



A Proud Chapter of
Romance Writers of America®

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WELCOME TO CENTRAL OHIO FICTION WRITERS

COFW's June presenter was Elizabeth Heiter, who taught us "Putting the Suspense in Your Romantic Suspense." Wondering how to add tension and suspense to your love story? Check out Liz's presentation!

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

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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 6-18-2016

by Julia Blaine



Jane Conner, President, called the business meeting to order at 12:30 pm, reminding members to make out a nametag, turn off their cell phones, and fill out Works in Progress. We met at the Norwich Township Firehouse #83, Hilliard, Ohio.

Present were Linda Rice, Jody Brohard, Tanja Fazzari, Angie Hockman (visitor), Gina Smith, Sara Tyrchniewicz (visitor), Lisa Coffey, Nancy White, Nichole Christoff, Shawn Dickerson, Andrea McConnell, Kris Branch, Jeanne Estridge, Julia Blaine, Saralee Etter, Jane Conner, Robin Gianakopoulos, Susan Heino, Stacy McKitrick, Donna MacMeans, Jenessa Hardin, Cathy Matuszak, and Elizabeth Heiter (our speaker).

The Minutes and Treasurer's Report were approved.

Saralee volunteered to write the recap of Elizabeth Heiter's talk.

Shawn, Robin and Jane volunteered to be the Nominating Committee.

Andrea announced she will become Social Media Volunteer.

Lisa awarded incentives to Stacy whose 5th book was published May 15. She also received her RWA Five-Book Pin. Andrea placed 2nd in the Cleveland Rocks Contest. She also received a full manuscript submission request from editor Heidi Moore. Donna's CHARMING THE PROFESSOR has been nominated for the Prism and Reader's Choice Awards. Nancy received a rejection. Angie and Gina were both finalists in the Fire and Ice Contest sponsored by Chicago North RWA.

Julia Blaine reported on LEAD ME NOT, a Gay Inspirational Contemporary Romance she reviewed on Amazon. Other reviewers suggested it as a book for HS teens. It deals with teens coming out and is educational about Gay Lifestyle difficulties without being salacious. Christian ministers with very different opinions explain why they believe as they do.

Susan would like feedback from PAN members about planning an event in the fall.

Nancy reported on the ITF Contest which will close to entries at the end of the month. Entry rules are available on the website. Author Leigh Michaels will be the final judge for the Grand Prize Winner.

Saralee reported the Newsletter deadline is June 20. She would like craft articles. Any writer submitting and published will be paid \$15 and the material may be picked up by



COFW MEETING MINUTES (CONT'D)

other newsletters – giving the author wider publicity. She also explained that, for unexplained reasons, sometimes the internet sends the newsletter that is mailed to you to your spam folder.

Robin reported COFW's speakers for the rest of the year:

July 9—Beth Daniels (Date is changed due to RWA Conference.) The meeting will be held at the Norwich Township Firehouse #83 (the smaller firehouse facility).

August 16—RWA Conference Report

September 17—Alicia Rasley: Battle for Love. (Possibly a workshop – more on this later.)

October 15—to be announced

November 19—Tracy Brogan who has sold over 1 million books will speak on “Small Moments, Big Story.”

Linda is our membership chairman. She will contact RWA's Judy Scott about registering on the RWA website.

Linda is also exploring the possibility of a COFW Conference in 2017.

Adjourn.

PUTTING THE SUSPENSE IN YOUR ROMANTIC SUSPENSE

Speaker Recap by Saralee Etter

No matter what kind of romance story you're writing, your story can always benefit from adding suspense. Tension and uncertainty can propel the reader forward. Even though romance readers can expect that a story will end with the lovers happily together – whether it's “happily ever after” or “happy for now” – it's the unexpected but ultimately satisfying way that they reach their happy ending that makes a story worth reading.



Therefore, the principles of a romantic suspense story – which is a romance where the two main characters face an external danger that keeps them apart and adds complications to the resolution of their love story – can be used in a variety of romance subgenres.

In her presentation, romantic suspense author Elizabeth Heiter shared a number of tips on how to best blend suspense into your romance.

PUTTING THE SUSPENSE IN YOUR ROMANTIC SUSPENSE (CONT'D)

1. Research. Before getting started with your storytelling, it always helps to do your research. Readers are savvy, and they will be disappointed if you get these things wrong. If your characters are going to be members of law enforcement, make sure that you know the correct details, like what job titles are used in what branch of law enforcement, what weapons are favored by the police, and what jurisdictions are granted to the different branches of law enforcement. If someone has some special fighting skill, figure out how they learned it. Also, make sure you know how the “bad guys” operate. What crimes are they likely to be engaged in? What is the typical structure of a criminal organization? Even your setting can be used to increase the danger, or lull the reader (and characters) into a false feeling of security. Make every element you include in your story count.

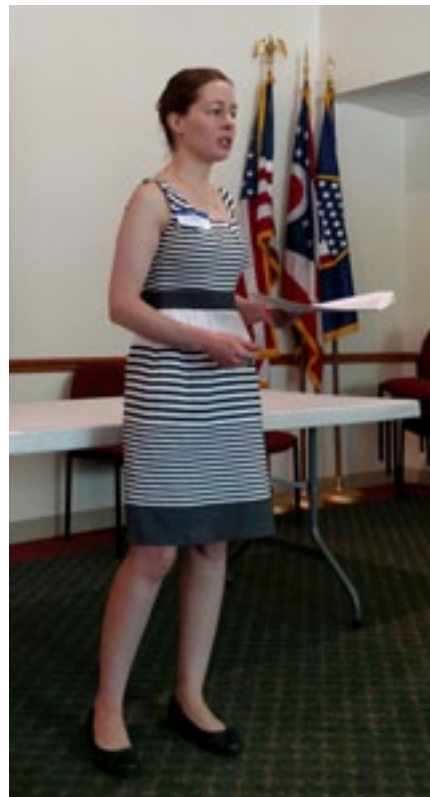
2. Know your villains. It's important to outline the goals, motivation and conflict of your villains as well as your protagonists. For every step forward that your protagonist takes, your antagonist takes two, so you need to know what's making them tick. It's not enough to make them “just evil.” Make sure the antagonist is a worthy opponent; not so powerful that the reader can't believe that the protagonist succeeded, but not too weak either, or the victory won't seem as great as it should.

3. Foreshadowing, clues, and red herrings.

When you set up a situation, make sure there's a payoff. Readers pay attention to unusual elements, so don't leave that unusual thing unexplained at the end, or the reader will be dissatisfied. As Anton

Chekhov noted, if there's a gun on the wall in the first act of a play, it had better go off by the third act. Red herrings are things that look like clues but lead off in the wrong direction, but they, too, must be explained. Real clues should be included, so that you are “playing fair” with the reader, but they ought to be skilfully buried in the middle of a sentence, scene or other storytelling element. Clues can also be hidden by having the characters discount them for some seemingly logical reason, or by putting them near a distracting red herring.

4. Sexual tension. The suspense and danger should increase the sexual tension between the lovers. But make sure their romance happens at appropriate moments in the story, and not when they're likely to be killed if they stop to fool around. Make sure to tie the suspense and the romance together by making the characters choose between their attraction or their suspicions.



Presenter Elizabeth Heiter

PUTTING THE SUSPENSE IN YOUR ROMANTIC SUSPENSE (CONT'D)

5. Intertwining the suspense and the romance. This is a key element for a romantic suspense, but also is valuable in all romance genres. The external elements of the plot should propel the romance forward, while the romance should affect the external plot. Since forward movement in a plot is the result of the characters' choices, the two elements must be mixed together.



6. Balance of power. Make sure that it looks like either side could win, at different steps along the way in the story. You can increase the tension by making the characters think that they are winning, only to discover at the end of a scene (or chapter) that they have badly misjudged the situation.

7. Black moment. The black moments of the suspense and the romance can happen simultaneously or they can happen one after the other, but both need to happen. If you want your hero and heroine to join forces and battle the antagonist together, that is great. But it's equally as great if one lover fights the bad guy and almost loses, and the other lover belatedly realizes that they almost lost the most important person in their life.

8. Tie up your loose ends. Make sure you tuck in all those loose ends! Explain why the red herrings were not real clues. Solve all the mysteries. In the end, the reader should be doubly satisfied – the lovers have triumphed over the baddies, and have found each other, all at the same time.

Follow all these steps, and your readers will thank you for taking them on a roller-coaster ride they won't easily forget!

Liz Heiter has been a member of RWA since 2003, and she sold her first 5 books in 2012 to MIRA/Harlequin Suspense. Find her online at www.elizabethheiter.com.



WRITING THE SOUTHERN ALPHA MALE (AND CHEESY GRITS)

by Suzanne Johnson

This article was published in the Southern Magic Romance Writer's (Birmingham, Alabama) June 2012 Magic Moments newsletter.

Well, they're SORT OF related.

There are two things I'm hearing a lot of chatter about these days, which got me thinking about what makes a Southern fictional romantic hero?

One of the email loops I belong to has been in a raging debate over when a fictional hero crosses the line from being alpha to being abusive. But toss the abusive alphas aside and look at the traditional alpha male hero. He makes our heart pound in a novel but, as a general rule, is someone we'd avoid in real life. The sexy, commanding neanderthal who gets saved from himself and changed in the presence of his one-and-only...in real life, he's kind of a jerk. But this is fiction, and we like our neanderthals who can be transformed.

How do we translate that into Southern? If you're a Northern politician visiting the South, you just throw out terms like "y'all" and "biscuits and cheesy grits" and think that will make you fit in as a Southerner.

Uh, no.

See, here's the thing. If you're not Southern, or don't know one intimately, you probably can't write a Southern hero who's going to sound authentic. So here's a primer to at least get you safely started.



1. Avoid dialect. If you don't know when "y'all" is appropriate and when it isn't, best to avoid it. Also, different parts of the South have different dialects. A New Orleans native alpha male will sound like he's from the Bronx; a north Louisiana guy will sound like he's from Mississippi; a north Alabama guy will have a singsong lilt and a more nasal accent, while a south Alabama guy will have more of the "classic" soft drawl, also like a guy from Mississippi. In large Southern cities, there's often no accent at all, just generic American. So don't try it if you don't know it.

2. Southern alphas drive pickup trucks, not SUVs. Said trucks are usually American-made. They don't have gun racks unless the guy actually hunts.

WRITING THE SOUTHERN ALPHA MALE (AND CHEESY GRITS)

3. Southern alphas might or might not give a flip about NASCAR but they will always, always, ALWAYS care about football, particularly Southeastern Conference college ball. Whether or not they actually went to one of the colleges they pull for is immaterial.

4. Southern alphas are dog people. Cats are for metrosexuals and other questionable types.



5. Food is an important part of the Southern culture and is therefore important to the Southern alpha male, and you might well find “cheese grits” on a breakfast menu. What you won’t find is “cheesy grits.” (Dear Presidential Candidate, see #1, above.) If a Southerner does not know how to cook something, it is perfectly acceptable to dip it in batter and fry it or slap it between two pieces of bread with mayonnaise (which in New Orleans has two syllables and is pronounced “my-nez”). Thus such delicacies as tomato sandwiches and fried green tomatoes.

Okay, lesson over. Off to pour some bourbon for an alpha male (because a real Southern man will not drink anything fizzy or pastel) and relax on the porch, y'all.

--Suzanne Johnson is the author of a new urban fantasy series beginning with *ROYAL STREET* and *RIVER ROAD* from Tor Books. And she also writes under the pseudonym of Susannah Sandlin. Her vampire romance trilogy, *The Penton Legacy*, through Montlake Romance starts with *REDEMPTION*. She's a member of Southern Magic.



NEW RELEASES BY COFW MEMBERS!

IN A HEARTBEAT

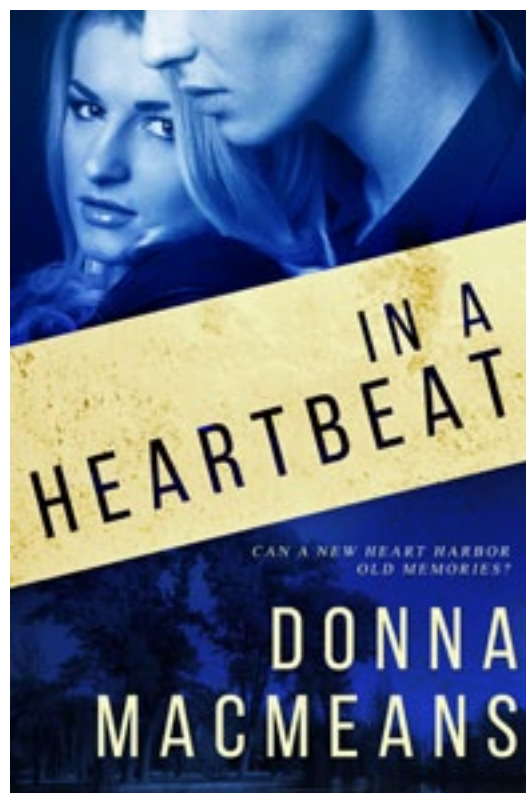
by Donna MacMeans

Transplanted hearts can hold memories. They can give voice to the dead. And they can hold the key to identifying a serial killer.

Assigned to do an audit for an old client may finally give Certified Public Accountant Angela Blake what she really wants: independence from a family that's been overprotective for far too long. Her recent heart transplant has given her a new lease on life and she's ready to live. The demanding new CEO of Hayden Industries may be distractingly sexy, but Angela's audit reveals troubling hints of deception. What is he hiding?

Hank Renard never wanted to be CEO of Hayden Industries, but his parents' impending financial ruin gave him no choice. If he doesn't reverse the flow of red ink, he'll lose the lucrative incentives offered. The clumsy, adorable auditor with the face of an angel only adds to his problems.

A series of troubling accidents point to a dangerous truth: someone wants Angela Blake dead. With her job, her heart and her life in peril, will Angela survive to discover a long-awaited love, or will her new life end before it's barely begun?



THE PRINCE AND THE MIDWIFE

by Robin Gianna

His Cinderella midwife

Gabriella Cain prides herself on the exemplary service she provides to her celebrity moms-to-be. So she certainly doesn't appreciate Dr. Rafael Moreno suddenly taking over her department...even if he is royalty—and gorgeous!

But distrust soon turns to secrets shared as irresistible Rafe proves dangerously easy to fall for. With a painful past behind her, can Gabriella dare hope for a fairy-tale ending with her prince?

TOP TIPS FROM AGENTS AND EDITORS:

SAVE YOUR WRITING LEGACY

by Donna Maloy

The following article first appeared in the June 2016 issue of In Print!, the monthly newsletter of Houston Bay Area RWA.

Do you have a literary executor? Do you need one?

The answer to the second question is Yes, even if you have a will and have designated who will inherit your “estate.” It’s Yes whether you’re published or unpublished, indie or traditionally published. Why?

The Problems

Questions will arise as your estate is being settled, and perhaps for many years after.

What will happen to the income (if any) from your published work?

Who will negotiate the license when Hollywood comes calling and wants to make a movie of your bestseller? Or a publisher wants to compile your short stories into an anthology?

Who will decide about license renewals?

Who will decide if your unpublished work should be put up on Amazon?

Who will decide if your unfinished work should be finished and by whom?

Who even knows where all your unfinished and unpublished manuscripts are hidden? Who knows which is the most recent version?

Do you want your next of kin saddled with all this? Would your next of kin know how to handle it?

The Solutions

The first solution is to get your literary affairs in order.

Collect printed copies of your work (published, unpublished, finished, unfinished) in files that are clearly labeled. Make certain the final edited draft is the one you save. If you’ve made changes to a published book or short story, indicate your intentions regarding future publication.

Have an easily accessible list or spreadsheet of any manuscripts currently out on submission, with agent/editor names and addresses.

Keep copies of all signed contracts handy.

Once you’ve got everything organized, you will need to designate a literary executor. Ask someone knowledgeable about your work for permission to name them in your will. Designate an alternate, too, if possible. Note: the executor shouldn’t be your agent or your editor, who each would have a financial stake in any negotiations that might be needed.

TOP TIPS: SAVE YOUR LITERARY LEGACY (CONT'D)

Then make certain you have a will and that it clearly specifies the name of the person who has agreed to do the job of literary executor.

The last solution involves keeping your executor informed about where your files are located, who your agent(s) and editor(s) are, and any special instructions you may have.

Don't put this off. Repeat: Don't put this off.

Credit: This article was based on an eye-opening blog post from über-agent Janet Reid. If you don't already subscribe to Reid's blog, I urge you to sign up. It's consistently full of the best advice in the industry.

Donna Maloy is a published author of fiction and plays for adults, teens, tweens and young adults. Her first book for middle grade, CELIA AND THE WOLF won the Lyra Award for best juvenile fiction in 2014. She has been teaching writing at the college and community level for more than ten years.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM ITF CONTEST COORDINATOR NANCY WHITE

Hello Everyone,

The **Ignite the Flame Contest** is now closed to entries! We received 82 wonderful entries. And we are going to do our best to provide some awesome feedback!

Now, we need you to be a volunteer judge!

If you are a PRO or a PAN member of RWA and have not entered the contest, please, **please** volunteer to judge the ITF contest. Help us uphold the great reputation of the ITF Contest as a learning tool and a thrilling chance for a writer to get her work in front of important agents and editors. And remember, judging our contest is a terrific way for you to learn more about the craft of writing romance.

Judges have **the whole month of July to judge** their entries. You can **choose how many entries you would like to judge, and in what categories**. The category coordinators will be helping you, sending you reminders and making sure you get the entries back in time.

Any questions, just ask.

Please send your email to nancywhite0529@gmail.com.

Thanks in advance!

THE MOST INTERESTING ROMANCE WRITER IN THE WORLD

By Jane Haertel writing as Susannah Hardy

The following article first appeared in the June 2012 issue of *CONNECTIONS*, the monthly newsletter of CTRWA.



Have you met The Most Interesting Romance Writer in the World? Here are a few facts about her:

- Her participles dangle, yet she is all the more attractive because of it.
 - She does not submit to publishers. Publishers submit to her.
 - Her books stay on the shelves at Barnes and Noble until she says it's time to remove them.
 - Head hops – and is praised for it.
 - Knows exactly how Margaret Mitchell would have given Rhett and Scarlett their HEA in a sequel, but will never tell.
-
- Reviewers ask her to review their reviews.
 - Gave style tips to Strunk & White.
 - Successfully puts “i” before “e” — even after “c.”
 - Literary agents pay her 15% of what they earn.
 - Nora Roberts secretly asks her for career advice.
 - Has solved the *Mysteries of Udolpho* – twice.
 - Received a million dollar advance — for a single Facebook post.
 - Her subjects (and verbs) all agree: She IS the most interesting romance writer in the world. Stay creative, my friends!

Jane Haertel writes humorous romantic mysteries under the name Susannah Hardy. She serves as CTRWA's 2012 treasurer.



WORKS IN PROGRESS

Julia Blaine: Got the yard cleaned up. I have a plan for writing.

Kris Branch: Working on untitled novella.

Nichole Christoff: Finishing latest "Jamie Sinclair," novel and outlining next novel.

Lisa Coffey: Working on "Leah's Story." (Still!)

Jane Conner: Sadly I haven't been able to work on my WIP this month.

Shawn Dickerson: Learning Scrivener while writing my Paranormal Romance. Starting my query letters on a finished novel and starting my nonfiction 7/1.

Jeanne Estridge: Working on a Contemporary.

Saralee Etter: Editing first Lucy Turner mystery, Victoria Road Noir.

Susan G. Heino: Revising proposal for editor; working on another Regency Historical.

Angie Hockman: (Visitor) "The Hustler," second draft. Revision of Romantic Suspense novel.

Andrea McConnell: Making good progress on edits. Trying to finish final edits and 20K words in next 4 weeks.

Stacy McKittrick: Revising "Ghostly Interlude." (Still!)

Donna MacMeans: Working on a novella for an anthology.

Cathy Matusak: Working on Roaring 20's Paranormal Romance for my MFA thesis novel.

Linda Rice: Plugging away.

Gina Smith: Editing "The Double D."

Sarah Tyrchniewicz: (Visitor) "Hindsight," 2nd draft.

Nancy White: A couple short stories on final edit and working on Historical novel.



COFW 2016 LEADERSHIP

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