

Liberty States Fiction Writers

New York - New Jersey - Pennsylvania



March-April 2010

Volume 2, Number 3

Let Freedom Ring!

www.lsfwriters.com

**Liberty States
Fiction Writers
PO Box 2914
Westfield, NJ 07090**

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Please send information, news, and articles for the newsletter to the appropriate assistant editor (listed below) if one is specified and to Anne Walradt – newsletter@lsfwriters.com

Articles: Eileen Foley - EF_Foley@yahoo.com

Road Story: Karen Bostrom - bostromk@yahoo.com

Member Spotlight: Kiersten Krum - kksquard@gmail.com

Contests, Conferences, and Classes: Monica Liming - mjliming@comcast.net

Author Spotlight: Kathye Quick - KathyeQ@aol.com

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President's Column



Okay, I just have to say it. Do we kick butt or what? I can't tell you how very pleased I am with the outcome of our first ever conference. With the outstanding array of speakers and the energy of the attendees this qualified as a full blown conference in my book, not the mini-con that we had been calling it for a year. And keep that in mind. We've only been an organization for a little over a year. Like I said, we kicked butt!

Read More . . .

"Words, once they are printed, have a life of their own."
Carol Burnett

★Articles★

Click on Title to Access Article

President's Column

Winning Query Letters
by Kathy Kulig

It's a Mystery
by Shelley Freydot

What do you write? A brief
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by Nisha Sharma

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Liberty States Fiction
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Brief Run-down* by Tara
Nina

How to Critique Fiction by
Victoria Crayne

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Next Month's Meeting

The next meeting of the Liberty States Fiction Writers is on
April 10th at the Edison Public Library on Plainfield Avenue.

How to Plan a Murder and Who Should Do It! By Lori Avocato

How to Plan a Murder and Who Should Do It!

Got a problem with characters and plot? Creating distinctive plot for your characters can be a challenge. Join Lori Avocato as she discusses ways to enhance character development though plot in a mystery/suspense, but also useful for a romance. Find out how to plan a murder and who should do it at April's meeting. Ms. Avocato will discuss:

- Characters that make you scream
- Characters that seem so nice yet... they really aren't
- How to plan a murder
- Scare the stuffing out of your readers before...THE END.



After serving in the Air Force as a registered nurse, Lori Avocato decided to write fiction. The best-selling author has sold a humorous mystery series about a burned out nurse who becomes a medical insurance fraud investigator to Avon/HarperCollins Publishers. There are six books available in that series. She also sold twelve romance novels in the past and knows about the ins and outs of this crazy business. Lori has returned to writing romances with her humorous voice. If you need a chuckle, check out Lori's blog at www.loriavocato.com/blog. She writes about daily life in her Lori Tib Bits or LTBs. Lori's website is: www.loriavocato.com where you'll also find many self-promotion tips.

Roundtable Sessions

Our Roundtable Sessions will be on **E-Book Reader Comparison and Critiques**. For the Critique Roundtable Session, please bring 10 (ten) copies of 5 (five) pages from the work you wish to discuss, as well as any pitch you would like to try out. If you are a published author and would like to assist with the pitches and critique sessions, please contact Lois Winston, our Program Chair.

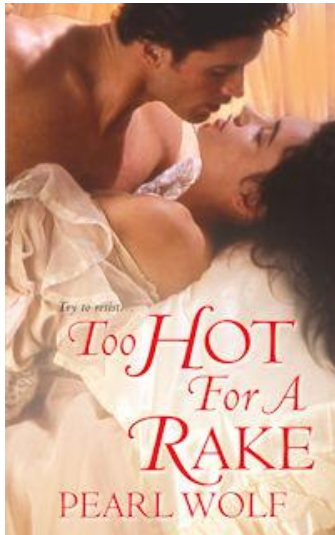
Networking and Snacks

During and after the Roundtable Sessions, members may network and either brown bag lunch or share snacks with fellow members.

Author Spotlight



Pearl Wolf published her first work of fiction--a short anecdote for THE READER'S DIGEST—when she was fourteen years old. For this effort, she received the grand sum of \$5.00. That was enough to start her on her writing career. She lives in Manhattan. She has two sons and three grandsons. Pearl is active in several other writers organizations along with Liberty States Fiction Writers including Florida Romance Writers, NYC Mystery Writers of America and Sisters in Crime, NY-Tristate Chapter (past president). When she isn't writing, she loves to play duplicate bridge and is a life master.



TOO HOT FOR THE RAKE

Her scandalous seduction... Hoping to pull off a brazen seduction, Lady Helena Fairchild sneaks into her betrothed's bed—only to realize too late that she is lying next to a notorious rake. Even worse, her fiancé stumbles upon them and calls off their wedding. To avoid scandal, Helena's family sends her away to the country. But when she steps into her coach, her escort is none other than the stranger who lay next to her that night... Was anything but an accident... Lord Desmond Bannington has no intention of changing his ways until he receives news that he is now the Marquis of Waverley. Returning to England to claim his title, Desmond vows to abandon his reckless habits—but for the memory of the lovely Lady Helena Fairchild undressed in his bed. Intrigued by her boldness, and yearning to know her innermost secrets, Desmond can't help a temptation beyond all reason... Try to resist...

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Meeting Review

**Kick-Butt
Heroes: Using
Martial Arts in
Your Action
Scenes**

**What would your hero do if a
villain held a knife to his throat?**

Many thanks to Kathy and Melinda for their wonderful workshop on using Martial Arts in Your Action Scenes as well as their information on self-defense and the histories behind some of the different kinds of martial arts.



Kathy Fawcett is a shodan (1st grade black belt) in Isshinryu Karate and helps run her husband's dojo, the NJ Academy of Martial Arts, located in Lebanon, NJ. She writes paranormal romances and loves kick butt heroes and heroines.



Melinda Leigh holds a 1st degree black belt in American Kenpo Karate and trains with Amerikick Karate Studios in Marlton, NJ. She writes romantic suspense and loves to incorporate aspects of Martial Arts in her writing.

Guest speaker podcast info:

This month we have a little something different – a videocast of the March workshop. Please login to the Motionbox account to view this video. We are also working on getting additional video available to you on this presentation.

To listen to any of the other monthly meeting podcasts, login to LSFW's Motionbox account with the following information:

User Name: podcasts@lsfwriters.com

Password: liberty

To access Motionbox, please click on this link:

<http://www.motionbox.com/user/login>

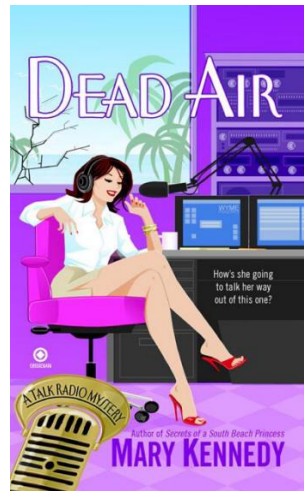
Please note that Motionbox will only display the most recent podcasts on the first page. To see more podcasts, click on FAVORITES.

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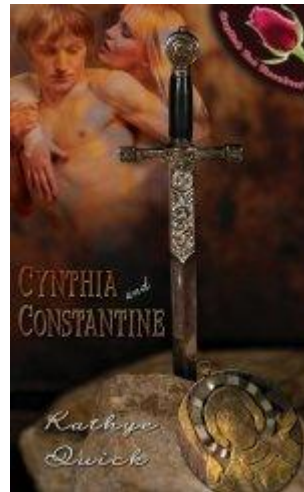
[Member News](#)



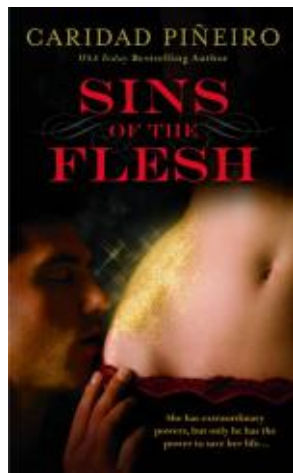
Luci Weston had an article featured at Bionic Beauty: <http://bionic-beauty.com/powerful-beauty-luci-weston/>



Mary Kennedy's DEAD AIR, the first of the Talk Radio Mysteries, hit the top ten on the IMBA best-seller list.

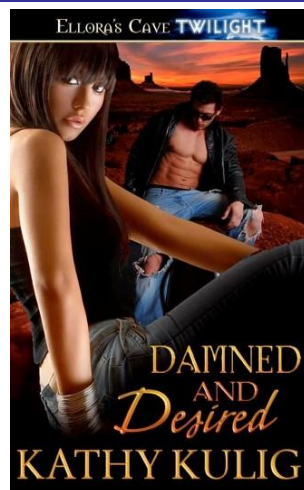


Kathye Quick is pleased to announce that she just got offered a contract from Lyrical Press for BRAEDEN and JANNE, the sequel to Cynthia and Constantine. Kathye pitched to Lyrical Press at the first ever Create Something Magical Conference which probably makes this our first ever post-pitch sale!



Myshelf.com gave **Caridad Piñeiro** the following review:

Sins of the Flesh is a fast-paced, mesmerizing and suspenseful paranormal thriller that had me reading well into the night. Mick is an intelligent and determined hero whose ruthless façade hides compassion and understanding. Cat's pain and confusion make her a sympathetic character from the start, one whose inner strength eventually becomes clear. Combine this with arousing love scenes and gene therapy science and *Sins of the Flesh* is an excellent novel with an intriguing twist. I can't wait for Caridad Piñeiro's next release in this series.



Kathy Kulig helped judge a poetry writing contest for children sponsored by Public Radio WDIY and a local newspaper. If you're in the Allentown/Bethlehem, PA area, the winners will read their entries on the radio 88.1 on April 19th between 6-6:30 pm, when Kathy will be interviewed along with the other judges.



Caridad Piñeiro's FURY CALLS was selected as the Reviewer's Choice Best Nocturne of 2009 by Cataromance.

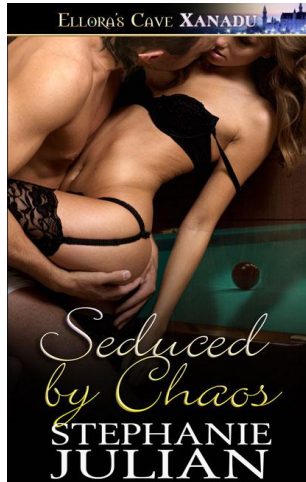


Melinda Leigh, Rayna Vause and Kathy Fawcett have created a blog about writing, self defense, and the martial arts. Come by and say hi and let us know what future topics you might like to see discussed.

www.attackingthepage.wordpress.com



Lois Winston is pleased to announce that she has accepted an offer to write a craft-themed mystery series for Midnight Ink, an imprint of Llewellyn Worldwide. *ASSAULT WITH A DEADLY GLUE GUN* will be the first book in the series and will be out as a trade paperback in early 2011. *MOP DOLL MURDERS* will follow a year later and a third book a year after that. There's an option for a 4th book if the series does well. The series was pitched as Kate Reddy meets Stephanie Plum.



Stephanie Julian is pleased to announce that she has accepted a deal from Sourcebooks for 3 books for their erotic romance line launching later this year. Her first book will be out in April 2011, the second and third at six-month intervals. The *Forgotten Goddesses* are an offshoot of my Etruscan series for EC and will feature the Etruscan goddesses who find themselves pretty much obsolete in this modern world. The first book will be about Tessa, Goddess of the Dawn.



Joanna Aislinn received 4.75 out of 5 stars for *NO MATTER WHY* from Night Owl Reviews



Jenni Holbrook has been working on a new publishing venture—Who Dares Wins Publishing. See what this is about by visiting www.whodareswinspublishing.com or visiting Bob Mayer's blog at www.bobmayer.org/blog for info on the concept of flex publishing. Currently we are seeking authors with a reversion rights backlist and military narrative non-fiction. Also, we are embarking in a new fiction series which is based on the television miniseries model. The first episode of season one is up on our website titled "Chasing the Ghost." Each episode is in eBook format only but the entire season will be rolled up into one POD at the end of the season.

The Cellar will premier next month. Each season will have about 8 episodes.

We've tried to streamline the process of members adding events to the Liberty Calendar of Events

<http://www.libertystatesfictionwriters.com/calendar/>

Just click on an event to expand it for additional details. To do this streamlining, we've created a public Google Calendar!

If you have an upcoming event that you wish to publicize, please cut and paste this link into your browser:

http://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=contact%40lsfwriters.com&ctz=America/New_York

You will be taken to the Google Calendar program where you can enter your information. Click on the small "Google Calendar" icon in the bottom right corner of the calendar. The user name and password are as follows:

User Name: contact@lsfwriters.com

Password: Isfwmember

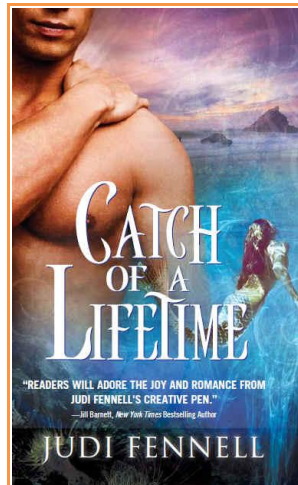
Please edit only your own events. Please list only those events in which you are personally participating. All members, whether SPA or not, may enter their writing-related events in the Liberty States Fiction Writers' Calendar of Events.

In case you forget this information, you may find the links and passwords in the Members Only section as well.

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Member Releases

February, March and April



CATCH OF A LIFETIME

by Judi Fennell

ISBN 9781402224287

Sourcebooks

She's on a mission to save the planet... Mermaid Angel Tritone has been researching humans from afar, hoping to find a way to convince them to stop polluting. When she jumps into a boat to escape a shark attack, it's her chance to pursue her mission, but she has to keep her identity a total secret...When he finds out what she really is, they're both in mortal danger... For Logan Hardington, finding a beautiful woman on his boat is surely not a problem—until he discovers she's a mermaid, and suddenly his life is on the line...



BOUND TO BE MINE

by Tess Lamont

ISBN Not available

Wild Rose Press

Stripping had not just been profitable for Lisa Emery; it had given her the power, the control, to be the woman she wanted to be. She'd had a stimulating job and the perfect man at home—her master. Together, they were exploring the darker side of passion, and both seemed to bloom with the knowledge. Why then had he suddenly disappeared just when things were going so well? And why now was he back? Ben Johnson knew the “life” he and Lisa were living had been wrong...just knew it. Something that felt that good couldn't be right. According to his therapist, “only by atoning for your wrongs could you really grow and change as a person.”

Why then, after so many months apart, did he still need to dominate Lisa, to bend her to his will and give in to his baser instincts?



THE FIEND OF WHITE BUCK HALL

by Penelope Marzec

New Concepts Publishing

They say Thomas Hillyer, a wizard, is in league with the Devil and that the white buck roaming his estate hypnotizes people and steals their souls. Molly is a fugitive, wanted for a crime she did not commit. Seeing a want ad for a secretary in a sleepy town, she sets off for White Buck Hall but ignores the warning about the albino stag who lurks in the woods. When she meets him on the forest path, her life is forever changed.

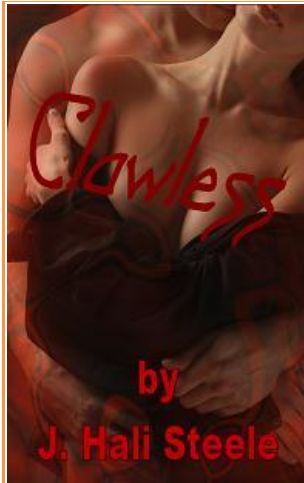


THE BEWITCHED COWBOY

by Tess Quinn

Wild Rose Press

The last thing Matt expected his twin to tell him was that he had to marry the woman of his parents' choice or suffer the loss of his powers. Destiny, a PhD and successful parapsychology writer, certainly did not expect her mother to tell her that she would die if she didn't get married to a man chosen for her at infancy. The collision of two hard-headed, anti-marriage witches makes Destiny and Matt's first encounter explosive. Now, they have to figure out a way to get along for the two weeks they can't be separated without doing the one thing that could change their fate forever...falling in love.



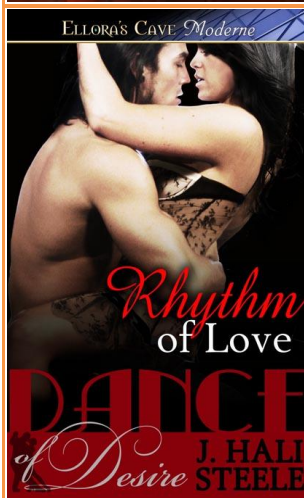
CLAWLESS

by J. Hali Steele

ISBN Not Available

Eirelander Publishing

An act of kindness can change your life—forever. Griffin Hayes knew what Jenna Sahara was and he didn't care. So what if she was a member of the Kind? She took his breath away. And his passion for her knew no bounds. A vampire-infected lioness from the Sovereign Kind, Jenna has never been so drawn to any man more than the mortal Griffin. And he's fated to be her true mate. Consumed by sadness because she is different, Jenna is determined to have Griffin in her life no matter what. First she'll have to save him from her family who holds the power of life and death over him.



RHYTHM OF LOVE

by J. Hali Steele

ISBN 9781419924330

Eirelander Publishing

Carter Gates, amateur Latin ballroom dancer, is ready to make a move on his sexy new assistant. Bree's scent intoxicates him, and her lithe body makes it hard to keep his hands to himself. But Carter owns the company and has one rule—hands off the staff. His body isn't listening. Bree's no better off. She has a taste for her new boss, one she can't quench. Hiding the fact she's best friends with his partner, and a dancer herself, she slips into a revealing outfit and his arms...just for one night of sexy, hot competition and a highly erotic tango that gives new meaning to "going up in flames". Bree's friend has other ideas—she wants to keep Carter for herself. However, after spending a passionate evening in Carter's arms, and his bed, Bree wants more. And she's determined to get it.

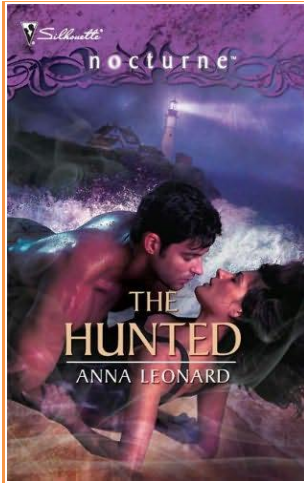


TEASING THE MUSE

by Macie Carter

The Wild Rose Press

Popular erotic romance writer, Page Burns, seems to have lost the "hotness" in her writing, or at least that's what her editor informs her. Is it because of her self-imposed celibacy after a bitter divorce, or because she's forty and just not interested? When she meets a handsome young stranger at one of her book signings, she decides what she really needs is a muse--in her bed. Fantasizing about the young man is just enough to revitalize some of her sizzling words. Can a forty year-old woman bed a man ten years her junior? Should she even try? But what Page doesn't realize is that she's not the only one fantasizing about teasing the muse...



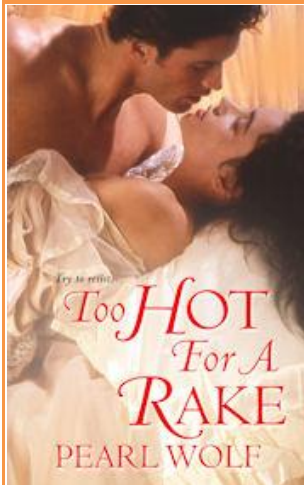
HUNTED

by Anna Leonard

ISBN 978-0373618330

Silhouette Nocturne

Beth Havelock always felt the pull of the ocean, tied to her Nantucket home even as she yearned for something new, something exciting. But when a handsome stranger washes up in a storm, she is cautious; her own immediate attraction to him frightens her. She knows nothing about him...except that he is hiding something. As seal-kin—a shapeshifter—Dylan Meredith was happy with his own kind. But the beautiful Nantucketer drew him from his rocky home to live among humans...and risk discovery for the chance at love. Neither can deny that the passion growing between them is real. But as Beth wrestles with her feelings—and uncovers her own mysterious origins—danger lurks. Dylan is being hunted, and now Beth is a target, too....



TOO HOT FOR A RAKE

by Pearl Wolf

ISBN-10: 1420104810

ISBN-13: 978-1420104813

Kensington Publishing

Her scandalous seduction... Hoping to pull off a brazen seduction, Lady Helena Fairchild sneaks into her betrothed's bed—only to realize too late that she is lying next to a notorious rake. Even worse, her fiancé stumbles upon them and calls off their wedding. To avoid scandal, Helena's family sends her away to the country. But when she steps into her coach, her escort is none other than the stranger who lay next to her that night...Was anything but an accident... Lord Desmond Bannington has no intention of changing his ways until he receives news that he is now the Marquis of Waverley. Returning to England to claim his title, Desmond vows to abandon his reckless habits. But for the memory of the lovely Lady Helena Fairchild undressed in his bed. Intrigued by her boldness, and yearning to know her innermost secrets, Desmond can't help a temptation beyond all reason...

If you have an upcoming release, please send your title, cover, release date and short blurb to Caridad Piñeiro @ cpsromance@att.net so that we can include the release in the newsletter and on the website.

Member Spotlight

Falling in Love with the Hero by Veronica Singleton

Here in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia where I now live is a CSPAN2 cable channel that hosts "Book TV," twenty-four hours. Not long ago, I happened to catch an interview of the King family—Stephen, his wife, and one of their children, Owen. Some of the questions being hurled at the family were interesting. In particular, someone asked Stephen if when he wrote, he ever had a specific person in mind to play that precise part in the movie, if one were to be made, ("Are you kidding?" she said chuckling, and clearing her throat.) His answer involved the writing of *Misery*, and how he wrote the entire main female part for Kathy Bates (We probably all remember reading that).

In any event, it set me thinking about the hero in my first book. I think of that

initial novel, because a great deal of sexual tension exists between the hero and heroine before the consummation of any relationship. However, in developing the hero's character—handsome, chivalrous, tall, dark, sensitive, strong, (can I just say *puissant?*), to name a few adjectives—somewhere between deciding on a name, and getting him into bed with the heroine, I realized I had fallen in love with him. The more I thought of it, the emotion presented itself as one akin to selecting a real person to play the part, the same as Stephen King or like someone had breathed life into the hero.

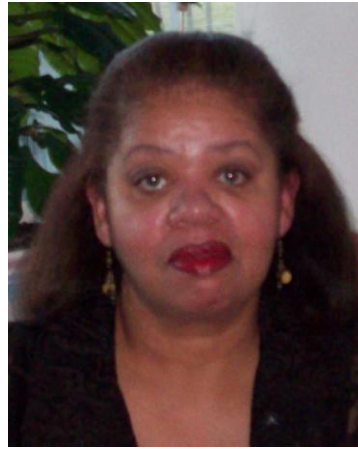
In thinking more about it, I wondered if it could be some strange cry from my youth as it scratches to rediscover itself. Am I remembering the days in which my husband courted me? Is it that romantic nature living way down inside, longing to be stroked, caressed, and cared for as if it were some neglected wife married for twenty years? Is the sexual tension of the story in itself causing a rejuvenation of hormones? Now, before someone decides I may need some kind of counseling or even how I would even have the cojones to admit this, let's think about it. It took me years to write that first book, and in fact, ten years later, I just finished editing and deleting scenes. And, for those of us in a committed relationship (marriage or otherwise) it didn't take that long to form that allegiance. This only confirms there are more reasons than not, to fall in love with the hero. Okay, maybe you wouldn't, due to fear of losing touch with reality. But, I've recently decided—I'm secure enough in my sanity to admit this, at least that holds true at the time of this writing.

Of course, we know the hero is constructed based on what will be required of him. But, do we automatically, and maybe even a little selfishly, design him to fit our own needs? In other words, what are the deciding factors on what characteristics he will possess? Can we so quickly and without hesitation say if this man were in real time, we wouldn't fall for him—the good guy with all the handsome qualities? When we begin to invent him, does an automatic tug begin at the heart? In some bizarre way, I think no matter how I look at it, he will have enough qualities to fit my needs, all because he is of my own thoughts.

I remember when I first joined any writing group, I happened to pass a member in the mall one Saturday afternoon, following the meeting. She appeared to be in such deep thought. As a writer, I could easily tell she didn't have work on her mind or what she might make for dinner. No—she had to be plotting, editing, or silently studying syntax. For the most part, I think, everyone understands what I mean by this, and maybe agree that it is worth taking a minute to think about. So, in that same vein, the next time you pass me on the street or catch sight of me driving in my car; the smiles, the glazed over look of stupidity, the drool I'm wiping from my chin all simply mean I'm reveling in and having visions of my hero ravishing me instead of my heroine in that scene I've created.

Veronica Singleton is a displaced New Yorker via New Jersey who now lives in Southeastern Virginia. She enjoys her marriage of thirty years, reading, travel, exploring, and listening to music. She is convinced that after more than 10 years in the garment district and 20 in the legal field a third career now looms on her horizon that involves a computer screen, plots, subplots, antagonists, and protagonists all shared with her trusted companion—her

iPod.



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Road Story

Over-Exposed: A Road Story
Rosemary DiBattista

In 2006, I attended my first writers' conference, where I took a class with mystery writer Hallie Ephron. Hallie began by asking us about problems we were encountering in our revisions. When it was my turn, I confessed my biggest struggle: I couldn't release my manuscript from my sweaty grip long enough for someone to read it.

Hallie looked at me with concern. "I assume it must be very personal. Is it a memoir?"

I gulped. "Um, not exactly. It's a romantic comedy." As her concern swiftly morphed into skepticism, I asked if she had any advice for me.

"Yeah," she said, and proceeded to quote Cher in one of my favorite movies: "Snap out of it!"

Once the laughter died down, Hallie looked me straight in the eye. "Unless you put yourself out there, you'll never grow as a writer."

But putting myself out there has never been easy for me. Though I was known as "the writer in the family," I hid most of my work. Showing people my poems and stories felt like standing in an open doorway in my underwear, waving to everyone who passed by. Even my mother grumbled that I never let her read anything, though that wasn't strictly true. It just took me thirty years to do it.

In college I dreamed of writing my Great Novel, but dreaming was as far as I got. Instead of writing literature, I spent ten years in an English classroom teaching about it. By the 90s I was home raising my sons, and turned to freelance journalism, working as an editor for *Family* magazine here in New Jersey. *Family* gave me my first byline and terrific editorial experience, and led to the opportunity to write a non-fiction book, *Female Body Image*, for

Enslow Publications. I was finally a published author, and writing articles, as opposed to fiction, felt extraordinarily safe. (I was still in that open doorway waving to passersby, but this time clad in a power suit and sensible shoes.)

When I returned to teaching, it was a pleasure to immerse myself in literature again; in fact, it was my work in the classroom that inspired my first novel, a contemporary update of *Much Ado about Nothing*. On nights, weekends, and summers between 2004 and 2006, I composed the first draft of a romantic comedy that brought together three things I dearly love: food, the Jersey shore, and William Shakespeare.

By the time I went to that summer conference, I was determined to be published. And though I flinched a bit in the face of Hallie's criticism, when one quarter of the Ephron sisters tells you to do something, you listen. So I took a deep breath, packed up my manuscript, and went straight home and gave it to my mom.

Once my mother read it, it became just a little easier to hand it off to others. I started at my local library and found two volunteers from their book club. I'm not gonna lie—it was a little nippy out there in my underwear, but taking that first difficult step said I was serious about being a writer.

The following year I felt ready for the big time, and applied for the Algonkian Pitch and Shop Conference in Manhattan. The Pitch and Shop consists of four grueling, palm-sweating, heart-fluttering days of writing, revising and polishing book pitches. Of the four editors I pitched, three asked to see pages. A senior editor at Berkley asked me to revise and let her read again. That spring I re-submitted, and she loved it, but could not get enough support to offer for it. But it was through that editor that I found my agent, and she has also asked to read my next book.

Though my first book has not yet sold, we've gotten lots of good editor feedback. My WIP is another Shakespeare update, and I now have a small group of trusted beta readers and critique partners. Last summer I took my biggest risk yet, and sent page one of my draft to the Dear Author romance blog, which publishes the first page of a manuscript for a no-holds-barred critique each Saturday. When my page finally went up in December, I was no longer in the safety of the doorway, but out on a ledge in a cold wind—stark naked, covered in goose bumps, and freezing my middle-aged tail off.

The blog comments ranged from gushing to snarky to “you've-got-to-be-kidding-me,” but they all gave me insights about my work. More importantly, they gave me a sense of what to expect from editors, and possibly reviewers, once this second book goes out on submission.

No doubt about it, it's cold out there. But in the four years since that conference, I've learned that I need to write for more than just an audience of one, that revision is my best friend, and that I have to take the hits as gracefully as I take the praise. I must, in other words—*snap out of it*.

And now if you'll excuse me, I need to go put on a nice warm sweater.



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★This Month's Articles★

President's Column Gail Freeman



Gail has been writing for twelve years and is a yet to be a 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

On behalf of the chapter, I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who worked so hard on putting this together. Rayna Vause, you are the conference goddess. Michele Richter, you so rock. Linda, Susan, Kathy, Jim and ... oh, the list goes on. To each volunteer who manned the editor/agent appointments to those that moderated a workshop or just pointed someone in the right direction and made them feel at home, a warm and heartfelt thank you.

Plans are already underway for next year. We're looking to book the same hotel and sending our order to the weather gods that we don't have a monsoon or a blizzard on the weekend that we choose. We're going to follow the same format as this year, one full day packed with workshops and editor/agent appointments. If anyone has feedback on the workshops or knows the perfect person to spend some time with us, drop a line to any board member and we'll consider the feedback and put the name on our list for consideration for next year.

Believe it or not, we have other events planned for the rest of the year. In May we are joining with the Sisters in Crime group to present a full day of murder and mayhem. Please be aware that this is a **members only workshop** due to the guns and other weapons that will be at the meeting.

Also take note that it will not be at our regular meeting location but will be held in Jamesburg. Directions will be supplied on the loop and in the next newsletter. Due to the nature of this meeting, we are requesting head count to give us an idea of how many members will be attending. In addition, you may pre-register for a box lunch for the cost of \$10 if you don't want to brown bag on that day. We will start collecting money for the lunch at the April meeting.

Also in May, we have our Mayke It Happen Challenge. The goal is to complete 60,000 words by the end of May. The challenge opened in February, but it's not too late to join. There is a loop set up that is full of support and help. Even if you don't think you can reach the goal, it's an excellent way to jump start your writing. RoseAnn DeFranco is coordinating the event and is doing a bang up job.

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.

One final side note on the conference. Did you know that over 50% of the material requested by the editors and agents is never submitted? Over the years I've had a number of editors tell me that they heard this great story idea but never saw it cross their desks. So if you got a request, they will remember it even if it takes you a month or more to get it ready for submission. Remember, they came to the conference hoping to find the next great author. It could be you.

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Winning Query Letters by Kathy Kulig



Kathy Kulig writes paranormal, contemporary and erotic romance. Her third novel Damned and Desired was released at Ellora's Cave on January 6th. It's the sequel to Desert of the Damned in her Demons in Exile series. At the 2010 Romantic Times Convention, Kathy will be participating on two workshop panels on "Building Paranormals from the Ground Up" and also "Twitter Unplugged." For more information, check out her website:
<http://www.kathykulig.com>

Janet Reid from Fine Print Literary Agency <http://fineprintlit.com/> gave an excellent lecture on writing effective query letters at a local writer's group meeting. Here are some of the things she talked about and tips taken from her hand out. Check out her blog too <http://jetreidliterary.blogspot.com/>

1. A query letter is a business letter, even if you're sending it via email, it should still be professional. Get rid of auto-signatures with pictures and fancy fonts. DO NOT copy and paste from a Word.doc file into the email or that email the agent gets will be full of those weird characters, you'll lose all the formatting and get a big block of text that's hard to read. Type the letter manually into the email or save it into a draft in your email and then copy and paste.

2. A query letter MUST tell an agent what the book is about:

- Who is the main character(s)?
- What happens to her?
- What choice does s/he face?
- What terrible thing will happen because of that choice?

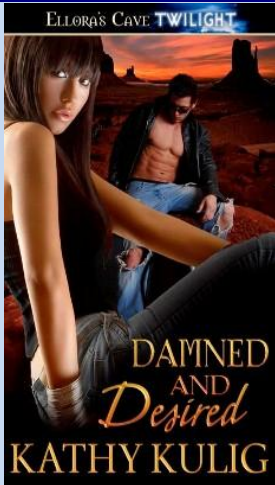
Here's a sample formula for writing a blurb: The main character must decide whether to _____. If s/he decides to do (this), the consequences/outcome/peril s/he faces are _____. If s/he decides NOT to do this: the consequences/outcome/peril s/he faces are _____.

A query blurb describes the book's premise, it's not a synopsis. Don't tell the ending. Stick to hero/heroine and possibly the protagonist in your blurb and that's all. Avoid character soup in your blurb.

A query letter should include the word count, title, genre and the publishing credits you have. You don't have to say the novel is complete. It should be before you query. Publishing credits are published works, not self-published, not winning a contest, not awards, not classes or teachers you've studied under, not an MFA, not conferences attended.

Instant rejection phrases: Fiction novel, sure best seller, Oprah, film potential, "dear agent"/"dear sir or madam."

Things to avoid: Don't beg, flatter, or demean yourself. Don't quote rejections letters (even ones with good feedback). Don't quote critique groups, friends, paid editors, or ask rhetorical questions like: "What would it be like to kill your husband?"



Don't offer exclusives (if you do, give a time deadline). Don't attach anything unless asked to do so. Don't engage your spam filter or auto responder. Keep your letter to the point and be specific.

For email queries, put your contact information at the BOTTOM. Include the following: Email, phone, website, blog, Twitter, Facebook, mailing address.

Expect to hear a lot of NOs. And never, ever argue with a rejection.

Have a query tracking system so you know what/who/when/where you queried and the response.

Here's an example of a format for a e-query:

Subj: QUERY – Title by Author
Dear (Name of Agent)

Paragraph ONE: 100 word paragraph on what the book is about. This is not a synopsis. Have a line break every three lines. Makes it easier to read. Include Title, genre and word count.

Paragraph TWO: Your writing credits (If none, then skip)

Paragraph THREE: Any kind words, how you found the agent, why you picked that agent, etc.

Closing: Thank you for you time and consideration. (No need for other stuff.)

Your Name
Your email
Your phone
Your website
Your blog
Your twitter name
Your Facebook page
Your physical address

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It's a Mystery by Shelley Freydont

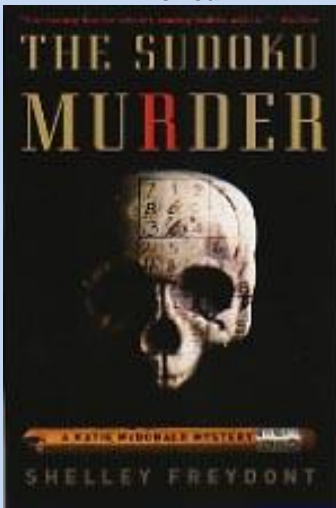
Some famous author, Dickens maybe, said that all good fiction contains a mystery. It could be the meaning of life, who stole the purloined letter, or what is the real identity of that stranger in town.

But when we hear "It's a mystery," we think of the genre of mystery writing. Most often this is a murder mystery. Most mysteries have three hard and fast givens. Someone died, someone killed, and someone catches the killer. These days a detective can be many things: a policeman, a private eye, a caterer, a journalist, a dog walker. There are several subgenres of mystery fiction, and more crossover genres popping up all the time.

A few decades ago, detectives followed clues, they used their gray cells, their body of arcane knowledge, or ground-pounding police work to solve the



Shelley Freydont is the author of the Katie McDonald Sudoku mystery series and Lindy Haggerty mystery series as well as several romance novels under the pseudonym Gemma Bruce. A former professional dancer and choreographer, she most recently worked on the films, Mona Lisa Smile and The Game Plan. Shelley is past president of Sisters-in-Crime, NY, NJ, CN, and a member of Mystery Writers of America, Liberty States Fiction Writers, and Romance Writers of America.



crime. They might have a side kick. Sherlock Holmes had his Dr. Watson and Hercules Poirot, Arthur Hastings. These secondary characters didn't have very accomplished detective skills, but were used as a sounding board for the great sleuth. As a rule, detectives didn't have hobbies, families, or significant others, except perhaps an occasional girl with the gams. Mystery fiction was about detecting: Following clues that led to the murderer.

This rule has loosened up considerably. Now having a significant other is *de rigueur*. Hobbies, bossy mother-in-laws, match-making aunts, and pets are a major part of amateur sleuth mysteries. Love scenes are not unusual in police procedurals. We might say anything goes . . . except: How do we know if we're writing a cozy mystery, a romance with mystery elements, a paranormal mystery, or a police procedural?

In a mystery, the solving of the murder takes up the largest bulk of the novel. Everything else takes a back seat, even all those recipes that you sometimes find along with the clues. If the romance in your novel is the most important part, you may be writing romance with mystery elements. If it's more about stopping the stalking psychopath before he strikes again, it may be a thriller or romantic suspense.

In a straightforward mystery, the clues must be set up and discovered in such a way that the readers feel like they could have solved the murder themselves. Of course, they can't because the writer has left almost every character with a motive without an alibi.

When I was writing my first mystery, I was halfway through when I realized I liked the person I chose as the murderer way too much to see him carted away in handcuffs at the end of the first book of the series. I wanted to keep him around. So I scrambled for someone with as strong a motive and without an alibi. There were plenty. And I didn't like the person I finally chose very much anyway. (Disclaimer: I wouldn't recommend this way of casting your villain.)

The murderer's motive must be believable, his means of killing credible.

The detective must logically follow the clues to the murderer.

The murderer must be caught, and the reader must have the expectation that he/she will be duly punished.

The detective, victim, and murderer should be introduced "up front." For a while, the victim had to appear on the opening page. Thankfully that conceit has been eased. But it is important to introduce the murder near the beginning so that the rest of the book is spent on detection. The villain also is introduced early on. The missing evil twin that shows up in the last chapter and other *deus ex machina* are no longer acceptable.

The violence of the crime should be appropriate to the kind of mystery you're writing. A gory decapitation might work for a dark, edgy police procedural, but not in a cooking mystery.

You don't want to fool the readers completely, but you don't want them to solve the case before you do. (Throw red herrings in their way.) But don't wait until the final page to have the villain confess and dump all the back-story in his confession. Christie was great at this. Gather all the members of the house party in the parlor and get someone to confess. That can be fun, but readers on the whole have become more sophisticated than that.

Research. Not just poisons and methods of garroting, but the various genres of mystery fiction and decide where your novel belongs.

Some interesting reading.

Writing Mysteries- edited by Sue Grafton

How to Write Killer Fiction by Carolyn Wheat

The Elements of Mystery Fiction William Tapley (a classic)

Writer's Digest has a whole list of reference books on procedure, poisons, crime scenes, amateur sleuths, weapons and procedures, etc.

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What do you write? A brief overview of different Romance subgenres by Nisha Sharma



Award winning author Nisha Sharma was raised in the countryside of northeast Pennsylvania. She graduated from Muhlenberg College with a B.A. in English in 2006, and she currently attends law school in New York. Her first novel *THE BEWITCHED COWBOY* was published under the pseudonym Tess Quinn by The Wild Rose Press in February 2010. You can find her at www.nisha-sharma.com

There are so many subgenres in romance, no wonder it's hard to keep track of them all. Well, don't panic. Here's an outline to give you a generalized idea of how romance is broken down. This isn't the ultimate source on subgenres, but at least it'll give you a good start.

Group One: The following are two classes that most subgenres fall under. When determining what story you want to write, pick one of the choices below before moving on to Group Two.

Single Title: Stand alone romances.

- No specific guidelines apply
- Identified by word count: Approximately 100,000 words.

Category: Also known as "series" titles. Guidelines available on Publishers' websites

- Books are published in specific romance categories
- Publishers release a certain number of books per category each month
- Readers have pre-determined expectations for a category book
- Examples of popular category publishers: Harlequin, Silhouette, Mills & Boon
- Shorter word count: Approximately 50,000 words.
- Usually has standard packaging similar for each novel published in the line

Group Two: The following are the difference romance subgenres. This is a very short, cursory list. Your book may fall under something that is not listed here, so don't freak out if you don't see "military" or "medical romance" in this group. This is just to give you a basic idea. When determining what story you want to write, after making a choice in Group One, choose one or two (at the most) of following:



Paranormal

- Deals with mental/psychic/physical phenomena
- Examples: vampires, werewolves, witches, ESP, ghosts, shape shifters
- Usually takes place in the real world or a setting similar to the real world

Fantasy

- Deals with more mythological or magical creatures
- Examples: dragons, gryphon, faeries, centaurs
- Usually takes place in a fictitious world

Dark Fantasy

- A cross over between Paranormal and Fantasy
- Paranormal characters and creatures mixed with Fantasy characters and creatures
- Usually takes place in a fictitious world
- Heavy emphasis on adventure and other world travel
- Incorporates some elements of horror

Urban Fantasy

- A cross over between Paranormal and Fantasy
- Fantasy story with strong emphasis on magic and magical/mythological creatures in a real world setting

Romantic Elements

- Romance is a subplot in the story
- Can be paired with other subplots listed in group two

Thriller

- Hero and heroine are subject to great danger
- Usually attempting to stop an event from occurring
- Fast pace, lots of action
- Contains devices such as cliffhangers and red-herrings
- May not have a typical happily ever

Suspense

- Hero and Heroine are subject to danger
- Fast pace, suspense is a key element in the climax of the plot

Adventure

- Strong alpha male and equally strong female characters
- Fast moving plot.
- Described as action/adventure movie-like stories
- Often categorized as romantic suspense with a faster plotline

Inspirational

- Involve heroes and heroines following traditional religious (mostly Christian) values, and demonstrating a strong faith
- Usually no sexual intercourse

Erotica

- Focuses solely on sexual relationship between characters
- A romance may be present at the core
- Includes graphic language, sexual intercourse, sometimes with multiple partners, and fetishes

Erotic Romance

- Sex is an inherent part of character growth, story progression, and the relationship
- Happily ever after is a requirement while it may or may not be present in an erotica story
- Requires a well developed plotline and characters in addition to graphic sexual intercourse

Comedy

- Lighthearted, humorous plotlines
- Happily ever after essential element of the story
- Usually contains situational comedy and satirical discourse

Chick lit

- Not necessarily happily ever after ending. Can be left open to interpretation
- Often referred to as the “dating and shoes” romances because the subject matter stereotypically includes both
- Involves young, single working women making relationship or life choices
- Agents and editors encourage authors to refrain from using the term “chick lit” anymore. Would prefer authors to use the term “romantic elements” instead

Sweet

- Innocent love stories
- Sensuality and tension exists in simple acts such as kissing
- If sexual intercourse present (not usually an element of sweet romance), it is alluded to, rather than described in detail

Traditional

- Sometimes interchangeably referred to as “sweet”
- Focus is on the love and emotional attachment between the heroine and hero
- Little to no sexual intercourse
- Usually happily ever after is marriage of heroine and hero

Group Three: The following are different time periods your story can be set in. After selecting from the groups above, chose one of the following:

Contemporary

- Set in present time or a modern with which world readers are familiar

Historical

- Stories set in the past
- Usually the popular historical periods start in the early 1900s and extend back in time through the medieval era

Regency

- Subset of Historical subgenre. Early 1800's period
- Revolves around traditional plot lines
- Examples are marriages of convenience or arranged marriages
- Usually a category romance but not always
- Sexual intercourse doesn't normally occur between unmarried hero and heroine

Futuristic

- Can take place in a future time period
- Usually takes place approximately a hundred or more years in the future
- Commonly paired with fantasy in the romance genre

Time Travel

- No longer a popular phrase to use in romance fiction
- Characters go forward or backward in time throughout story

Exception:

- Other worlds created for the purpose of the fantasy/dark fantasy subgenres don't require a particular time period

Group Four (Optional): The following are different types of social and cultural backgrounds that may affect a romance. When determining what story you want to write, after choosing a number from each of the categories above, you can opt to choose one of the following:

Multi-Cultural

- Focuses on non-Caucasian culture group and different ethnic backgrounds

African American

- A subset of multi-cultural romance. Focuses on heroes and heroines from an African American background

Interracial

- Focuses on a hero and heroine from different ethnic/racial backgrounds

LGBT

- Focuses lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender character backgrounds

After working your way through the different groups above, you'll be able to know what genre your book falls under, whether it's a single title urban fantasy contemporary romance, or a category sweet historical romance.

Remember to only pick two subgenres from group two at the most. If you have too many subgenres, you'll confuse/lose readership and may confuse/lose the interest of agents or editors who want to know how they can pitch your story to publishing houses. Happy writing!

Sources: <http://www.romancewiki.com>, <http://www.writing-world.com/romance/romgenres.shtml>,
<http://romance.fictionfactor.com/articles/subgenre.html>

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Creating Convincing Characters by Pearl Wolf



Pearl Wolf published her first work of fiction--a short anecdote for THE READER'S DIGEST--when she was fourteen years old. For this effort, she received the grand sum of \$5.00. That was enough to start her on her writing career. She lives in Manhattan. She has two sons and three grandsons. Pearl is active in several other writers organizations along with Liberty States Fiction Writers including Florida Romance Writers, NYC Mystery Writers of America and Sisters in Crime, NY-Tristate Chapter (past president). When she isn't writing, she loves to play duplicate bridge and is a life master.

The essential business of crafting character arcs is crucial for writers. Consider reader expectations. What are they and why are they important?

Your reader yearns to identify with your protagonist. "Character is key. Character is plot—something about the character has to relate so the reader can . . . understand them," Nora Roberts writes.

My own definition of a character arc is this: The GRADUAL changes in a protagonist throughout your story. To begin with, you need to develop a character worksheet for each major character as well as for each of the vital secondary characters important to your story. One of the things I deem crucial for reader identification is the use of tags. A tag is a way to identify your character for the reader.

In *David Copperfield*, Charles Dickens' Uriah Heep repeats over and over again, "I'm a very umble person." Of course the opposite is true, but the reader "gets" it because repetition of the tag fixes that character. Agatha Christie's Miss Marple snoops as she solves crimes. Tags are helpful. Use them liberally.

When you craft your character arcs, keep in mind a few things. First, show, don't tell. It took me a long time to understand this phrase, but I get it now. We show when we use dialogue and action to advance the plot. It isn't powerful enough to tell the reader that Mary is tense. Show her shredding a tissue or digging her nails into her hands. Ask yourself, how does your protagonist react to the circumstances she/he must face?

Successful screenwriters have it all over us in this respect, since they must be visual. We all begin with a set-up where the protagonist faces a problem. If you don't create a challenge for your main character, you don't have a story. Your protagonist then confronts the challenge, meets opposition, suffers consequences, believes all is lost. This leads to the resolution when your protagonist solves the problem and gains wisdom.

Writers reveal character through physical description, through inner thoughts; through behavioral responses to problems consistent with personal traits, through tags and finally, through growth when they triumph over adversity.

Many writers don't earn enough money, but we keep trying. We are compelled to write anyway, though we accumulate one rejection after another.

To quote Samuel Beckett: “Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.”

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**Liberty States
Fiction Writers
Create Something
Magical
Conference: A
Brief Run-down by
Tara Nina**



Ellora's Cave Romantic, and Liberty States Fiction Writers. Her stories are diversified from sizzling hot to simmering sweet with a flavor to suit almost any palate. She is a Southerner living in the northern wilds of New Jersey complete with teenagers, pets, and a mountain man husband. Visit her at www.TaraNina.com .

Though the weather outside was frightful, the Liberty States Fiction Writers' first conference was delightful. They set out to *Create Something Magical* with this conference and they accomplished that feat. Being a veteran conference attendee, I have to admit this was a well-rounded event for all genres of fiction writers. They hosted a menagerie of talent within the multitude of workshops, which provided valuable information on writing the YA novel, Horror and Suspense, the Thriller, Science-Fiction, or Romance.

Knowledge on craft abounded. The phenomenal “Show, Don't Tell,” “Plot, Pacing, and Page Turners,” “Creating Villains,” and “Characters Inside and Out” were just a sample of the variety of help available to the budding or experienced writer. I've learned that every day in the writing world is a new learning experience. Unfortunately, I couldn't be in every conference room at once, which saddened me, to miss out on even one ounce of the shared resources made available to us as writers by LSFW.

Workshops on self-editing, submitting your manuscript, query letters, and synopsis were available which lead to the most awaited event in the writer's life “You've got a Contract! Now what?”

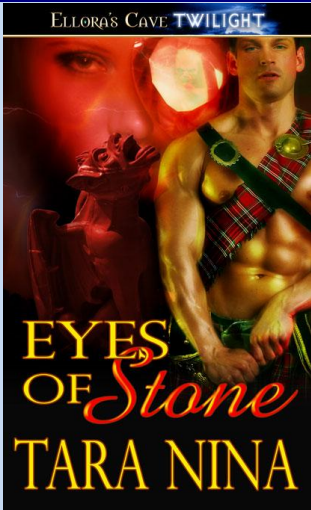
The luncheon speaker, F. Paul Wilson gave a humorous spin on a day in the life of the “average” writer. His insight put a new perspective on things and made me laugh. I guess it's true not everything submitted gets a million dollar advance. But a good single-malt scotch can take the edge off of that disappointment and bring forth the elusive inspiration. (LOL)

This may have been LSFW's first conference, but they managed to pull off an impressive Editor/Agent appointment schedule. Not only did they take appointments, these hard-working individuals gave informative panel discussions.

For a one-day event, it was packed with a whirlwind of opportunities. They ended the day with a fantastic and classy networking reception and topped it off with a multi-author booksigning.

I anticipate next year's Liberty States Fiction Writers' conference to be even more fantastic now that the “opening night” jitters have passed. Bring it on, LSFW. You've got the right idea. Every writer deserves to learn and grow in a healthy environment, and you've succeeded in providing the right combination to help push the budding enthusiasts forward no matter which genre they've chosen to write.

[Some Photos from the Conference](#)





To see more photos from the conference, please visit the LSF Writers Profile Page at:
<http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=2038780&id=1166254635&l=9467ba64f7>

Many thanks to Jenn Nixon for shooting these photographs. If you have any you'd like to share, please send them to contact@lsfwriters.com.

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How to Critique Fiction by Victoria Crayne



Ms. Victory Nancy Crayne lives in California and has been a very active member of the Internet writing community since January 1995. Her Victory Page has her articles "Career Plan for Fiction Writers," "How to Critique Fiction," "Victory's Motivational Newsletter" (several issues), and many other writing resources. Visit her webpage: http://www.crayne.com/write_top.html

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Introduction

Ever wonder how some critics can find some weaknesses in your work whereas others gloss right over them?

You pour your energy and nine-tenths of your soul into a story. Night and day you wrestle with yourself over every page, every word at your keyboard, typewriter, or notepad. You are writing every day, aren't you? At last, you're finished! With nervous anxiety you take the next daring step - letting someone else, maybe another writer, editor, friend, or even enemy open to the first page and start reading.

You wonder - is this your masterpiece? Have you learned at last how to write a best seller? You really tried hard to do so much better on this one. You wait, as if standing in front of the judge at your murder trial. Will the verdict be 'Not Guilty'? Will the jury yell and wave their arms in praise?

Or - will you hear those awful words - 'GUILTY of Bad Writing'?

A professional learns to systematically organize their knowledge of how to write well. One area of knowledge is how to do a professional critique - a really detailed, rip it up and tear it apart critique, hitting it from all angles, until every weakness stands raw and exposed.

Here is a checklist of points and questions on many aspects of fiction writing

that may be useful to you—or your chosen favorite critic—in evaluating works of fiction.

There are many different styles of critiquing, of course. The checklist and questions presented here are offered as food for thought, not as a strict set of rules. Very few people will try to answer every one of these points/questions.

After you finish your next piece, or part of it, set it aside for a few days. Then haul out this article, put on your Critic Hat, and go through these questions for your work.

See you on the Bestseller's List!

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- A. Let the author know if this is not your favorite type of story.
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- B. Don't be afraid to critique something if you're not familiar with the genre.
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- A. For fiction in general
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1. The critique process

A. Don't read other critiques of this story yet.

Doing so would likely bias your review. The author would much prefer your unbiased and fresh impression.

B. Write down your impressions as a reader.

Was the story captivating from the very first few paragraphs? Did you enjoy reading it? What type of person would this book appeal to? Do you think that the story or book has sales potential?

C. Try to give feedback on what could be changed.

Remember, the purpose of writing a critique is twofold: (1) identify the weaknesses in the piece and (2) offer some constructive advice to the author that might lead to improvement in the story. To just bash the story without providing something useful to the author is not really being professional.

D. Give examples of improvements, if possible.

When you give an example of a better way to do what you pointed out, you make your point much clearer to the author. As they say, 'an example is worth a thousand words'.

E. Praise where praise is due.

Did you remember to add some positive comments on the piece, where the author did something you thought was very good?

"I feel I have a decent critical eye. But when I think I see a touchdown, I cheer. That's feedback, too. Why should all the mistakes find their targets, but the successes meet with only silence--leaving the poor writer, who has poured out her/his heart, with nothing but: no, no, no, ... As [critics], don't we have a responsibility to not only point out what needs changing, as we see it, but also what worked and why, so the writer WON'T change it and will be encouraged to produce more of the same?" - J. R. Lankford (Jilla).

"We all need to be told where we are very good as well as where we are very, very bad. We cannot grow, otherwise." - Pete Murphy

"I think there's a sometimes overlooked purpose in critiquing and that is to identify the strengths in a story as well, to offer encouragement and positive reinforcement in regard to those strengths, thereby preventing the possibility that the author will change, for the worse, those things that make the story good." - Debra Littlejohn Shinder

F. Never criticize the author personally. Focus your attention on the story as written.

G. Critique as you would want to be critiqued.

Ask yourself before you post or mail a critique: Is this an example of the way I would like to be treated?

2. The checklist (things to look for)

A. Opening

Do the first few sentences or paragraphs of the story grab your attention? Do they present the protagonist's main problem? Remember how you judge a book or story when you first see it in a bookstore. Don't we often base our decision to buy or not buy upon those first few sentences? Did this author grab your attention fast enough?

B. Conflict

1. By conflict, I do not mean lots of slam-bam action. Conflict is "The mental or moral struggle caused by incompatible desires and aims. That is the kind of conflict that makes stories vitally alive." - Ben Bova in "The Craft of Writing Science Fiction That Sells".
2. Is there emotional conflict WITHIN the main character? Between the main characters? Emotional conflict is part of what gets readers interested. For example: love vs. loyalty; greed vs. duty; fear vs. desire; revenge vs. self-doubt.
3. Are there too many or not enough conflicts?

"The writer's job is to be a troublemaker! Stir up as many levels of conflict and problems for your protagonist (hero) as you can. Let one set of problems grow out of another. And never, never, never solve a problem until you've raised at least two more. It is the unsolved problems that form the chain of promises that keeps the reader interested." - Ben Bova.
Until the end, of course, when all the conflicts should be resolved.
4. Is there enough conflict between the characters? Is it expressed through action, dialogue, attitudes, or values? Were the characters sufficiently contrasted? Or did they seem to be totally satisfied with their roles? Did they have the potential to transform each other?

C. Plot

1. Was the main plot clear and believable?

2. Did the main character have a clearly defined problem to solve? Did you feel by the end of the piece that this problem was solved or did the character become resolved to live with it?
3. Were you able to determine the time and place of the story quickly enough?
4. Did the story start at the right place? Did it end at the right place in the plot?
5. Are there scenes which do not seem to further the plot?
6. Were there too many flashbacks, which broke your attention?
7. If the piece was a short story, were there too many subplots? If the piece was a novel, could it be improved by more attention to the subplots or have more subplots? Conversely, does it have too many subplots and you got confused about what was happening?
8. Was every subplot useful? Did it add to the overall story or did the author seem to stick it in just for complexity?
9. Pacing: Did the plot/subplots move fast enough to keep the reader's attention?
10. Resolution of conflict: Did the conflict and tension in the plots and subplots come to some reasonable ending? Or did the author leave us hanging, wondering what happened? When you finished, were there things that you still felt needed to be explained?

If the author did leave some conflict unresolved, did they indicate somewhere that future stories are pending?

D. Setting

1. Is there enough description of the background in the story to paint a picture that seems real enough for the reader? Did you feel that you were transported to 'that time or place'?
2. Was there too much description so modern readers might tend to become bored? Was the description written with clichés?
3. Did the author use good enough names for people, places, and things? Names help set the tone for a story. Were some names of people hard to keep track of? Did some names seem inconsistent with the character? Were the names too stereotypical?

"The reader would have a tough time imagining a two-fisted hero

named Elmer Small, but James Retief comes across just fine as a hero in Keith Laumer's stories. Similarly, Bubbles La Toure is hardly the name of a saintly nun, whereas Modesty Blaise is a sexy and intriguing name for a female counterpart of James Bond." - Ben Bova.

4. Did the author convince you that people in that time or place would behave that way?
5. Is the timing and order of events in the story consistent? For example, did John drive his new car on his vacation in chapter six but it wasn't until chapter ten that he bought it?

E. Characterization

1. Did the people seem real? Or were the main characters stereotypes or one-dimensional cardboard characters?
2. Were the facts about the characters accurate and consistent?

"It's very important in building characters to make sure your 'facts' are accurate and consistent. If you mention in chapter two that your sister's birth sign is Leo, and then in chapter twelve, you have her celebrating her birthday during a snowfall (unless she lives at the north pole [or in the southern hemisphere]), credibility will be lost. Even if the reader doesn't key in on exactly 'what' is wrong with the picture, he/she will have a disquieting sense that 'something' is." - Debra Littlejohn Shinder

3. People do not exist in a vacuum. They have family, friends, a job, worries, ambitions, etc. Did you get a sense of enough of these, but not too much, for the main characters?
4. Did you get a good picture of the culture, historical period, location, and occupation of the main character?
5. Did you get enough of a sense of paradoxes within the character? Enough of their emotions, attitudes, values?
6. Backstory: Were you distracted by too much background information of a character at one time? Did the author seem to dump a lot of information on the background of a character in one or two long speeches, or did we learn about that character here and there in smaller pieces?
7. Did the protagonist undergo some change in the story?
8. Could the story have been improved by adding more details of the protagonist's or another character's reputation; stereotyped beliefs; their network of relations to other people; habits and patterns; talents and abilities; tastes and preferences; or physical description of their body?

9. Does each chapter/page have enough sensory description? Can the reader easily sense what is happening physically to the main character? Were there enough words of sight, sound, touch, smell, or taste?
10. If the story used a person as the antagonist (villain), did they seem real too? Or did they seem so evil or one-sided that they were more like ideal villains? Did they have some redeeming qualities too? Did the villain seem to be a hero in their own mind?
11. Every reader has their own taste in how much characterization they like. Did this story have too little or too much characterization for you?

F. Dialogue

1. Did the words from the mouths of the people in the story seem consistent with their personalities?
2. Was there too much or not enough dialogue, in your opinion? Usually writers err on the side of not enough dialogue.
3. Did any character tend to talk in long monologues?
4. Were you able to sense the conflict, attitudes, and intentions of each character in their dialogue without the author telling you of these directly?
5. Were you able to detect any exchange of power that is sexual, physical, political, or social?
6. Did the dialogue seem easy to speak? Can you 'hear' it? If it sounds unusual, you might suggest that the writer try reading it aloud.
7. Does the dialogue seem TOO MUCH like normal speech, with too many incomplete sentences, pauses, restarts, profanity, cliches, etc. that it was distracting?
8. Did the author use dialect that was too heavy, making it difficult to read?
9. Does each character have their own speech rhythm, accent (if necessary), vocabulary, and even length of sentences?
10. In an exchange of conversation, can you easily tell who is speaking if you didn't have their names or gender attached to their sentences?

G. Point of View

1. Was a given chapter or section written from one person's point of view? Are there too many points of view in the story?
2. Did the story skip around between the first person or third person point of view (POV)? Were the changes in POV signaled clearly? There is nothing inherently wrong in changing POV, as long as it is not done too often.
3. If the story was written in the third person POV, as most stories are, did the story stick with the omniscient (all knowing) POV, use a limited POV (where we don't know everyone's motives except by clues from their words or actions), or did the author mix the two? Did the author's choice seem right to you?

"The key point is to get the reader to engage in a contract in which the writer offers: 'I'm not going to show you everything in the character's head because that would spoil the story for you. Instead, I will reveal things as we go along but I promise that I won't cheat.'" - Trevor Lawrence

4. When the POV changed, were you able to quickly sense who the new viewpoint was from?

H. Show versus tell

1. When in the POV of a character, did the author describe what his/her senses showed, e.g., sight, sound, smell, touch, taste? Or did the author just tell you the dinner was very good?
2. Did the author describe exactly how the people acted?
3. Was there too much abstract language where specific details would have made a greater impact on the reader?
4. Were there many instances of words like "very", "much", "really", "great", or "nice" when a more detailed description would have been more colorful?
5. Did we get the chance to interpret what the characters were feeling or did the author just tell us directly? For example, I once wrote: "Two weeks later, after more hours than he cared to remember, Jet felt very, very tired" and let it go at that and missed the opportunity to describe his fatigue instead.

I. Format of the text

1. Was it easy to read or were the paragraphs too long or the lines too long (not enough margin)?
2. Would it help to put blank lines between paragraphs? If the

piece is to be read on a computer monitor, adding a blank line between paragraphs will make it much easier for your critics to read. Note: when you submit the final version to print publishers, it is best to adhere to their manuscript format (no blank lines between paragraphs).

J. Grammar and spelling

1. Was the English readable? Were there too many grammatical errors, misuse of punctuation, run-on sentences, etc.?
2. Did you point out any typos or misspelling? How many times have you missed that in your writing because you passed over it without seeing it? Were there so many such errors that they made reading the piece difficult for you?
3. Did the author use too many exclamation points (one of my weaknesses)?
4. Were there any clichés in the narrative? For example, I once wrote "fruits of mother nature" and "thoughts burning in his mind", both of which are clichés. In dialogue clichés are okay if the character would speak that way.
5. Did the author use melodrama? For instance, I once wrote: "With tears in her eyes and barely able to speak, the head nurse dialed the Chief of Staff. There would be a lot of crying tonight." Can't you just hear the violins in the background?

K. Style

You may wish to comment on the style the story was written in, e.g., humorous, wordy, sparse, literary, homespun, technical, etc.

3. Some tips

- A. Let the author know if this is not your favorite type of story.

This may help them better understand your viewpoint. Things you do not like in the story may very well appeal to a fan of that genre.

- B. "But don't be afraid to critique something, even if it's 'outside your genre'. There are certain things that are important to ALL types of fiction, and any good writer/critiquer should be able to pick them out. I get some of my best critiques from people who 'never read science fiction'." - Joan Shapiro

- C. Read how other critiques are done.

"I think reading critiques in general -- perhaps about other unrelated stories -- can help a new critic see how it's done. For example, I agree to critique a story -- and because I don't know any better, I spout off personal preferences ("I don't like female heroines!" or "Do you really

have to use religious imagery? Religion turns me off." -- when those things may be central to the story and nothing more than my own tastes). Reading good critiques may help a newbie learn that a pro offers objective advice about more tangible problems (character development, grammar, advancing the plot, use of dialogue)." - Anthony Boyd

D. Consider the target readers.

Do you as a critic have a good idea of the type of readers this author was writing for? Before you criticize something that you may not like personally, ask yourself: who are the readers this author wants to write for? Is this appropriate for that audience?

E. Give your relevant experiences (optional).

If you have some experience or knowledge that is very relevant to a comment of yours, you might mention it. For instance, when I found the description of a device in a computer to be in error, I pointed it out to the author, suggested an alternative that would be more plausible to computer sophisticated readers, and qualified my comments by telling her of my years of computer experience. By the way, she thanked me.

F. Short stories versus novels.

1. When critiquing a short story, remember that every word must count. Are there sentences and/or paragraphs that don't appear to contribute substantially to the story and maybe should be thrown out?
2. Are there too many subplots? In short stories, one subplot may be okay, but two or more is often just too much.
3. Did the author go overboard on flashbacks? Generally in short stories, flashbacks should be used very sparingly.
4. Novels, however, not only allow more room for expression, talk, details, and moods, but readers of novel expect more.

4. Recommended reading

A. For fiction in general

1. *Characters and Viewpoint* by Orson Scott Card
2. *Creating Unforgettable Characters* by Linda Seder
3. *How to Write a Damn Good Novel* by James N. Frey
4. *How to Write a Damn Good Novel, II* by James N. Frey
5. *Art of Fiction* by John Gardner
6. *Becoming a Novelist* by John Gardner
7. *Writing the Breakout Novel* by Donald Maass

B. For science fiction

1. *How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy* by Orson Scott Card
2. *The Craft of Writing Science Fiction That Sells* by Ben Bova
3. *The Writer's Guide to Creating a Science Fiction Universe* by George Ochoa and Jeffrey Ogier
4. *How to Write Tales of Horror, Fantasy & Science Fiction* edited by J. N. Williamson

5. Acknowledgements

The author wishes to express sincere gratitude to the following people who have contributed valuable ideas to this document: Anthony Boyd, J. R. Lankford (Jilla), Trevor Lawrence, Pete Murphy, Christopher Olson, Joan Shapiro, and Debra Littlejohn Shinder.

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★This Month's New and Noteworthy★

★New and Noteworthy Publishing News★

Click on Title to Access Article

[Hachette Launches Social Media Sites](#)

[McMillan CEO responds to comments on E-pricing](#)

[Authors Guild Disagrees with Justice Dept. on Google Settlement](#)

[Katherine Heigl to play Stephanie Plum](#)

[Sales Down at HGB on Meyer Comp](#)

[Scribd's Mobile Plans](#)

[B&N Reports Decent Earnings on Sales Decline](#)

[Profits Rise at Harlequin](#)

[How Freebie Can Increase Print Sales](#)

Contests

Twenty-Seventh Annual Orange Rose Contest for Unpublished Writers

NEW! Electronic Entries for RWA Members who reside outside the continental United States

Deadline: April 10, 2010

Enter: Synopsis and beginning of unpublished manuscript (first 55 pages maximum)

Fees: OCCRWA Members: \$25.00, Other RWA Members: \$35.00

First Round Judges: 3 published authors

Top ten finalists will be announced July 10, 2010 and are chosen by their overall score, NOT by category. Finalist manuscripts are judged by two editors who acquire in the appropriate category for the finalist entry(ies) and are selected AFTER the finalists are determined.

Cash prizes: 1st - \$100, 2nd - \$75, 3rd - \$50, 4th - \$25

Rules/Entry Form and Sample Score Sheet:

www.occrrwa.org/orangerose.html. Questions: Contest Coordinator: Lynn Nissen. Email: orangerose@occrrwa.org or lnissenoccrrwa@yahoo.com.

The 2010 AI Blanchard Award, sponsored by Sisters in Crime--New England and New England Mystery Writers of America

Deadline: April 30, 2010

The rewards? A cash prize, publication in the next Level Best anthology, and free admission to Crime Bake!

GUIDELINES:

Harlequin Launches
Nintendo Books

Why Author Carrie Vaughn
Left Her Publisher

Authors Demand Higher
Ebook Royalties

Dorchester Sells Titles to
Harper Collins

Survey of Book-buying
Habits

Borders April 1 Loan
Deadline and Earnings
Estimates Due

IPAD arrives on April 3!

★Current Bestsellers★

Click on Name to Access List

Booksense Indie
Bestsellers

NY Times Bestsellers

Publishers Weekly

USA Today Bestsellers

Washington Post

Bestsellers

★Contact Us★

www.lsfwriters.com
contact@lsfwriters.com

Become a Friend on
Facebook!

Become a Fan on
Facebook!

–The story must be a crime story of no more than 5,000 words, by a New England author OR with a New England setting.

–The story must be previously unpublished (in print or electronically).

–Genres may include mystery, thriller, suspense, caper, and horror. (Please, no torture or killing of children or animals.)

HOW TO SUBMIT:

–Send your submissions to: _contest@crimebake.org
(mailto:contest@crimebake.org)

–Include "Al Blanchard Award" in the subject line. Without it, attachments will not be opened.

–Include your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address, as well as your story title and word count, in the main body of your e-mail. Do NOT include personal information in the body of your submission.

–Send your story as an attachment in Word format, double-spaced.

–We will promptly acknowledge the receipt of your submission. The attachment will be coded to insure anonymity and be sent on to the judges. Therefore, your name should not appear anywhere in the attachment.

–There is no entry fee.

–Limit of TWO stories per person.

–Deadline for submission is April 30, 2010.

THE PRIZE:

–\$100 cash award.

–Publication in Level Best Books' eighth Crime Fiction anthology.

–Admission to the Crime Bake Conference.

You do not need to attend the conference to win. Get those submissions in now! Sheila Connolly, Registrar, New England Crime Bake 2010

BREAKOUT NOVEL INTENSIVE - STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

For session: September 13-19, 2010 -- Charlotte, NC

Application deadline is April 30, 2010 (POSTMARKED).

Offered to both new and returning students, the Free Expressions Student Scholarship is presented to a writer, working in any genre of fiction, who has already developed significantly in his or her craft and who demonstrates a clear need for financial assistance. Both published and pre-published writers are invited to apply. The scholarship, valued at approximately \$1875, covers the cost of a student's tuition, workshop materials, lodging, and meals at the 2010 Breakout Novel Intensive in Charlotte, NC. Transportation and incidental expenses are the responsibility of the student. Scholarship recipient will be notified by May 30, 2010. For more information, please visit <http://www.free-expressions.com>.

The David Nathan Meyerson Fiction Prize

Deadline: May 1, 2010

Prize: \$1,000.00. Entry fee: \$25.00

The prize is open to writers who have not yet published a book of fiction, either a novel or collection of stories. Submissions must be no longer than 8,000 words. A \$25.00 reading fee must accompany each submission. Work should be printed without the author's name (if work is submitted online, please omit the author's name from the final "submission content text area"). Name and address should appear only on the cover letter or at the top of the online form. Submissions will not be returned. For list of

winners, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. No simultaneous or previously published work. Postmarked deadline for entry is May 1, 2010. (Winner will be announced in August.) The winning story will appear in **Southwest Review** Vol. 95, No. 4 (autumn), 2010. All entries will be considered for publication.

<http://smu.edu/southwestreview/Meyerson%20Contest.asp>

Sonora Review Contests

Short Short

Deadline May 1, 2010

A prize of \$1,000 and publication in Sonora Review is given annually for a short short story. Joe Wenderoth will judge. Submit a story of up to 1,000 words with a \$15 entry fee, which includes a copy of the Summer 2010 issue of Sonora Review, by May 1. Include a cover page with your full name and current address.

Short Essay Contest: \$1000 and publication in Sonora Review will be given for the first annual Concentrated Nonfiction Contest. The inaugural contest will be judged by Ander Monson. Submit a work of unpublished nonfiction, up to 1,000 words, by June 1st. Entry fee is \$15, which includes a copy of the Summer 2010 issue of Sonora Review. Include a cover letter with full name, title of work, mailing and email address. The author's name should not appear anywhere on the manuscript. By "concentrated nonfiction" we mean a short essay of any variety under 1000 words, not limited to any specific type of essay. In fact, we encourage creativity that projects the malleability of the form. We also are willing to publish multimedia essays as long as the main force of the essay is through language (and it is short). Send Submissions To:

Sonora Review. Contest

Department of English

University of Arizona

Tucson, AZ 85721

They'll have an online submission system for contests soon.

<http://sonorareview.com/contest/>

The Journal's Annual Short Story Contest

Deadline May 1, 2010

The Journal, the literary magazine of The Ohio State University, would like to announce the sixth annual *Journal* Short Story Contest. *The Journal* Short Story Contest offers \$1000 and publication of the winning story in *The Journal's* Autumn/Winter issue. All styles, subject matter, and forms are welcome. Simultaneous submissions are accepted provided immediate notice is given if work is accepted elsewhere. Please submit only previously unpublished fiction up to 7500 words. All manuscripts will be considered for publication. A reading fee of \$10 must accompany each manuscript (please make checks payable to *The Journal*). Manuscripts should be submitted anonymously with the title of the work and all contact information listed on a separate cover letter. Please be sure to also list your title on the manuscript itself. Manuscripts will not be returned. Please number pages and double-space all entries. Notification will be in late October. Send previously unpublished story along with reading fee to:

Short Story Contest

The Journal

Department of English
The Ohio State University
164 West 17th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43210

<http://english.osu.edu/research/journals/thejournal/shortstorycontest.cfm>

Fugue's Ninth Annual Prose & Poetry Contest

Deadline May 1, 2010

First place winners receive \$1000 and publication. Second and Third place winners receive publication.

Check back August 4, 2010 for announcement of the winners.

Judges: Junot Díaz (fiction) and Ilya Kaminsky (poetry)

1. Submissions may be sent via email only to prosesubmit@TuidahoDOTedu or poetrysubmit@TuidahoDOTedu. For each submission, please paste your name, contact information, and a short bio along with your work into the body of your email AND as an attachment. If you only send an attachment, we will not consider your work and you'll receive a note saying as much. The genre you are submitting for (Fiction or Poetry) and the word "contest" should be typed in the subject line.
2. A \$20 reading fee payment must accompany your submission and be made online, which guarantees consideration and a one-year subscription to the journal.
3. Submissions must be e-mailed by May 1, 2010.
4. Story submissions should not exceed 10,000 words in length.
5. Poetry submissions should not exceed 3 poems or 5 pages.

<http://www.uiweb.uidaho.edu/fugue/contest.html>

79th Annual *Writer's Digest* Competition

Entry Deadline: May 14, 2010.

GRAND PRIZE: \$3,000 cash and a trip to New York City to meet with editors or agents. *Writer's Digest* will fly you and a guest to The Big Apple, where you'll spend three days and two nights in the publishing capital of the world. While you're there, a *Writer's Digest* editor will escort you to meet and share your work with four editors or agents! Add \$5 per manuscript or poem to Entry Fee(s) on all entries submitted after May 14.

<http://www.writersdigest.com/annual>

Contest Diva

If you are a romance writer and interested in "Romance" Contests you can sign up for broadcasts at the following site:

<http://contestdivas.blogspot.com/>

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.

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

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Online Courses

BEGINNING WRITER WORKSHOPS

Beginning Writer Workshops offers online writing workshops for writers of all fiction genres, as well as non-fiction and memoir writing. These monthly online workshops, taught by experts with a proven track record, and are designed to help all writers build successful careers in their chosen area. Courses begin in September and are \$25 per course. Check out this year's selection at <http://www.BeginningWriterWorkshops.com>.

The Tiny Art of Elevator Pitches: How to Craft Them and How to Use Them

April 5 – 16: REGISTRATION ENDS APRIL 1

Description: Every word counts! If you've ever considered attending a conference, you've probably heard the term "elevator pitch," which is nothing more than a bare-bones summary of your novel. But reducing tens of thousands of words down to 30 or less can be difficult, daunting, and confusing. What to leave in? What to ignore? How to give it punch and drama? Instructor Carrie Lofty will share the elevator pitches that got her in the door, as well as her techniques for making them both concise and effective. We'll look at the four plot arcs of any romance novel--hero, heroine, external, and romantic--and how to weave all four into the most powerful elevator pitch possible. Each student will be encouraged to share his or her pitch(es), and to identify the most important themes, details and character traits--the good stuff that will set your work apart. We'll also discuss how elevator pitches can help your career: from query letters and off-hand conversations, to finding your hook and focusing your writing before you even start!

Bio: Born in California and raised in the Midwest, Carrie Lofty met her husband in England —the best souvenir! Since earning her master's in history, she's been devoted to raising two precocious daughters and writing romance. Her January release, *Scoundrel's Kiss*, featuring a Spanish warrior monk and the troubled woman he's sworn to protect, is the sequel to her Robin Hood-themed debut, *What a Scoundrel Wants*.

Elements Member \$9, Non-member \$15

To register for this workshop click [here](#).

Sex & Violence (Without the Sex) and Alpha Male Warriors with Bob Mayer

April 4, 2010 – April 18, 2010

\$15 for PI Members; \$20 for Non-members

Writing action scenes requires being in real time and real people. This presentation will focus both on how to write action scenes effectively, but also understanding the subtext to the scene in terms of reality, personalities, and effect on plot and character. Tactics, weapons, hand-to-hand, etc. will be covered. The mindset of a warrior (and the coward)

approaching and involved in action scenes will be discussed. Lessons will be presentations with questions to be asked afterward and answered in next lesson.

BIO: NY Times bestselling author Bob Mayer has 40 books published. He has over three million books in print and is in demand as a team-building, life-change, and leadership speaker and consultant. Bob graduated from West Point and served in the military as a Special Forces A-Team leader and a teacher at the JFK Special Warfare Center & School. He earned a black belt in martial arts while living in the Orient. His latest book is *Who Dares Wins: The Green Beret Way to Conquer Fear & Succeed*. He teaches novel writing and improving the author via his Warrior-Writer program. For more information see his [website](#).

To Pay Online : Using PayPal (PayPal), send payment to workshops@passionateink.org with "WORKSHOP – Sex and Violence" as the subject. In the "message" section, include Your Name and Email Address. For more information: workshopchair@passionateink.org

Section 1.01 Cost: \$15 for Passionate Ink Members, \$20 for non-members. To pay by check, print this page and send with a check to Passionate Ink Workshops

c/o Robin L. Rotham, P.O. Box 2412, Norfolk, NE 68701.

Fixing Your Fiction

April 11-24, 2010 - Register Before April 7.

Cost: FREE to FTHRW members; \$15.00 for all others

Course Description: Learn how to edit your own manuscript with tips and techniques to find what's slowing you down. Attendees will be invited to submit one scene for editing.

About the Instructor: Jeannie Eddy is a professional freelance editor/ghostwriter who has seen her clients go on to win contests, get agents and get published. She works on any genre doing line and conceptual editing. She is currently giving classes in Fixing Your Fiction and Catching the Web Wave, and recently edited an anthology for the World Horror Convention and two other horror anthologies.

FTHRW Members: FREE; FTHRW Non-Members: \$15.00

http://fthrw.com/workshops/wkshop_2010_04.php

All workshops are conducted via email. Non-members are welcome to participate in workshops. For more information, e-mail [workshops @ fthrw.com](mailto:workshops@fthrw.com). Please use subject header FTHRW WORKSHOP Thank you for your interest in the workshops offered online through From The Heart Romance Writers.

EDITING, LAYERING, REVISING AND ALL THAT NECESSARY FICTION JAZZ (for the brave-hearted)

Mon., April 5, 2010 – Mon. April 19, 2010

Instructor: Dianne Drake

At long last, you've finished that book, put the last period at the end of the last sentence, printed it out, turned off the computer, and poured yourself a celebratory margarita. You're done. Hurrah! Right? Probably not. If you haven't gone back, done your editing, done your layering, you're about half way there. Meaning, put down that margarita, turn on the computer, and go back to work. You've more work to do. Writing doesn't get done in a first draft, and most good writing doesn't get done in the third, fourth or fifth.

It's a long process – with this class learn the tools to shorten it. And then, when you're done, you're safe to pick up that margarita glass until you get the call from an editor who says... "Revisions!" Come learn tips from an author who actually loves doing all that jazz (e.g. revisions)! To register: www.beginningwriterworkshops.com

Prose and Contests: Everything You Wanted To Know About Contests But Were Afraid To Ask by Amy Atwell

April 5-30, 2010

\$20 BDRWA members/\$25 non-members (Three Week Class)

Overwhelmed by the number of writing contests out there? Unsure whether to enter? Unclear about why you should enter? This workshop is geared for unpublished writers seeking feedback and/or a chance to final in the hundreds of writing contests offered through RWA chapters. Contests offer opportunities for feedback from published authors, agents and editors. But contests cost money and valuable writing time. This interactive lecture format will include handouts, examples and open Q&A to help writers understand what they can expect to gain from entering a contest. We'll provide an overview of the contest process, sources for researching contests, help writers identify their motives for entering a contest, and even give tips on preparing your contest entry.

Amy's Bio: 2008 Golden Heart® finalist Amy Atwell has experienced every aspect of writing contests. Having entered over 60 contests over the past ten years, her manuscripts have won the Winter Rose, Great Expectations, Beacon, Golden Gateway, Heart of Outreach contests and Award of Excellence. She has over 25 contest finals to her credit, including The Maggie, The Sheila and The Daphne du Maurier contests. Amy's also judged numerous contests including Romance Through The Ages, Great Expectations, The Golden Pen, The Barclay Sterling, More Than Magic, and she coordinated the 2009 Golden Pen Contest. In addition to her writing, Amy runs the WritingGIAM community of loops to help "PRO equivalent and up" writers achieve their writing goals. A former theater professional, Amy's had two plays commissioned and produced. During her tenure as education director at Georgia Shakespeare Festival, Amy taught workshops to middle and high school students and developed and led a state accredited program for English teachers teaching Shakespeare's plays in the classroom. Amy holds an MA in Speech Communication and has worked as a writer/editor for Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the National Park Service, and Virginia Tech. Read more about Amy at her website: <http://www.amyatwell.com>

FMI: email mrsgodiva@comcast.net or go to our website: www.bdrwa.com check out online classes.

The From the Heart Chapter of RWA Presents Fixing Your Fiction with Jeannie Eddy

April 11-24, 2010

***Registration Deadline:* April 7, 2010**

***Cost:* FREE to FTHRW members; \$15.00 for all others**

Course Description: *Learn how to edit your own manuscript with tips and techniques to find what's slowing you down. *Attendees will be invited to submit one scene for editing.

About the Instructor: Jeannie Eddy is a professional freelance

editor/ghostwriter who has seen her clients go on to win contests, get agents and get published. She works on any genre doing line and conceptual editing. She is currently giving classes in Fixing Your Fiction and Catching the Web Wave, and recently edited an anthology for the World Horror Convention and two other horror anthologies.

For more information please visit

http://fthrw.com/workshops/wkshop_2010_04.php

All workshops are conducted via email. Non-members are welcome to participate in workshops. For more information, e-mail workshops @ fthrw.com. Please use subject header FTHRW WORKSHOP Thank you for your interest in the workshops offered online through From The Heart Romance Writers.

Tapping Into the Secrets Behind the Success of Nora Roberts, Stephen King, and J.K. Rowling and Every Best Seller and Blockbuster Film

April 12 to May 8, 2010

Enrollment Information at <http://www.occwa.org/onlineclassApril10.html>

COST: \$20 for OCC members, \$30 for non-members

If you have specific questions, email occwaonlineclass@yahoo.com

ABOUT THE CLASS: What does Nora Roberts, Stephen King, George Lucas and all of those other blockbuster creators know about writing that makes them the mega stars that they are? Learn about the 18 scenes that every story contains, no matter its length or genre. Find out how to identify your character's mental gender and what impact that has upon readers. Discover how your character's arc drives your story and how your story drives your character's arc. Learn the four throughlines of every story and how to weave them together. Every successful story contains characters who come alive for the reader. Every successful story is built on a solid, easy-to-master, story structure that works every single time. Every successful story lives on in the hearts and minds of readers because their authors have mastered the simple secrets needed to turn them into writing super stars. And you can, too.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR: Award winning writer, poet, journalist, filmmaker Carol Hughes has a lot more in common with Jason Bourne than Matt Damon. But Matt Damon is definitely cuter. So she's now turning her real life adventures into fictional stories – much to the consternation of former colleagues. *Enrollment Information at*

<http://www.occwa.org/onlineclassApr10.html>

COST: \$20 for OCC members, \$30 for non-members

Understanding Scene: How Goal, Motivation, Conflict, and Disaster Factor into It

May 3 - 30, 2010

\$25 BDRWA members/\$30 non-members (4 week class)

According to Dwight Swain, author of *Techniques of the Selling Writer*, a scene is identified by action. The sequel is the reaction. But what does this mean in terms of your writing? What goes into a scene? Heck, what IS a scene? This online course will take you through the process of understanding the elements of a scene and will introduce the concept of sequel. You will use your favorite fiction to identify how authors use Goal, Motivation, Conflict, and Disaster, as well as write your own scene(s) using

these crucial 4 elements. You will come away with a PDF file detailing everything discussed in the course.

Instructor Bio: Misa Ramirez is the author of the Lola Cruz mystery series: Living the Vida Lola (January '09) and Hasta la Vista, Lola! (February 2010) from St. Martin's Minotaur. A former middle and high school teacher, and current CEO and CFO for La Familia Ramirez, this blonde-haired, green-eyed, proud to be Latina-by-Marriage girl loves following Lola on her many adventures. Whether it's contemplating belly button piercings or visiting nudist resorts, she's always up for the challenge. Misa is hard at work on a new women's fiction novel, a middle grade series, is published in Woman's World Magazine and Romance Writers Report, and has a children's book published. Read more about Misa at her website: <http://misaramirez.com> For more info: www.bdrwa.com click on online classes or contact mrsgodiva@comcast.net.

CREATING A WEB PRESENCE FOR THE TECHNO-CHALLENGED May 10 - 23, 2010

\$15 BDRWA members/\$20 non-members

A self-confessed techno-klutz and tightwad, Anne Marie Novark will explain how to create do-it-yourself websites for free or on the cheap. Get the down and dirty regarding domain names and hosting services. Learn about blogging, Facebook, MySpace and more. The class will consist of five lessons every other day over the space of two weeks with handouts loaded with resources and information. "Believe me, if I can set up an eye-catching, cost-effective web presence, then so can you!"

Ann Marie's Bio: Anne Marie Novark is a Texas girl, born and raised. She loves to read and write about men and women falling in love, overcoming life's obstacles, and living happily ever after. She writes spicy Contemporary Western novels, as well as Regency historicals. Anne Marie is published with The Wild Rose Press. Visit her at www.annemarienovark.com.

For more info: www.bdrwa.com click on online classes or contact mrsgodiva@comcast.net.

Snakebite Scenes and Hollywood Plots: Enhancing Action and Emotion in Romance

May 3 - 17, 2010

Instructor: Carrie Lofty

Sponsored by : Heart of Dixie, RWA (www.heartofdixie.org)

Cost: \$20

Class Description: You have the beginning. You know how it should end. But what to do with those hundreds of pages in the middle? Carrie Lofty, author of sexy, adventurous historical romances for Kensington, will demonstrate how action can make your novel more exciting and more emotional. Use Carrie's so-called "snakebite scenes" to help characters acknowledge their deeper passions and bond over moments of danger or everyday drama, and analyze films and novels to see how Hollywood tells rip-roaring, action-packed stories. For plotters, pantsers, and everyone in between, this course can unblock your creativity and help you power through that draft, adding action and heart to every page.

Instructor Bio: Born in California and raised in the Midwest, Carrie Lofty found the love of her life in England . She earned her MA in history from

Ohio State University with a thesis on Old West legends in post-Civil War society. Now she writes, raises two precocious elementary-aged daughters, and manages Unusual Historicals, a blog she founded in 2006 to celebrate romances set in unusual times and places. Carrie's debut, *WHAT A SCOUNDREL WANTS* (Zebra: 12/2008), is the hot, adventurous tale of Will Scarlet and his dangerous lady love. Register at www.heartofdixie.org by May 1. Questions? Contact the online coordinator at online@heartofdixie.org

**Special workshop to fund the Passionate Ink Perseverance Fund* –
WRITING EROTIC ROMANCE with Angela Knight
May 3, 2010 – May 31, 2010**

In this class, New York Times bestselling author Angela Knight will discuss the techniques of writing erotic romance she used to make the leap to New York publication. She'll cover creating heroes heroines and villains for erotic romance, as well as how to structure a plot that combines sexuality, sensuality and conflict to create a story readers can't put down. She will discuss creating intense internal, external and romantic plots for erotic romance, as well as how to write multiple love scenes in such a way that each one is different and advances the plot.

Bio: Angela Knight is the New York Times bestselling author of books for Berkley, Red Sage, Changeling Press, and Loose Id. Angela lives in South Carolina with her husband, Michael, a polygraph examiner and hostage negotiator for the county's Sheriff's Office. You can find out more about Angela at her website – <http://www.angelasknights.com/>
For more information: workshopchair@passionateink.org
To Pay Online : Using PayPal (PayPal), send payment to perseverance@passionateink.org with "WORKSHOP – Perseverance" as the subject. In the "message" section, include Your Name and Email Address. Cost: \$25 To pay by check, print this page and send with a check to Passionate Ink Workshops – Perseverance c/o Robin L. Rotham P.O. Box 2412 Norfolk, NE 68701

*100% of all entry fees from this workshop will go to fund the Passionate Ink Perseverance Fund.

**Airing Dirty Laundry—Use Family Stories, Eavesdropping, and Cable TV to Create Writing Income
June 7—21, 2010**

CLASS DESCRIPTION: Airing Dirty Laundry offers information and tips on how to create a source of outside income by writing short stories for the confessions and romance magazines. This two-week workshop is geared for writers who want extra income while waiting to sell their first book, are between royalty checks or simply want an extra income stream. This course takes students step by step through writing a confession. It begins with learning the market, developing hooks and compelling story lines and structuring a story properly. By the end of the course, students should have a story ready for submission. Additionally, participants will be given the opportunity to submit the first few pages of a story they start during the class and have the pages critiqued by published writers. Two stories will be selected toward the end of the class to receive a full critique.

INSTRUCTOR BIO: Marilyn Puett has sold over thirty stories and a half-

dozen short feature articles to the confessions and romance magazines. She has also sold to an e-zine called [Chick Lit Review](#) and an anthology titled, appropriately enough, [I Confess](#). She appears in both the 2008 and 2009 [Bylines Writers' Desk Calendar](#) and her article "Short Shorts—Not Just a Fashion Statement" was featured on the Writing for Dollars website. In November 2008 she took the NaNoWriMo challenge and wrote 50,000 words on a book she started way too many years ago. When Silhouette Special Edition announced an online pitch contest several months later, she hunkered down, finished the book and submitted a synopsis to the contest. One of eleven finalists, she received a request for her full manuscript, putting her a tiny step closer to the dream of being published in novel format. The book was ultimately rejected but is awaiting revision and submission to a different line. Marilyn is a member of Heart of Dixie RWA and serves RWA on both the local and national levels. A founding member of The Writing Playground, a website for aspiring writers (www.writingplayground.com), she lives in her empty nest in north Alabama and dotes on her granddaughter.

Cost: \$20 - Submit the payment via Paypal below or mail to the address listed. All payments for a workshop **must** be received by the registration deadline—**June 5th**. Please email the [Online Class Coordinator](#) with questions.

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

The 2010 Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop at the University of Dayton Thurs., April 15 to Sat., April 17, 2010

The Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop is a one-of-a-kind national resource for humor and human interest writing. No other organization has targeted humor and human interest writers as its primary educational focus.

The workshop registration fee is \$375 and includes all workshop sessions as well as two continental breakfasts, two lunches, and three dinners.

Registration is now open. To register, follow this link:

<https://www.regonline.com/bombeck2010>

RT BookReviews Convention

April 28 – May 2, 2010

Columbus, OH

The Annual RT BOOKLOVERS Convention is brought to you by RT BOOK REVIEWS the magazine for fiction lovers with over 250 new books reviewed in every issue, author interviews, book news, gossip and much more! Join close to 1000 attendees at this long-running, educating and entertaining conference. For more information, please visit www.rtconvention.com

MERWA (Maine RWA) 4th Annual Writer's Retreat

Friday, May 14 - Saturday, May 15

Limited seating for an intimate experience and great networking - we have filled to capacity the last three years, *so register early*.

Portland, Maine (off 295 about 2 hours north of Boston)
\$65.00 (or join MERWA for \$30 and save \$5 on retreat registration)
Featured Speaker, Terry McLaughlin. multi-published Harlequin Super Romance author, presenting two Saturday workshops, "First Kiss Scenes with Blush Free Writing: Crafting the Love Scene" and "Voice: "What It Is; What It Isn't." Friday night: Special Program* Maine Ghost Hunters, paranormal investigation team, workshop, "Maine Ghost Hunters: We face Your Fears," an in depth review of basic team processes with a focus on the scientific approach to discovering what lurks behind the veil. MGH client-centered methods toward investigating possibly paranormally charged environments serve to bring comfort, understanding, and awareness to those who seek their services. *Saturday workshops* include "Blending Paranormal with Other Genres" presented by Joyce Lamb, Berkley author of COLD MIDNIGHT, a romantic suspense, and the upcoming paranormal romantic suspense trilogy beginning with TRUE VISION in June, followed by TRUE COLORS and TRUE CALLING, and "Brainstorming" facilitated by Diane Amos, a Harlequin, Five Star and Wild Rose Press author. This session is a big hit each year. Retreat attendees bring WIP or ideas for new work to the session. Attendees provide great ideas and guidance. *Editor Pitches:* Cynthia Thomas, Lyrical Press, pitches on Saturday afternoon.
Retreat Registration: checks can be sent to MERWA - Writers' Retreat, PO Box 6478, Brunswick, ME 04011 - or pay through PayPal on the MERWA website <http://mainerwa.com>. Retreat brochures (with workshop and registration details) can be downloaded from the site, as well. Registration includes Friday and Saturday workshops and Saturday lunch. Many choose to stay Saturday night and go out to dinner as a group.
Hotel registration: a room block under MERWA with special rates is available if registering by April 24, 2010. * \$109, double occupancy, plus tax per night, includes Friday evening manager's reception and full breakfast. Call 1-800-362-2779. Mention MERWA to get the special retreat rate. Hotel features Jacuzzi, lap pool, fitness room, business center, bar and restaurant open until 10 p.m., and huge lobby with tables and sofas, perfect for writing and networking.

CAPITAL REGION Romance Writers Conference June 12

Speakers Jenna Peterson and Caridad Pineiro

Registration includes Friday night reception, continental breakfast and buffet lunch on Saturday, all four workshops, handouts, and door prizes. Also included is editor/agent appointments and admission to Saturday's book signing/book sale event. Please go [here](#) for more registration information. Accommodations: This year's event will be at the beautiful [Hilton Garden Inn](#), located in Troy, New York. Overnight accommodations are \$99/night as long as you reserve by May 12, 2010. Use code CRRC when making your reservation.

THRILLERFEST V July 7-10

Grand Hyatt, New York City, New York

Thrillerfest has several different packages and tracks for aspiring and published authors. Please visit the website at <http://www.thrillerwriters.org/thrillerfest/> for additional details.

RWA National Conference July 28-31, Nashville, TN

Registration for RWA's 30th Annual Conference is now open. RWA members who register by May 19 pay the \$425 early member registration fee. Visit www.rwa.org to register online, to learn more about the conference, or for hotel information.

Please consult the [Conferences & Events section](#) of the RWA site first before contacting RWA (conference@rwa.org or 832-717-5200, Ext. 128).

Note regarding hotel reservations: The Gaylord charges one night's room fee as a deposit when the room is booked. Also, questions about or changes to hotel reservations should be directed to the Gaylord at 1-888-777-6779. The RWA staff does not have access to the hotel's reservation system and cannot make any changes.

Promo Opportunities

Ozark Romance Authors Deadline May 1

A Non-RWA Chapter is seeking 50-60 stuffers, books for their conference. Before May mail your promotional items to: Beth Carter, 5263 E. Farm Road 174, Rogersville, MO 65742

RomanceUniversity.org is dedicated to helping writers establish and advance their careers, introducing readers to a variety of authors, and delving into the ever-inscrutable male mind. It's the sassy brainchild of ADRIENNE GIORDANO, KELSEY BROWNING, and TRACEY DEVLIN. RU currently is taking applications for the position of junior faculty member. Get deets and apply here: <http://bit.ly/aTn8kj>

Los Angeles Romance Authors is looking for promo items for goodie bags for our annual one day workshop on May 15th. New York Times Bestselling author Bob Mayer is the workshop instructor/speaker. We expect 50 to 60 people. Please send your promotional items **by May 7th** to:

Tammi Flora (LARA Workshop)
625 The City Drive, Suite 310
Orange, CA 92868

We will also have raffle baskets. We accept books, cds, other items and baskets themselves for this fund raiser. Items should be sent to Tamera at the above address by May 7th to ensure timely receipt. For more information on the workshop, please go to: <http://www.lararwa.com/workshop.html>. If you have any questions, please contact Tammi Flora at programming@lararwa.com.

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

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Editor/Agent News

Caroline Hardman has moved to the Christopher Little Literary Agency as an agent. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Jessica Waters, Courtney Moran, Courtney Turco and **Clare Swanson** to have all been promoted and are now assistant editors at Random House. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Aliza Fogelson has been promoted to senior editor, **Angelin Borsics** has been promoted to assistant editor, **Ashley Phillips** has been promoted to assistant editor at Clarkson Potter. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

At Random House Children's Books, **Michele Burke** has been promoted to editor and **Allison Wortche** has been promoted to associate editor. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Don Fehr joins Trident Media Group as a literary agent. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Leah Miller has been promoted to associate editor at Free Press. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

At Harlequin, executive editor of HQN and Luna **Tracy Farrell** has resigned after 25 years with the company. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

YA author and agent **Mandy Hubbard** has joined the D4EO Literary Agency where she will concentrate on YA and middle-grade fiction. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Jane Fleming is leaving her job as editor at Penguin Press to start freelance editing. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

David Patterson has left Holt, where he was an editor, and starts today at Foundry Literary + Media as an agent. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Alex Littlefield has joined Basic Books as associate editor. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

At St. Martin's, **Marc Resnick** has been promoted to executive editor. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Peggy Hageman has joined the Overlook Press as an associate editor. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Sherri Vanderveen has joined Toronto's Helen Heller Agency, specializing in literary fiction. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Ben Greenberg has been promoted to senior editor at Grand Central Publishing. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Selina Mclemore is now a Senior Editor and second-in-command to **Amy Pierpont** at Grand Central Publishing.

Jessica Rothenberg has been promoted to Senior Editor at Razorbill, an imprint of Penguin Young Readers Group. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Sally van Haitsma has formed her own agency. She represents commercial and literary fiction, narrative non-fiction, current affairs, pop culture and business. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Matt Martz has been promoted to associate editor at St. Martin's. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

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Publisher News

HCI Books has announced a new line, Vows, combining romance and memoir, to launch in October 2010. They dub it "reality-based romance," producing novels "based on personal interviews with real couples whose love stories read like the best in romantic fiction." *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

From the co-authors of the highly popular CHRISTMAS MIRACLES, Cecil Murphey and Marley Gibson are seeking submissions for their follow-up book, CHRISTMAS SPIRIT, to be published by St. Martin's Press in the fall of 2011, with a foreword by *New York Times* bestselling author, Debbie Macomber. The project seeks true stories that emphasize the significance of the Christmas season. We get caught up in the busy-ness of the season—the shopping, the family drama, and the event planning—that we lose sight of the true meaning of Christmas. Sometimes, through God's grace or what some call a twist of fate, we're able to step back and grasp the real meaning of Christmas and our lives are enriched. This is a great opportunity for authors of all kinds to participate in a successful compilation. Please visit <http://www.christmasspiritbook.com> for more information on guidelines and how to submit.

Deadline for stories is May 1, 2010

Carina Press, the e-book press of HQN, is looking for historical romances. Details are at:

<http://riskyregencies.blogspot.com/2010/01/carina-press-call-for-submissions.html>

and here's the link to their submission guidelines:

<http://carinapress.com/submission-guidelines/>

Realms of Fantasy has scheduled a special "Women in Fantasy" issue for August 2011, and the editors are looking for contributions now. If you are a woman who writes short fantasy fiction, this issue is for you. Stories should be no longer than 10,000 words. Payment is 6 cents a word for the first 7500 words and 4 cents a words thereafter. The deadline for submissions is November 15, 2010. Check their [writer's guidelines](#). *Courtesy Cynthia*

Sterling.

Dear friends, colleagues, writers I've exchanged two e-mails with at most, Sir Ben Kingsley, and that really tan guy from Golden Corral, Have you ever seen a void in the world and think the only way to fill it is to create a bi-annual humor journal that will expose the masses to the finest and freshest of literary humor? Well, so have I. Thus, I have hatched Kugelmass.

What is Kugelmass? Ah. It's stories and essays. It's funny, what I'll call ambitiously humorous. It's print. Twice a year. Our mighty group of contributing editors: Steve Almond, Daniel Nester, Dan Pope and Daniel Asa Rose. The first issue is planned for early 2011. We are now wide open for submissions and want to get the word out in a big way. Be sure to check out the website: firewheel-editions.org/kugelmass/ and if you or anyone you know might have work that you think might fit, please send it (submissions@firewheel-editions.org) or pass this message along.

The **International Thriller Writers** are putting out a call for submissions for a Thriller Anthology. You can read more about it here:

<http://us1.campaign-archive.com/?u=110228af76af71c6de2847e2a&id=9ba436029a&e=efb572e90e>

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