



A Proud Chapter of
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WELCOME TO CENTRAL OHIO FICTION WRITERS

COFW's March presentation was on "Cut out the Middle, Man!" Susan Gee Heino's system for building up to a great pinnacle, and then bringing the story to a great end!

How do you structure your stories? Let us know!

For more great articles and news about your fellow COFWers, read on!

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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 3-12-2016

by Jane Conner

Jane Conner brought the meeting to order with a reminder to turn down cell phones. We passed around name tags and the Works in Progress report. We welcomed visitors and introduced members.

Lisa Coffey reported that Susan Heino, Andrea McConnell, and Pam Johnson were worthy of incentives for a Harlequin deal, a contest win, and rejections, respectively.

Susan Heino asks published COFW members to apply for PAN or PAN Provisional on the RWA website.

On May 14, we should be back at the other Norwich Township Fire Station. The business meeting will begin at 12:30 and at 1:30 we will see a documentary film about Romance Writing which will last about 1 ½ hours.

Afterwards published authors will share books and promotional material.

Nancy White reported on the Ignite the Flame Contest. An ad will appear in RWR in the April issue. The contest begins June 1. Nancy needs volunteers to coordinate categories. Julia and Jane volunteered, but more volunteers are needed.

Saralee Etter reported that the deadline for the April Newsletter is March 20. We are using Mail Chimp to deliver "Write from the Heart." On the URL bar, type <http://COFWevents.org/newsletter> to find a hidden page of newsletter.

Robin Gianna reported that next month's meeting, April 16, will feature speaker Mel Jolly, a professional author assistant. Bring your laptops. She will cover, for example, why authors need to build email lists, have a newsletter, building websites, and red flags to alert an author to problems with a writer/assistant relationship.

The June meeting will feature best selling author Elizabeth Heiter giving her views on suspense. Beth Daniels will be July's speaker. The August topic is a recap of the RWA Convention.

Linda Rice reported we have 59 members. Linda has a cross-reference for names, pen names and Pay Pal names.

Julia Blaine will recap Susan Heino's presentation.



PAN AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: ROBIN GIANNA

by Susan Gee Heino,
COFW Published Author Network Liaison

This month the PAN Spotlight shines on Robin Gianna. Aside from being our COFW Vice President of Programs, Robin is an internationally multi-published author. She writes for Harlequin's Medical Romance line.

After getting her start in the advertising industry, Robin eventually turned to writing romance. She loves pushing her characters toward their happily-ever-afters while she lives out her own with a wonderful husband, three great kids, a drooling bulldog, and one grouchy Siamese cat.



Q: Thanks for sharing with us this month, Robin. Can you tell about when you joined COFW and what brought you to the group?

A: I believe I joined in 2005—or maybe 2004. I'd recently had my epiphany that I wanted to write romance fiction, and by chance read a book by a Harlequin author (Catherine Mann) who lived in Dayton at the time. I emailed her about local resources, and she very kindly directed me to COFW. So I went to a meeting and stayed! Being a member has been a huge benefit to me as I learned the craft of fiction writing. So many wise and generous women make up COFW, and I'm not sure I would ever have gotten published if not for all the things I learned through them, and by attending COFW meetings and workshops.

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

A: I sold to Harlequin in May of 2013—a pretty exciting day! I applied for PAN membership shortly after I signed my contract and received my advance.

Q: What do you write and who is your publisher?

A: My published books are all for Harlequin/Mills & Boon Medical Romance. I also have a light paranormal single title my agent is going to throw out to the world again, and I'm working on some other contemporary romance sub-genres.

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

A: Medical Romance isn't as well known in the U.S. as it is in other countries—it's quite popular in the UK, Australia, France, and elsewhere. Think Gray's Anatomy or ER, with a bit more romance than emergencies! It's one of the more flexible Harlequin series lines. Stories can be set anywhere in the world, and take place in hospitals or the outback or a mission hospital—anywhere your imagination takes you. That makes it fun for me, as my characters can be from a wide variety of backgrounds, work in any medical capacity and be hanging out in Greece, if I want!

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

PAN AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: ROBIN GIANNA (CONT'D)

A: I believe it's critical to focus our attention first on learning how to write the best book we can, and not be in a giant hurry to get published. After all, no one can learn to play a musical instrument in six months, so why expect to have a good novel on your first try? When I first decided I wanted to write fiction, I thought, "Hey, I have a journalism degree, so I'm a pretty good writer. And I love to read. How hard could it be?" I learned that the answer is, pretty hard! To me, though, the learning process has been part of the fun—and part of the pain and disappointment, too, let's be honest!

But the better the book you write, the more likely you will be bought by a traditional publisher. And whether you're indie published or traditionally published, a good book will bring readers back for your next book. I learn something new with every book I write, and I expect I always will. And of course, my other advice is something you've heard before - keep at it and don't give up! Persistence and determination are important keys to success.

Q: Tell us your first sale story! How did you make the sale and how were you informed of it?

I was at my middle school son's track meet, and it so happened that my college daughter had just come home, and my husband was there, too. My phone rang, and it was my agent. It was super windy, and I could hardly hear her, not to mention that the crowd of spectators kept erupting into cheers, which made hearing her even more challenging! She talked in this disappointed voice, and I can't remember exactly what she said except that the story we were trying to sell had been rejected. Just as I was accepting that, she laughed and said she was kidding, that they'd offered me a two book contract! I was shocked, and also accused her of being horribly mean to tease me that way. So I got to celebrate with my husband and daughter, which was thrilling. A woman I'd known for a long time who is the mother of one of my son's friends was there, too, and she happened to be one of the first people I'd ever told all those years ago that I'd decided to write romance fiction. So it was awesome that she was there to share the news with as well. My husband's father was staying with us for a while at the time, and we all shared champagne when we got home.

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

A: I have not achieved balance in this AT ALL, and it's one of the things I must do better with! Before I was published, I was very guilty of my writing being the first thing I'd throw aside when life got super busy. I wish I hadn't done that, as it definitely took me longer to get published because of that. I'm still guilty of doing that, even with deadlines staring at me, and my goal for 2016 is to be the steady writer with weekly word counts for an entire book, instead of killing myself for a solid week to get a book finished in time. So I encourage you all to do better than I, and stick to a weekly word count that is reasonable for you and your life, or you'll regret it the way I do!

PAN AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: ROBIN GIANNA (CONT'D)

Q: What is the best part of being a published author?

A: There are so many great things, but number one is seeing my cover and holding that book in my hand. A close second is being able to tell people I write for Harlequin. After years of being asked by friends and family "How's your writing coming?" and answering, "Oh, I'm working away at it," to be able to say "I'm a professional writer now" feels unbelievably good. A close third is expanding the number of writers I've become friends with through the line I write for, and through my publisher. Honestly, romance writers are just the most awesome people I know! Getting to attend publisher events at the RWA National Conference and meet my editors in person is also wonderful. Obviously, all those rewards are pretty great!



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

A: I had no idea how crazy busy I would be from the moment I sold. I so wish I had gotten a website and all my social media set up beforehand. A COFW friend and I had heard it would be good to get our websites ahead of time, but could never figure out what we'd put on them. I later saw a suggestion that if you don't have content you're ready to send out to the world, getting the site set up but not publishing it will keep the headaches at bay when you do sell.

If you're traditionally published, there are a lot of things to do after you turn in that book. There are revisions and Dear Reader letters, dedications, etc, then a final round of author approval, which requires reading the book through one last time. Deadlines can seem to come around pretty fast, so be sure to look ahead at your life commitments before you make deadline commitments, and plan them accordingly. And remember you'll have promo to do, so try not to have a deadline at exactly the same time you have a release.

Q: Do you have an agent and where do you stand on the importance of agents in an author's career?

A: I do have an agent, and she's been very valuable to me as I launched my writing career. All agents are different, and some want only work that's ready to send to publishers. Others, like mine, enjoy the editorial process. She's great to brainstorm with, and I consider her a partner in this crazy journey navigating the publishing world.

Q: What do your family, friends, and co-workers think about your writing? Are they confused? Supportive? Skeptical?

A: I'm lucky in that that vast majority of friends and family have been very supportive and enthusiastic about my writing. I've endured very few of the comments fellow romance authors have experienced in terms of lack of respect for the genre.

PAN SPOTLIGHT: ROBIN GIANNA (CONT'D)

Though I did have one friend imply that the books I write are pretty much like paint-by-number, which I admit really ticked me off! Every book is the result of hard work, and while there is story structure, there's no such thing as a 'formula' even though there are those who believe there is.



Thanks, Robin, for letting us get to know you a little better.

If anyone wants to learn more about Robin and what she writes, please check out her website at www.RobinGianna.com. She can be found on social media at <https://www.facebook.com/Robin-Gianna-651967504836892/> and https://twitter.com/Robin_Gianna.

SUSAN GEE HEINO: “CUT OUT THE MIDDLE, MAN!”

by Julia Blaine

Do you fall asleep writing chapters four through eleven of your manuscript? Susan Gee Heino has a plan to fix that!

Many authors have trouble writing the middle of their manuscript. We've often heard it called the “sagging middle,” or the “muddle in the middle.” Worse, statistics show that readers who start a book and don't finish it usually stop reading in the middle.

What's the solution? Don't put the plot in the middle, Susan said. Build up your plot to a climax and wind down to a happy ever after. Leave out the middle!

In examining a story's elements, including plot points, goals, and climax, Susan pointed out that often, the best part – or the actual plot – is in the middle of the story. However, to craft a page-turner, it can help to think of those plot elements as either part of the beginning, or part of the end.

Using the Disney movie “Beauty and the Beast” as an example, Susan asked the group to list the major points of the story. The inciting incident is when the Beast imprisons Belle's father. Building incidents include: beautiful versus ugly, Belle lives with the beast, Belle seeing the Beast's library, Belle visits her father. The resolution of the story starts with Belle's returning late, with the climax being



SUSAN GEE HEINO: CUT OUT THE MIDDLE, MAN! (CONTD)

when the villagers attack. The end, of course, is happily ever after with the Beast becoming human again.

Now, what are the goals of your characters? It is your characters who move your story.



Think goal, motivation and conflict (GMC). A character might have more than one goal. For example, Belle wants to live free. That's one of her goals. She'd rather read a book than be tied to a man. That's the motivation for this goal, but—conflict—she has this insistent suitor, Gaston...

One goal of the Beast is to have someone love him. His motivation is that, if someone loves him he will be saved. Unfortunately he is a beast with lots of unlovable baggage. That's the conflict.

The whole story is built around these goals. As things progress, the characters learn and develop; some goals are altered, adjusted. What changed these goals?

The story builds to a pinnacle. It is the characters and their goals that provide the plot. Then comes the point where decisions are made, where conflicts are revealed and the author can finally begin pulling all the story threads together to be neatly tied up.

First establish your character's goals, motivations, and conflicts. Now think about what is at stake if the goals are not met. Where is the place where the characters face their goals? That is your pinnacle, your turning point.

Your characters probably know what their goal is from the beginning of the book. Don't let them get sidetracked because it is the middle of the book. Keep them constantly moving forward and building up. Your readers will be thrilled when, at last, they can catch their breath and enjoy the happy ending.

Bestselling author Susan Heino got her start in the theatre where she discovered that writing snappy dialog was much more fun than memorizing it. As a sucker for happy endings, writing romance came naturally to her. In 2008 she won the RWA Golden Heart® Award and her first book was released by Berkley Publishing in 2009. Since then she has published nearly 20 titles.

Today she writes lighthearted Regency Romance with wicked banter and cravat-clad heroes, as well as quirky Contemporary Romance with a small town flair. Under her pen name, Serena Gilley, she writes The Forbidden Realm fantasy romance series, with sexy, magical creatures in a world where passion is forbidden and true love plays a dangerous game.

Ms. Heino is a preacher's wife who lives in rural Ohio with her husband, two very creative children, and an accidental collection of critters.

WRITERS AT THE CROSSROADS

by Julia Blaine

On Saturday, March 19, 2016, during a snow storm, COFW participated in Writers at the Crossroads, presented by the Guernsey County District Public Library and Cambridge Writers. This was the 7th annual program.

Fifteen authors read for five minutes from their stories, shared with other writers and non-writers, ate pizza and cookies, and sold books. Author's subjects ranged from non-fiction, to funny memoirs, to short stories, to the Paranormal, and, of course, to Romance. Because Cambridge sits on an area ripe with coal mines from long ago, this heritage appeared often in the writings of local authors.

Cambridge, Ohio writer J. Paulette Forshey is a member of Cambridge



Writers, and COFW. She invited Columbus authors to join her for this event. Jane Conner, Julia Blaine, Marcia James, Donna MacMeans, and Saralee Etter brought material and books to autograph. Each author donated a book to the Guernsey County Library. Robin Gianna donated to their raffle. There was lots of time to mingle. All proceeds support the library's children's programming.

Guernsey County Library hosts Cambridge Writers who meet there regularly as part of the library's adult programs. A library has served Guernsey County since 1832. Evolving over the years, eventually as Carnegie library in Cambridge, in 2006 the current beautiful building opened on Byesville Road where it provides bookmobile and other services to the rural area.

COFW gratefully thanks J. Paulette Forshey, Cambridge Writers, and Melissa Essex, Assistant Library Director, for their kind invitation to share with other writers and see parts of the beautiful Ohio countryside.



How You Doing? CONVEYING EMOTIONS IN FICTION

by Isabo Kelly

This article was first published in the RWA/NYC July 2012 newsletter.

One of the most essential aspects of any work of fiction is being able to convey a character's emotions. Readers want to feel and experience the story with your hero and heroine. But how exactly do you express emotions in writing?

This is a very specific aspect of showing rather than telling. Because telling the emotional state of your characters won't invest your readers in your story, they won't feel what your protagonists feel, and they'll be left distanced from any emotional impact.

Let's look at an example of telling emotions:

Sarah felt worried. Tommy hadn't called since yesterday afternoon. He should have called by now.

In this example, we're simply told Sarah is worried, not just that she is worried but that she *felt* worried. Except that we don't actually feel Sarah's worry. We can't connect to the visceral experience of worry specific to Sarah.

Each character will be unique in their emotional responses (this should help you avoid an excess of clichés). Knowing your character well will allow you to dig into exactly how they experience their feelings. Once you understand their reactions, you can express those in specific details which will allow readers to experience the emotions and to understand the character on a deeper level.

Use the following four approaches to writing about emotion to help you to show how a character is feeling without having to resort to abstract nouns like "worried" or "happy".

1. Physical Reaction: Emotions will create a physical reaction in your character, often before they even recognize the emotion they're experiencing. Showing those physical reactions will convey what your heroine is feeling better than using abstract nouns and



will be as individual as she is. Here's a place to avoid clichés by making sure you know your character well. Falling back on phrases like "her heart melted" too often will start to read the same as "she felt deep love". Go farther and attempt to give your character a more unique physical experience.

2. Actions: The movements and actions of your character can also demonstrate their emotional state. Someone sitting on the couch, feet up, watching TV, while every light in the room is on, is probably not feeling anxiety or concern for the shadows creeping around his open window. (Though, here the reader will feel anxiety and that's a great technique for manipulating reader emotions; but that's a different topic.) Someone clenching and unclenching their hands is likely experiencing anxiety, or anger, or frustration. When combined with other actions, the exact emotion can be conveyed clearly.

3. Internal Thought: What the character is thinking at any given point can convey their emotional state as well. In fact, what a character isn't thinking can also point readers toward that protagonist's feelings. Again, you want to "show" here, so having your charac-

CONVEYING EMOTION (CONT'D)

ter think "I'm worried about Tommy" doesn't get the job done. Their inner thoughts should demonstrate for the reader exactly how the character is feeling without having to use those "telling" abstract nouns.

4. Dialogue: The words people use can also give away their feelings. Sometimes those words can bluntly state the emotion. "Damn it, I'm worried about Tommy," Sarah said. But for a deeper and more visceral experience for the reader, it's even better to have the dialogue convey emotion without actually coming out and defining it. "I am not looking at my phone again," Sarah swore. "I will not check that screen again. Damn it. Tommy, where the hell are you?" Combined with some physical actions, this second example is much more specific to an individual character and gives readers insight into Sarah's state of mind without being spoon fed the emotion.

Let's go back to our original example and try to avoid the word "worried":

Sarah walked into her kitchen for the twelfth time, opened the fridge, closed it, then paced back to the living room. She picked up the phone off the coffee table. The screen was still blank. No missed calls. No texts. With a grunt, she dropped the phone and flopped onto the couch. Flicking through the TV channels kept her from the phone for exactly one minute.

"A thousand stations and nothing on," she grumbled, before snatching up her phone again. "Damn it. Is this thing working?" She turned it off, then on again, just to check. Tapping her foot, she stared at the screen until it was fully on. No message.

She checked the clock. Well after three. Tommy always called before three. Maybe she should call him. He never went this long without contacting her. What if he was trapped under something and needed her help? "You're being ridiculous," she scolded herself and chucked the phone into a corner of the couch. One round through the useless series of channels again, and she reached for the cell, checking the screen.

As with all showing rather than telling, a lot more words are required. But this last scene will



pull readers into Sarah's state of mind without actually ever using the word "worried". They can feel and experience her anxiety. They'll start to worry about Tommy right along with Sarah. And this is the kind of emersion in a story readers love. The example also demonstrates that using only one of the above four approaches aren't as effective as using multiple ways of showing feelings. Utilize several of the techniques together to maximize the experience and the authenticity for readers. Get specific, know your characters, use these four ways of conveying emotion, and avoid as many abstract nouns as possible. When you do, your characters' feelings will jump off the page, taking your readers on an emotion ride alongside your heroines and heroes.♥

Isabo Kelly's latest science fiction romance, *THE SECRET OF NARAVA*, from Tirgearr Publishing is now available. She hopes readers take the emotional journey with Ti'ann and Nanthan. For more on Isabo and her books, visit her at www.isabokelly.com, follow her on Twitter @IsaboKelly or friend her on Facebook. This article was published in the RWA/NYC July 2012 Keynotes newsletter. Permission is granted to share this article with the proper credits to the author and chapter. Thank you.

SCENE PLOTTING

By J. D. Faver

Previously, I tried to present a compelling argument for at least loosely plotting your novels. This time, I'm going to try and convince you to plot your scenes. I know that you're rolling your eyes.

When I finish a scene in my current WIP, I think about what needs to happen next.

Here are some questions to ask yourself before you start the next scene:

Is this going to be a scene or a sequel? Action or reaction?

Who is going to be in the next scene?

Who owns the scene?

What are 3 things this scene must accomplish?

1) Is this a scene or a sequel? Is this scene a reaction to what happened in the previous scene, or does someone need to act on something to move the story forward?

2) Who should be in the next scene? You want the story to move forward, so which characters will be able to carry the story to the next plot point? Who logically should be included in this scene to make sure the reader receives the information they need? Who will have the greatest emotional investment in the events of the scene.

3) Who owns the scene? It has been said that the person who owns the scene should be the one with the most to lose or the one with the most invested. This is the point of view (POV) character, or the one whose head we live in for the duration of the scene. So everything is seen through that character's eyes. If it's a big, rough and tough cowboy, he probably won't notice the floral wallpaper or the scent of lilacs in the air. He might notice that it's too hot inside and all that fusty furniture makes him feel out of place...or that it smells like a funeral home...You are in his head, so you can only see the things he sees; feel the things he feels; experience the things he is experiencing. You must be mindful of his frame of reference, because his past has shaped him. He won't step outside his own experiences to react to the events of the scene. In my novel, *Bad Vibes*, the hero, Mike is a former Marine and so when he experiences a combination of love and lust, he isn't feeling butterflies waltzing in his heart. He feels like a fragmentation grenade exploded in his chest. It's his scene, told in his head, through his eyes in terms he's comfortable with, and within the confines of his frame of reference.

4) What are three things this scene must accomplish? This sounds arbitrary, but it works for me. Unless I can devise at least three reasons for the next scene, I don't write it. I try to include the one or two bits of information in another scene without devoting an entire scene when it isn't warranted. I actually list 1..2..3...and fill in the blanks. In the aforementioned scene with my hero, Mike, the things that had to

SCENE PLOTTING (CONT'D)

happen in that scene were:

1. Mike and Darla had been on a mission that failed. The people they intended to rescue were killed, so emotions were high. I needed to show their tension and disappointment.
2. The sexual tension had been building between them and in this scene, it needed to reach the breaking point where they stepped over the line.
3. I needed to take the two characters to a different place in their relationship, which had been at times, antagonistic.
4. Mike has been such a loner, so this scene needs to show the yawning emotional experience for him when he connects with Darla sexually, and how vulnerable he becomes when he gives in to his needs.

I hope this helps you write tight scenes with focused elements and strong motivations.

J.D. Faver lives near Houston, Texas. She writes contemporary romance and mystery/suspense. Although she writes daily, she still finds time to enjoy family and friends. She also enjoys cooking, gardening, and painting. She is active in several writer's organizations in the area. She belongs to National RWA and is a member of all three Houston area chapters: West Houston RWA, Northwest Houston RWA and Houston Bay Area RWA. She is owned by two cats and a small, yappy rescue dog. She would rather be sailing or on a beach somewhere, but if she can't do either of those things, she would just as soon write.

www.jdfaver.com www.livingwiththemuse.com

NEW RELEASES BY COFW MEMBERS!

ALWAYS ON HIS MIND

by Barbara Lohr

In the second book in the Man from Yesterday series, Mercedes plots a triumphant return to Manhattan, but hometown hero Finn has other plans. Heart-warming beach romance.

Available April 6.



NEW RELEASES BY COFW MEMBERS!

FIRST GLANCE

by 13 authors including Marcia James

FIRST GLANCE -- fall in love with the first stories in thirteen, very different, exciting series! There's something for every taste in these 13 romances from USA Today and Amazon bestselling authors. From light paranormal and Motorcycle Club romantic suspense to New Adult, reunited first loves, sports hunks, and even a taste of forbidden love. The 99-cent First Glance ebook box set has it all: sexy heroes and smart heroines in love stories to make you cheer, sigh, and beg for more.



ADRIAN'S PEARL

by Julia Blaine

Beautiful Catherine Weatherby, wounded in the war to wed and win the London Season, loses her place in Society when her face is scarred. She vows never to return to London or look in a mirror again. Catherine refuses to believe anyone can love an ugly woman such as herself.

A hero of the Peninsula War with Napoleon, Major Adrian Seaborn loves her but must stay in town, persuading Parliament to recognize the needs of returning veterans. Adrian was accused of murder before he was suddenly sent off to war. The real killer must be found. Adrian's tarnished reputation impedes his influence.



Can Adrian help those maimed in foreign battles and secure the woman he loves?

Available from Amazon in March, 2016.

Julia Blaine loves living on a dusty road in rural Ohio with one not-so-smart dog, two enigmatic cats and a grumpy truck driver.

NEW RELEASES BY COFW MEMBERS!



BREAKING OUT

by Denise Gwen w/a Angharad Jones

Denise's male-male romance, *Breaking Out*, for which she regained the rights from Secret Cravings Publishing, is soon going to be released as an audiobook through ACX.

“DOING IT YOUR WAY” WITH RED DOOR READS

Susan Gee Heino and Serena Gilley participating in multi-author release.

Each year Red Door Reads tries to lessen the sting of Tax Day by giving readers something special. This year we asked our readers what they'd like to read. We received many suggestions for character traits and story settings, then selected winners in a random drawing. Now, the authors of Red Door Reads, have taken those elements and crafted one amazing story from the winning suggestions.

“The Road Home” is truly a group effort. Each chapter was written by a different Red Door author. It is vibrant, unpredictable, and full of emotional twists and turns.



On release day, each author will post their chapter--completely FREE! This is our treat to you, so just sit back and enjoy.

Matthew Chadwick just inherited an island off the coast of Maine. The last time he was here he left Anne Bartlett in tears. Anne has spent her adult life trying to forget this blue-eyed Marine. But Matthew's return stirs up old feelings--and something more. Someone doesn't want him back on the island. As Matthew digs into the past, it becomes clear more than just Anne's heart is in danger...

Join us on April 15th to follow their story.

Follow Red Door Reads along the road home! www.RedDoorReads.com

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Becky Barker: Finished the final edit & approved the cover art for "Zack's Ranch." Moving into promo mode.

Julia Blaine: New book, "Adrian's Pearl" is about to be available at Amazon.

Kris Branch: After a slight glitch with my tablet, learning to use Scrivener.

Lisa Coffey: Working on "Leah's Story."

Linda Culbertson: Working on "Nora's Story" and getting ready for Yale Writer's Conference with Julia Quinn.

Jeanne Estridge: My paranormal romance, "Demon's Wager," finalized in the Diamonds in the Desert Contest and will be reviewed by Brenda Chen of Belle Books. "The Demon's in the Details," Paranormal, comic Romance.

Saralee Etter: Writers at the Crossroads, March 19. Critique of my work will be coming soon on the Writership podcast, <http://writership.org/podcast>.

Tanja Fazzari: Continuing my work on Paranormal romance.

Susan Gee Heino: Revisions for submission for Harlequin. Beginning Regency for upcoming multi-author release.

Pam Johnston: Self-published Christian.

Sandy Kachurek: Submitting a short story today to a YA Literary Magazine.

Nathan Lintz: Working on Children's Book. (First time attendee.)

Andrea McConnell: Almost ready to send partial manuscript per agent request.

Linda Rice: Writing.

Nancy White: Working on Historical Western.



BECKY BARKER'S KINDLE SCOUT PROGRAM EXPERIENCE

As many of you know, I currently have a Kindle Scout (KS for short) campaign running for my latest release, ZACK'S RANCH. Since launching the campaign, I've learned a few things I wasn't aware of before submitting my book. You can decide if they're pro or con.

Once a book is approved via KS, it is automatically enrolled in the Kindle Unlimited program where members can read books for free and authors earn some sort of collective royalty. I'm not too familiar with that program, but I intend to learn more.

Another thing I've learned is that anyone who nominates the book can get a free copy once it's published. I'm sure that's a big incentive for readers in the program.

One negative for KS is that its campaign links don't always work well. I was told they work best with Firefox, but it's certainly not the most common browser. If a clickable link leads to an error page, the user must cut and paste or try another browser. Technical support is slow to respond to email queries and the staff often gives a general "this is how it works" response rather than addressing a specific problem.

Since most of my thoughts on the program are strictly conjecture, I should put in a little disclaimer now. I really have no idea how Amazon decides which titles get published. At first, I thought it was just a popularity contest. If readers liked a story idea enough to make a nomination, the book would be published (providing the cover and writing were acceptable.) But that may not be the case.

When I make a daily check on my submission, I see how many votes it's garnered, but the statistics are far more extensive. I'm guessing there's an Amazon algorithm that keeps track of many contributing factors, including how many hours a book is on a hot and trending list, what percentage of nominations came from external links versus the KS community, what variety of URLs bring the readers to the page. There's a listing of direct traffic from web mail, bookmarks, cut/paste, etc. There's also a listing of URLs from various social media websites like Facebook, Google, Twitter, and personal websites. Lots and lots of factors to consider.

Supposedly, once my 30 day campaign is finished, the KS editorial team will decide if ZACK'S RANCH, should be published. Then it will be another 30 or so days before the book goes live on Amazon. I'm not sure how much the quality of my writing or the subject matter will count since contemporary westerns are a very small niche in the romance genre and an even smaller niche in popular fiction. I'm guessing the algorithm numbers will far outweigh the quality of writing.

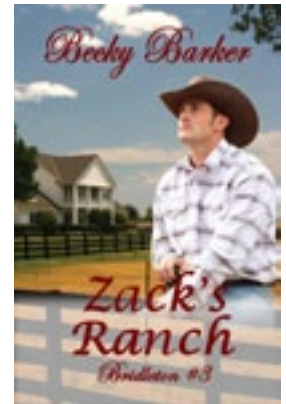
At this point, I'm torn between wanting my book to succeed with KS for the wide-spread exposure and wanting to make it available for my readers at a faster pace. What I hadn't anticipated was the stress involved with the whole process. Launching it before a major holiday wasn't the best-laid plan, either. Now that the commitment is made, I'll have to wait, watch and learn. My campaign ends April 18th.

For those who already nominated ZACK'S RANCH, my heartfelt thanks! For those who'd like to vote, please try cutting and pasting the following web address:

<https://kindlescout.amazon.com/p/3P7JVACJNJZU4>

You can also find a clickable link on my website. BeckyBarker.com

Hugs, Becky



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.

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