



A Proud Chapter of
Romance Writers of America®

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WELCOME TO CENTRAL OHIO FICTION WRITERS

COFW's April presentation was on "How to Create Your Own Author Newsletter" by Mel Jolly of Author Rx.

Do you have an author newsletter? Don't know where to start? Read on!

For more great articles and news about your fellow COFWers, see inside.

CONTENTS

1. Minutes of COFW Meeting, April 16, 2016
2. PAN Spotlight: Saralee Etter
3. March Speaker: Mel Jolly: "How To Create Your Own Author Newsletter"
4. COFW Authors Bring Romance to Ohioana Book Festival
5. Article: A Tale of Two Desk Chairs
6. Article: What Is Our Business?
7. Works In Progress
8. Coming in May: RWA Documentary "Love Between the Covers"
9. COFW Leadership Contact List

Central Ohio Fiction Writers (COFW) <http://cofwevents.org> is a non-profit professional association for romance writers and a local chapter of the Romance Writers of America (RWA) organization that offers monthly meetings. Since 1987, COFW has promoted excellence in fiction writing, encouraging writers to grow and gain knowledge in their craft. Members provide a networking system to share knowledge and support the goal of becoming published.

MINUTES OF THE COFW BUSINESS MEETING 4-16-2016

by Julia Blaine

Central Ohio Fiction Writers met at Norwich Township Fire Station #83, 4283 Davidson Road, Hilliard, Ohio.

Attending were, Jane Conner, Julia Blaine, Saralee Etter, Andrea McConnell, Marcia Anderson, Mel Jolly, Nancy White, Linda Rice, Stacy McKittrick, Aleta Dobson, Becky Barker, Alicia Anthony, Susan Heino, Jean Estridge, Sheri Atkins, Robin Giannakopoulos and Bev Randall. Others may have arrived later.

Jane brought the meeting to order, reminding us that the presentation today would be by Mel Jolly on "How to Create Your Own Newsletter." She reminded us to turn off our cell phones, make a name tag, and to sign the "Works in Progress" sheet being passed around. She asked members and visitors to introduce themselves.

The Minutes and Treasurer's Report from March were approved.

Saralee volunteered to do the recap of Mel Jolly's presentation for the newsletter.

Jane reported on Incentives:

Paulette Forshey has been accepted as a PAN member.

Sheri Adkins' latest YA tentatively titled, "The Underwear Games," finaled in the Golden Heart. This is her third final in the YA category. Is the third time a charm? There was a discussion of how the high-school game featured in her book has evolved. Sheri insists that this new version is a real event in some locations.

Jeanne Estridge was a winner in 2015 in the Paranormal category of the Golden Heart. She will be presenting the award in this category this year at the RWA Conference.

Alicia Anthony's thesis for her MFA program was accepted. It is a portion of her novel tentatively titled "Inheritance." She will graduate from the program in June.

Susan G. Heino is part of a multi-author compilation being released on April 15. "The Road Home" is a novella written by authors of Red Door Reads. This group asked readers what they would like to see in a story and these stories reflect the ideas chosen. Winners received a prize. Each author wrote a chapter and the tale came together nicely. Red Door Reads has a tradition of doing something special on Tax Day. Readers can visit www.RedDoorReads.com for the first chapter. They will just follow the links from chapter to chapter.

Julia Blaine has a new Regency available on Amazon Kindle, "Adrian's Pearl." It deals with the wounded, those rejected by Regency society and with the veterans returning from the Napoleonic War.



COFW MEETING MINUTES (CONT'D)

These veterans have the same problems as veterans today. Julia likes it so much she wishes the characters were real people! Julia also learned much more about Face Book at a class at the library in Grove City.

Robin and Donna will participate in this year's Ohioana event.

Donna will make a presentation at the end of April at the Medina Square Library in Medina, OH. She was also inducted into her High School Hall of Fame.

Donna reported on RWA news. There is a continuing discussion about diversity at RWA. There was discussion regarding how diversity needs to be reflected in our own contest.

Nancy says the Ignite the Flame contest is on schedule. She asked for 2 more category coordinators. Jean Etheridge and Sandra Kachurek volunteered.

Susan reminded us of the PAN event, the movie **"Love Between the Covers"** which will be shown to members and non-members on **May 14** at the Norwich Township Building (5181 NW Parkway, Hilliard, Ohio).

The movie is subtitled *"Pulling Back the Covers on a Billion Dollar Industry."* It tracks celebrated writers and newbie authors in a documentary about the Romance Novel business. The full-length film, made over several years, is well reviewed and a winner at several film festivals.

There is a slight possibility that the venue may be changed due to construction at the NW Parkway location. Keep abreast of COFW information at www.cofwevents.org. Jane will make every effort to update everyone.

The Newsletter deadline is April 22. Saralee is looking for craft articles. Please give her information on your new releases.

Respectfully submitted, Julia Blaine with the help(?) of Patch the Cat



PAN AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT

by Susan Gee Heino,
COFW Published Author Network Liaison

The Published Author Network Spotlight shines on Saralee Etter this month. Saralee is currently our Vice President of Communications and serves as COFW Newsletter editor. She has also filled this role in 2005 and 2006, and she was the 2009 Ignite the Flame Coordinator for our chapter.



Saralee is a retired lawyer and has worked as a newspaper journalist, a non-profit association communications coordinator, and a public relations representative for several central Ohio public school districts.

Q: So, Saralee, when did you join COFW and what brought you to the group?

A: I joined COFW in 2001 because I wanted to learn to write fiction, and the RWA was the only writer's organization back then that accepted aspiring authors. At that time, the Mystery Writers Association and the Science Fiction Writers Association did not accept anyone who was not already published. At COFW, everyone I met was so welcoming and helpful, and I made many good friends. I enjoyed the friendship and the learning opportunities that COFW afforded.

Q: When did you first publish and when did you achieve PAN or PAN Provisional Status?

A: I published my first book, a traditional Regency romance titled ***A Limited Engagement***, in 2007. But the publisher, Ellora's Cave, did not offer an advance and so until recently I was not eligible for PAN status. Now I am a PAN provisional.

Q: What do you love most about the specific sub-genres you write in?

A: I love traditional Regency romance because I grew up reading Georgette Heyer. I love her combination of humor, history and romance. Time travel through historical novels is one of my favorite pastimes. I also love cozy mysteries, because

the mystery gives the reader the chance to explore a new world through the sleuth's investigations. I like writing stories that combine history, mystery and romance.

Q: What would be the best advice you could share with COFW members who are still hoping to achieve PAN status?

A: Concentrate on writing the best book you can. Write the stories you love. Your passion for your characters and stories will communicate to the reader, and that is the best way to achieve writing success.



PAN AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: SARALEE ETTER (CONT'D)

Q: Are you traditionally published with a large press? Small press? Self-published? A combination of these? Tell us what you've learned through your experience and what has worked for you.

A: After having two full-length novels and two novellas published by Ellora's Cave's Cerridwen Press/Blush and Cotillion lines, I am now pursuing independent publication (self-publishing). I have my own vision for the types of stories I want to write. I like having control over the production and pricing of my own books. Being an introvert, I like working on my own and on my own schedule.



Q: What do you wish someone had warned you about before you became published?

A: I wish I had known, or understood, exactly what a publisher will do for an author. A publisher is responsible for editing the book, providing cover art, and providing a means of distribution for an author's books. However, in my experience, publishers do not provide marketing support for an author. That is the author's responsibility—and I didn't understand that part. I don't think I'm alone there. It's my impression that many authors don't reach a wide enough audience because they are not prepared to market their own work once it is published. At present, I'm working on building an audience for the types of stories that I want to write.

Q: How important do you feel goal-setting is to your success? What advice would you give regarding how to set attainable goals and how to measure your progress?

A: Goal-setting is crucial to any author's success. How else will you know if you've arrived, if you haven't decided upon your destination? Success takes many forms. Some authors want to be best sellers. Some authors want to make a lot of money. Some authors want recognition. My goal is to write stories that I love, that will provide enough money to provide for my family's needs and wants. I also want to feel that people enjoyed my stories and want to come back for more. A number of years ago, I took a course called Author MBA (*no longer available*), which really helped me define my goals for my writing career.



Q: Time management can be a real issue for many busy writers. What have you done to achieve balance in this area?

A: I am a big believer in learning through online courses. Recently, I took a course on time management for self-published authors which was offered by [Udemy.com](https://www.udemy.com/). In the course, I learned about using the [Pomodoro](https://pomodoro.es/) method, setting daily schedules, and establishing a routine. I also use the [Rescue Time](https://www.rescuetime.com/) app, which tracks how I spend all my time on

PAN SPOTLIGHT: SARALEE ETTER(CONT'D)



the computer. There are also apps such as [Freedom](#), which will turn off access to the Internet when you don't want to be distracted. I try my best to stay on task.

Also, I am teaching myself how to use [Dragon Naturally Speaking](#), so I can write faster through dictation. In fact, I dictated the answers to this questionnaire!

Q: In what ways have you seen your writing change over the course of your career? What do you feel has influenced that?

A: I hope that my storytelling has gotten better over the years. As a recovering lawyer, I have always prided myself on my ability to write with clarity and precision. But I have learned that writing fiction requires a different ability: storytelling. I have learned to plot and organize stories that engage and please readers, and I've learned to infuse my work with passion. Reading fiction of all kinds is one of my favorite activities, and I aim to copy the best techniques of my writing heroes.

Q: Do you write under a pen name? More than one? Share your experience with this and tell about the positives and the negatives.

A: I also write under the pen name Rose Maybud. I decided to use a pen name, so I could write stories with sex scenes in them and not shock my relatives! I got the rights back to my first Rose Maybud story from Ellora's Cave last fall, and have self-published it. It is titled ***Something In The Coffee***. I plan to write some more sexy stories after I've written a few mysteries. The only downside to having two names is that you have twice as much social media to catch up on – two websites, two blogs, two promotional schedules....

Q: Everyone wants to know about the money. Without being too personal, what can you share about financial expectations an author might have? What expenses are involved? Are there certain markets or platforms that are more lucrative than others?

A: Everyone wants to be an overnight success. But true success comes from building a career. All the experts that I've listened to in podcasts and webinars say that it takes time to develop a following as a writer. As with any business, the author has to invest her time and money into achieving her goals.

There are resources online that can help an author understand what to expect in financial terms, and how to improve her income. I would advise everyone to check out blogs like [J A Konrath's blog](#), podcasts like [The Self-Publishing Formula](#)



AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: SARALEE ETTER (CONT'D)

and [The Creative Penn](#), and other resources like Brenda Hiatt's [Show Me the Money](#) and Hugh Howey's [Author Earnings Report](#).

Thank you, Saralee, for standing in our Spotlight this month!

If anyone would like to connect with Saralee, she assures us she is everywhere! You can find her at:

www.saraleeetter.com (check out my new redesigned site!)

www.saraleeetter.com/blog1 (*A Fine Mystery Indeed*, updated weekly)

<http://www.facebook.com/saralee.etter> Personal Profile

<http://www.facebook.com/AuthorSaraleeEtter/> Author Page

<http://twitter.com/Saraleeetter> @Saraleeetter

<http://really-saralee.tumblr.com/> my tumblr

<http://www.instagram.com/reallysaralee/> my instagram

MEL JOLLY: CREATE YOUR OWN AUTHOR NEWSLETTER

by Saralee Etter

Melissa Jolly of AuthorRx started her presentation with a big promise to her COFW audience: By the end of her talk, we would be able to have an email newsletter set up and ready to go! And we did—in very short order, we had the all basic information an author needs to get started with their own email newsletter.

Not your Mother's Newsletter

What is the first thing you think when you when you hear “author newsletter?”

If the answer is, “Boring!” “Advertising!” or “All about me!” then you’re not alone. These days, we feel spammed to death by Internet advertising. We remember those old paper newsletters which always ended up going right in the trash. Authors are busy people, inundated with stuff in our own inboxes. Why would we want one more thing to write?

Mel says it's time to throw out what you thought of email newsletters. They are useful tools for an author, a way to get heard in a



MEL JOLLY: YOUR OWN AUTHOR NEWSLETTER (CONTD)

noisy world, and a method to keep in contact with the people who like and appreciate your work.

So why would an author WANT a newsletter?

You own it. You can get in touch with your list without Facebook or some other entity deciding to change the rules about who sees what.

Sending email to someone's inbox is awesome. It's direct contact.

It's communication with a personal touch.



Mel Jolly speaks at COFW

Newsletter Dos and Don'ts:

- Don't spam the list. Contacting people who have given you their email address is a privilege and not a right. Don't continually send them messages that say "please buy my book."
- Do use the opt in process. Make sure they want to be on your list.
- Don't sell your list.
- Don't use false or misleading subject lines (No "You May Already Be A Winner!" cheese, please).
- Do tell them where you're located. (It's a law. Luckily, however, your email service provider can help with that.)
- Honor opt outs.

How do you set up a newsletter list?

First, find a newsletter provider: MailChimp, Infusionsoft, Aweber, and MadMimi are just a few of the better known email newsletter providers. If you google "newsletter comparisons," you can find out what features they all have.

After introducing these services, Mel walked us through the steps of how to set up our own email newsletter. She used MailChimp, because MailChimp allows a person to set up an account for free, for up to 2000 email addresses. However, there are some advanced MailChimp features which are only available in their paid service, such as autoresponder sequences (that means a series of emails sent automatically over a period of days to a particular subscriber).

Some Tips as we worked through the MailChimp setup sequence:

1. Set up a separate email address for fan email.

That way, it will be easy to separate email from fans from your ordinary business mail.

MEL JOLLY: YOUR OWN AUTHOR NEWSLETTER (CONTD)

Tips, conti'd

2. What is a list?

A list is a group of people who have signed up to receive emails from you. You can set up different lists/segments for different types of communication, depending on what the groups are interested in.

3. Getting subscribers

If you already have an existing email list, you can copy and paste your list into Excel and transfer it to a newsletter service. Remember that you want “quality subscribers” – people who really want to hear from you, and not people who are just looking for free stuff.

4. Build your audience.

In MailChimp, you are assigned a unique URL which you can paste into your website, or add to your signature line on emails (by hyperlinking the URL to a sentence inviting people to sign up).

Use your unique URL everywhere you can: in the header and footer of your website, on your contact page, on your menu, and in the back matter of your book – in your “Dear Reader” letter.



Mel explained what a “Dear Reader” letter is: at the back of your book, the author writes a short letter to the reader thanking them for reading the book and inviting them to sign up for continued contact. Example:

“Dear Reader, thank you for reading my book. I hope you enjoyed it. If you want to know what happens next, sign up for my new release list, or visit my Facebook and website. I look forward to staying in contact with you!

Signed, Author.”

What do I say in my newsletter?

Many authors wonder what to say to the readers who accept their invitation. Content generation ideas include extra goodies like deleted scenes, character interviews, and big news like when your next book will be coming out.

Best-selling author Kristan Higgins sends her email subscribers recipes and behind the scenes comments. You might also want to send quizzes, polls, playlists (such as on Spotify), or create a game, like a crossword puzzle or a word find. Or you can simply ask them a question.

Make your newsletter special – make your readers feel that they are getting exclusive content. Subscribers should get content that no one else does. This can also be a useful way of making your work do double duty, and making use of writing which didn't make it into the final book.

MEL JOLLY: YOUR OWN AUTHOR NEWSLETTER (CONTD)

If calling it a newsletter sounds too formal, maybe you could call it a new release mailing list, or some other less scary title.

Freebies.



In order to entice a person to sign up for your email list, it helps to offer them some free item that they might like to have. For authors, this might take the form of a downloadable PDF – perhaps a short story, a chapter of a book, or some other special content.

Authors also can offer giveaways. When a physical item like a book is offered, it might be a good idea to make winners contact you, so you can put their names in the newsletter. If a person is reluctant to have their entire name published in the newsletter, you can post just their first name and last initial. Collect their information using Google forms and ask them if they want to subscribe to your newsletter.

For giveaways, Mel suggests using Rafflecopter, so you don't have to deal with too many details.

Back up your email list.

Make sure that you back up your mailing list by exporting it to your own computer. Remember, the list belongs to you. Mel showed us how to back up our lists on Mail Chimp.

How often to send?

An author can contact her list as little or as much as she wants. Remember, the people who have signed up for your emails want to hear from you. It helps to make people feel like they're in on the secret, and that they are receiving exclusive content.

How to design your newsletter.

In MailChimp, there is a whole section on designing the appearance of your newsletter. Each time you send out a newsletter is called a campaign. You can use templates in MailChimp that will help you construct an attractive looking email. Make sure you are choosing visual elements appropriate to your own brand. Although authors don't like to think that they are branding themselves, but we are all unintentionally branding ourselves anyway, so we might as well take control of the image we present.



MEL JOLLY: YOUR OWN AUTHOR NEWSLETTER (CONTD)

Using [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com), an author can create a header image for little to no money. The dimensions of the header should be 600 by 210 pixels.

And there you have it! You have successfully used MailChimp to create a list and design your first newsletter campaign. Now all that is left to do is to test the email by sending a copy to yourself, making any final tweaks, and you will be ready to send it to your list.

Adopt, Adapt and Improve

Look at authors who are doing a good job with their email newsletter lists for ideas on how to communicate with and engage your audience. These are the people who are waiting to hear from you when your next book is about to come out. Some best-selling authors who have great ways of communicating with their audience include: Nalini Singh, Barbara Freethy, Kristan Higgins, and Tonya Kappes.

Melissa Jolly of AuthorRx, originally worked in a library's young adult department, conducting outreach to a Florence Crittenden Center for juvenile offenders. When she moved to North Carolina, she began her business from home as a virtual assistant for authors. This is her fifth year as a full-time Virtual Assistant. Her job includes helping authors prioritize, organize, and run their business. You can sign up for her email newsletter at www.AuthorRx.com.

COFW AUTHORS BRING ROMANCE TO THE OHIOANA BOOK FESTIVAL

by Susan Gee Heino



COFW AUTHORS AT OHIOANA BOOK FESTIVAL (CONT'D)

Several COFW authors participated in the Ohioana Book Festival on Saturday, April 23rd. This was the tenth year the Ohioana Library has held this event and it was bigger than ever. An all-day affair, authors participate in panel discussions, Q&A sessions, "Author Speed Dating," and a huge, multi-genre booksigning.



Bestselling author Karen Harper made time for each of her many fans.

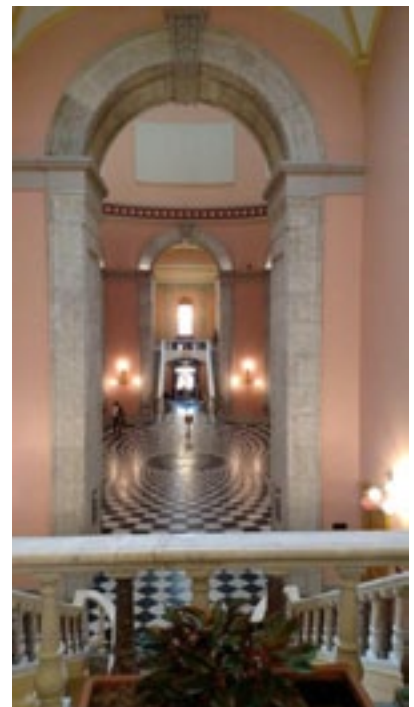
Donna MacMeans, Robin Gianna, and Karen Harper were among those signing, while other COFW members were on-hand as readers and volunteers. Many other familiar faces from Northeast Ohio RWA, Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, and Sisters In Crime of Central Ohio added to the smiles.



Harlequin Medical Romance author Robin Gianna offered personalized Band-Aid packs for her readers, while Historical Romance author Donna MacMeans is known for her fabulous peacock feathers.

COFW AUTHORS AT OHIOANA BOOK FESTIVAL (CONT'D)

This year's festival was held at the Sheraton Hotel at Capitol Square in downtown Columbus. It was an excellent venue, right in the very heart of Ohio. Following the festival, authors were invited to a sumptuous reception across the street at the Ohio Statehouse. For anyone interested, a tour of the gorgeous statehouse was provided by one of the knowledgeable docents there.



Susan Gee Heino enjoying some of the amazing views of the Statehouse, including an excellent hors d'oeuvres spread.

COFW AUTHORS AT OHIOANA BOOK FESTIVAL (CONT'D)

The Ohioana Library Association was founded in 1929 by Ohio First Lady Martha Kinney Cooper to collect, preserve, and promote the works of Ohio authors, artists, and musicians. Initially the library was housed in the Governor's Mansion, but today the Library is located in the renovated Jeffrey Mining Corporate Center near downtown Columbus. Its holdings include more than 45,000 books by or about Ohioans; 10,000 pieces of sheet music; biographical files on notable Ohioans; personal papers of Ohio authors and artists; and numerous scrapbooks created by Ohio civic and cultural organizations. The collection does not circulate, but is available for in-library use.

COFW has long had a great relationship with the Ohioana Library and its devoted librarians and curators. For more information about Ohioana Library and the Ohioana Book Festival, visit <http://www.ohioana.org/programs/ohioana-book-festival/>

A TALE OF TWO DESK CHAIRS

By Cheryl Bolen

*The following article first appeared in the May 2012 issue of **In Print!**, the monthly newsletter of Houston Bay Area RWA. Permission granted to reprint or forward to sister RWA chapters with proper credit to author and chapter.*

Many of my chaptermates have seen the office where I've written many of my books because I've hosted the chapter Christmas party for several years. For those of you who haven't, it's a glorified sun porch the original architect built onto the house to mimic a sun porch.

It's a great place to write because it's all windows, and I even have a nice view: a private wood.

When I moved in 11 years ago, I decided to go with the cottage look in my office. Off white furniture with faded cabbage roses. Very feminine.

Here's what this article is about: the comfort of your workspace.

Three years ago I had a new office chair custom made. The one I had had recovered at move-in time in feminine fabric with pink piping absolutely wore out.

I selected an off-white wood, and because the manufacturer specialized in office furniture of the sturdy, industrialized, masculine type, I opted to provide my own fabric and the rep sent it off to their factory. You can see how cute it is in the photo on this page.

Cut three years.

This past fall I was on deadline for my October book and writing minimum 12 hours a day (at least in the



A TALE OF TWO DESK CHAIRS (CONT'D)

chair 12 hours to 14 hours – does email count?) when I got to where I could not sit down. Seriously. My back was in agony.

I told my husband the sight of my desk chair made me sick.

So I went to the archives of the email loop for PASIC (RWA's Published Authors Special Interest Chapter). I knew they had previously discussed the best office chairs for those of us who make a living writing with butt in the chair eight plus hours a day.

The consensus seemed to be an ergonomic chair manufactured by Herman Miller. So I investigated them on the internet.

Everything I read was positive.

Except the price. With the lumbar feature, it was \$719. Hmmm. Barely three years previously that's what I'd paid for my pretty office chair with made-to-order wood finish.

Of course, I could no longer sit in it.



I kept going back on line at looking at the ergonomic chair. It looked kind of like a giant black spider. Not pretty. Hmmm. You can also see the picture of the ugly chair on this page.

By then I was writing in the recliner with my laptop because my back hurt too bad to sit at my desk.

I told my husband I was going to order one online. He did not like the idea because he was worried about returns, especially if my back still hurt once I had the new chair.

I told him the company I was buying from offered a full refund for up to 365 days – and if you saved original packaging, they would pay shipping, too.

Then I pulled out my trump card. November was the most spectacular month I've ever had as far as earnings. In fact, I made more in November than I'd ever made in an entire year before. And I sold my first book in 1997!

What could the man say?

I waited impatiently. It was more than three weeks before my chair was delivered.

The minute I sat in it, I knew I was going to be all right.

It's been four months now, and I have to say that was the best \$719 I ever spent.

I've learned a valuable lesson. Aesthetics are not all important. When you earn your living writing at a desk, you have to take care of your body. Take frequent breaks. Get up. Most of all, don't be fooled by a pretty chair.

Cheryl Bolen is the author of more than a dozen Regency-set historicals. Her next print release is October's MARRIAGE OF INCONVENIENCE. Her latest ebook is the bestselling HIS LORDSHIP'S VOW, which was released in March.

WHAT IS OUR BUSINESS?

by Tara Lain

*The following article first appeared in the Q3 2012 edition of **Pot of Gold**, the newsletter of the Rainbow Romance Writers chapter of RWA.*

Our theme this month in the newsletter is The Business of Writing. So I thought I'd crawl up on my soapbox and do a short harangue. Okay, close your ears. This post is about what our business is -- promo!



Writers like to write. Many of us are introverts and mixing with the public, literally or virtually, gives us hives. The few extroverts among us, like me, still have deadlines and editing and full-time jobs! It's easy to resent every moment we have to spend promoting our books or ourselves as authors. But I stand on my soapbox and wave my hands for a change of attitude. Yes, our business is to write. And our other business is to promote the stuff we write so that readers can find us. If we don't do that, we're writing as a hobby.

I know those are fighting words. My wonderful mentors have all told me that the best promo you can do is to write a great book. I agree -- and it is twice as good if you promote it! The mentors who tell me this are such great writers that they can put books out and the world will beat a path to their website. But is that true for most of us?

Probably not. LOL. Especially if you're a new author.

I don't care how good your first book is, unless you're that one in a gazillion writers who strikes gold, the chances are your first book is just going to sit there, selling a few hundred copies if you're really lucky. Unless you promote it! I started promoting myself as an author six months before my first book came out. Not relentlessly. Just some inoffensive blogging and a presence on Twitter. After my book was accepted for publication, I stepped it up a little with some posts on how I had managed to get published.

Then I heard of this thing called a "blog tour," so I set one up -- all on my own. I



WHAT IS OUR BUSINESS? (CONT'D)

know, some of you are pointing your finger and saying, "But you're a PR person in your day job". This is true, but I promote pH analyzers and medical instruments, and we never do blog tours for those! Anyway, I started talking about the blog tour on my blogs and on Facebook and Twitter weeks before it started. Then I plunged into the tour. When my book released, I had the number one bestselling book at Loose Id my first week and the number three book the next week.

Does that mean I sold a million books? Heck, no. I struggled along with moderate sales like many writers plus, due to ignorance on my part, my second book didn't come out for five months! That is not a good way to run a business. But I continued to promote my one book and myself as a writer -- and it looked like I was selling more books than I was. That's another benefit of promotion: you look like a more successful writer, and readers (and even publishers) take you more seriously. In fact, some publishers want to know how you plan to promote your books before they agree to publish them.



Since I'm fairly prolific, by the end of 2011, I had six published books. Some were more successful than others, but I promoted them all! At the end of the year I was named "Best Author of 2011" in the LRC Awards, my series was runner-up for Best Series of 2011 and one of my books was nominated for a CAPA. Another book was named Best LGBT Ménage. What is my point? Reviewers and bloggers are not going to nominate your book for an award if they haven't heard of it. They may hear about it from readers, or from you, or hopefully both, but they have to hear of it some way. And do awards matter? Yes -- but only because they help you sell more books!

Some writers like to ask, "What is the bare minimum I can do and still get results?"



Others want to know the one thing that gets the best response. They seriously measure their website hits and their book sales after each blog or newsletter to see if the promo worked. Sadly, promotion doesn't work that way.

That's not to say that you won't do a specific promotional event and get a big response. You will. But promo is cumulative. People don't al-

WHAT IS OUR BUSINESS? (CONT'D)

ways know where they heard about you or your book, they just heard it was good so they bought it. Yes, it makes sense to find the promotional activities that you enjoy and that seem to generate the most response from readers, but the message is the Nike slogan -- Just Do It. Evaluate from time to time, but heck! Every time you post a guest blog and get a new reader is a victory!

We acquire readers one at a time. The fact is, different promotional tools work best for different writers -- depending upon how they enjoy it and how they use it. The key to successful promotion is consistency. When people tell you "I saw this book everywhere so I decided to buy it," you're doing something right!

Does that mean you can write a crappy book and promote it well and sell a lot of books? We all know it does happen. But you can't fool all the people all of the time, so you better make a lot of money on that first book because readers may not come back. Our number one job is still to write a great book. But there are so many great books snuggled up on the Amazon list at number 3,000,000 that seldom sell a copy.

So write a great book and contemplate with as much pleasure as you can muster, "Oh, boy! Now I get to promote it."



Tara Lain, like so many novelists, wrote her first book at five. Writing ability got her through college when there wasn't enough time in the day, and, shortly thereafter, it became a marketable skill. Very early in life, people started paying her to write -- scripts for industrial films, brochures, magazine articles on semiconductors. She became a really successful non-fiction "ghost-writer."

Married to a her soul mate, a wonderful man who surprises her every day, Tara continues to love semiconductors and software and medical devices -- all with a little touch of romance. She's also an artist in her spare time (LOL) working in oil and mixed media collage.

Tara on Twitter [@taralain](https://twitter.com/taralain)

tara@taralain.com

<http://www.facebook.com/tara.lain.3>

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Sheri Adkins: Finishing edits on Golden Heart final, hoping editors request it.

Marcia Anderson: Writing a Christmas novella for a box set in the fall. Putting my three "Klein's K-9's" novellas in a print book. Promoting 2 ebook box sets this month: "Love Notes," and "First Glance."

Alicia Anthony: Last few chapters of a mystery/suspense.

Becky Barker: Getting ready to do the launch of my latest release, "Zach's Ranch," the third book in my Bridleton Series.

Julia Blaine: Finally have new book, "Adrian's Pearl," available at Amazon Kindle. Unfortunately discovered previously published "Shot through the Heart," has format errors. Darn! (At least "darn...")

Jane Conner: Revisions.

Beverly Randall: visitor.

Shawn Dickerson: Paranormal romance – "Angel Chronicles."

Jeanne Estridge: Finished first draft of my second book in my demon trilogy.

Saralee Etter: Writing "Victoria Road Noir," blogging weekly. Updating website.

Robin Gianna: Starting a new medical romance as part of a duet set in Italy.

Susan G. Heino: Still finishing overdue Serena book and fleshing out proposal for next one.

Sandy Kachurek: keeping my blog updated – almost done with a Florida mermaid short story.

Andrea McConnell: (w/a Lena Welston) Finishing edits on "The British Captain."

Donna MacMeans: Tax season is over! "In a Heartbeat" is done. Returning to "To Bait a Rake."

Linda Rice: Struggling.

Kaily Schmidt: Revising my NA Sci-Fi/Fantasy.

Adelyn Sterling: Editing my fairy godmother's novel and writing a new high concept fantasy.

Nancy White: Drafting Historical Western.



PAN EVENT: “LOVE BETWEEN THE COVERS”

by Susan Gee Heino

Following our monthly business meeting on May 14, we'll be showing “Love Between the Covers,” a documentary film about romance writers and the romance industry. This is truly something you won't want to miss! After the showing, we will host our first annual PAN Networking Event, a time to mingle, share, and celebrate what we do



as romance authors. If you have a friend or loved-one who is curious about what you do as a romance writer, bring them along!

Love stories are powerful.

And so are the women who write them.

Love Between the Covers is a feature-length film chronicling the vast, funny, and savvy community of romance writing. Over a three-year time period, Emmy award-winning Director/Producer Laurie Kahn followed the lives of five diverse and successful romance authors (and one unpublished newbie) as they built their businesses, found and lost loved ones, coped with a tsunami of change in publishing, and earned a living doing what they love. Pulling back the covers on a billion dollar industry, this film documents romance authors who are on the front lines, pioneering new ways to survive, and building communities in our rapidly changing environment. The film is informative, emotional, and very up-lifting. You will be proud to be a part of this remarkable industry!

Many institutions and individuals have supported this project. Some of them are: Romance Writers of America (RWA), the National Endowment for the Humanities, Mass Humanities, the Nora Roberts Foundation, Amazon.com, Harlequin Enterprises, the Tavis Fund at Brandeis University, and donations through the website, lovebetweenthecovers.com.

After the movie, we invite everyone to participate in an Author Networking Event. Our PAN and PAN-Provisional authors will set up at tables and be invited to share promo and informational materials, showcasing their books. We will all get a chance to circulate and chat, using the time to get to know each other and share tips and insights on market, readership, publishers, promotional items, etc. Hopefully, there will be a give-away or two. Details for this event will be discussed on the COFW PAN author loop. Members are invited to bring a guest for this event. This will be a great way to introduce someone to RWA, to COFW, or to Romance in general.

For more information, or if you have questions about PAN membership, please contact PAN Liaison at susan_gee_heino@yahoo.com.

COFW 2016 LEADERSHIP

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