



A Proud Chapter of
Romance Writers of America®

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WELCOME TO CENTRAL OHIO FICTION WRITERS, 2016

This is the first issue of the 2016 newsletter for the Central Ohio Fiction Writers. You're going to receive your newsletter via a new delivery method this year -- direct to your in-box (if I can do this correctly). So here we go...

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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.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COFW DECEMBER BOARD MEETING

by Jane Conner, COFW President

The new board met on January 9, 2016. All members were present. The following items of business were discussed and actions were taken.

1. The Board voted to switch the March meeting from the 19th to the 12th as most of the Board will be attending the Cambridge Writers' Event on the 19th.
2. The Board is very concerned about dwindling attendance at monthly meetings and the difficulty the chapter has in filling Board positions every year. This has caused many chapters of RWA to fold. In turn their holdings transfer to RWA. The Board decided that since a speaker and venue had not been contracted for the Fall Conference, we would forgo that event. They decided to focus efforts on bringing more members back to monthly meetings. The Board voted to substantially increase the speaker line item of our budget to give VP of Programs, Robin Gianna, the resources she and her committee need to engage quality speakers. Robin plans to create a member survey regarding topics of interest.
3. The 2016 Budget was drafted and approved. One line item, for an external audit, has been omitted by e-mail communication vote since that meeting.* It was replaced by a line item for the purchase of monthly In-the-cloud accounting software and storage for our treasurer. A digital copy of the 2016 budget is posted in the files section of the COFW loop.
4. The Board discussed the domain name issue that has been troublesome for the chapter. They also discussed the pros and cons of outsourcing a new web site design and updates. The Board voted to hire Rachel Conner, Jane Conner's daughter, to design a new site and facilitate the updates. Rachel will also design a postcard for members to distribute to promote COFW. The president made note for the minutes that she was abstaining from a vote on this issue.

* Many thanks to members Donna MacMeans, Susan Gee Heino, and non-member David Conner for spending MLK day doing a review of the last two years of COFW's financial records. It was a long day so please say thanks next time you see them.

MINUTES OF THE COFW BUSINESS MEETING 1-16-2016

by Julia Blaine, COFW Secretary

Meeting was brought to order by our new president, Jane Conner. New officers for 2016 include, Stacy McKittrick – Treasurer, Robin Gianakopoulos – Programming Vice President, Saralee Etter – Newsletter Editor, and Julia Blaine – Secretary.

During the next four months we will be meeting at a different Hilliard firehouse, Station 83, 4283 Davidson Road.

Jane brought the meeting to order, reminded members to turn off cell phones, passed out nametags and the Works in Progress sheet. We welcomed visitors and introduced ourselves.

Present were: Susan Heino, Donna MacMeans. Wendy Thorn-Smith, Ally Scott, Nancy White, Andrea McConnell, Alicia Anthony, Becky Barker, Janessa Hardin, Lisa Thompson, Kris Branch, Linda Rice, Sandy Kachurek, Don Hart and our officers.

The deadline for the next newsletter is February 1. Writers submitting Articles that are published in the newsletter receive \$15.

Our new treasurer reported \$16,508.25 in the treasury.

Because of rules at our new meeting place – concerning bringing in food – we will not at this time be selling brownies for Financial Aid for members. Anyone wishing to donate to this fund can give money to Stacy. There is a balance in the Financial Aid Fund at this time.

Jane passed out Service Awards to members unable to attend our December meeting.

Our March meeting will be held March 12 rather than March 19 because so many members will be attending a book-signing in Cambridge, Ohio at that time.

The COFW Board met January 9.

1 - They made the decision not to have a Conference in the fall of 2016 due to dwindling attendance at meetings. They decided to concentrate on offering programs that would draw more writers to our regular meetings. Robin is looking for speakers and will be sending a survey to members asking what sort of programs might help them.

2 - We will re-vamp our website, "COFWevents.org." We also have the websites, "COFW of RWA.com," and "centralohiofictionwriters." Rachel Conner will be our new Web Mistress. She will do our updates.

3 - The Board voted on a new budget for 2016: Expenses - \$8363.00

Revenue -- 2252.00

With a negative net of 6111.00

Linda Rice is our Membership Chairman. Dues for COFW are \$25. RWA are \$99.

JANUARY 2016 MINUTES, CONT'D

RWA dues are paid on the anniversary of the month you first joined. To pay online, go to **cofwevents> pay> (and that takes you to the RWA website)**. The COFW dues are due on January 1 of each year. Both organizations also accept checks but like being paid online. We now have 30 members.

Saralee expects to arrange for our newsletter to be sent to individual members through Mailchimp or Announcements. Give Saralee your email if you are not on the Announcements List. (email her at saralee_etter@yahoo.com)

Our newsletter includes New Releases, Minutes, the Treasurer's Report, Works in Progress, and articles on writing.

Sandy Kachurek volunteered to write up our speaker's program for the newsletter.

Nancy White reported on Ignite the Flame. She has submitted information about our contest to RWR. The grand prize is a critique from Leigh Michaels.

Nancy has a number of editors and agents who have agreed to help judge the contest. Discussion of how to run the contest. How many manuscripts should be sent to an editor or agent? Nancy will send a list of editors and agents to the membership so we can give her feedback on who might be dependable. Some editors and agents agree to look at contest material but never get back to us. There will be 3 winners in each category. The contest begins June 1.

Incentives: Lisa reported that Stacy's novel, "My Sunny Vampire," reached the royalty level to qualify her for PAN status. Julia and Saralee reported their new critique partnership.

As Pan Coordinator, Susan wants a list of published authors. Please tell Susan.

The next meeting is February 15. We adjourned for Donna's presentation: Tax Insights for Writers.

DECEMBER 2015 COFW TREASURER'S REPORT

Total Cash:

Checking: \$ 1,812.56

Savings 1: \$ 9,201.60

Savings 2: \$ 1,589.27

PayPal: \$ 3,904.82

Total \$ 16,508.25



DONNA MACMEANS: TAX TIPS FOR WRITERS

by Sandy Kachurek

If someone gave her audience an eleven-page, double-sided packet of information and said, "Let's get started. This is going to take a while," groans would erupt. People would slip out of the room.

Not if the someone was Donna MacMeans.

Donna opened the new year of the COFW as guest speaker and tax specialist. Her humor and fitting examples made the presentation informative and interesting.

Who would expect less from a romance writer who not only knows the tax code but penned *The Casanova Code* as well?



"People find it amazing," said Donna, "that I am a CPA and a writer."

Donna always enjoyed math and English. She attended The Ohio State University through a scholarship program in journalism. When money became an issue, she sought employment. Her company offered to pay for college, and she returned as an accounting major in the School of Business.

She's been a licensed certified public accountant for over thirty-five years, working with writers and other self-employed workers. Being a writer herself strengthens her skills as a CPA.

"I have raised my prices, but my clients won't leave," laughed Donna.

Donna is valuable because she is thorough. Her thick packet contained eleven points that every writer should keep in mind throughout the year.

Her first point stressed that an author think of her writing as a business not a hobby. "Being a business can lead to substantial tax savings." The IRS uses nine factors to determine if your writing is a business. If so, then "your intent is to make a profit." COFW members asked questions and added their experiences, particularly in discussion of point two, whether an author's business should be one of three entities: sole proprietor (self-employed), LLC

(Limited Liability Corporation) or Subchapter S Corporation (S Corp).

Donna believed that "most writers function just fine as a sole proprietor. It's easy and doesn't require a lot of hoops and registration."

The other tax tips offered techniques to keeping the actions, costs and profits of one's business legal according to tax laws and expectations.

"Point 4: Keep Good Records" was extensive.

SPEAKER RECAP: DONNA MACMEANS (CONT'D)

First in the process was getting a checking account and credit card for business purposes only. Next was following at least one of various methods for keeping track of expenditures.

Donna advised beginning manually, noting revenues and expenses on paper then exploring automated methods. "If you can write a novel, create characters out of thin air, concoct an intriguing plot" said Donna, "you can keep track of revenues and expenses without a problem."

She personally prefers Intuit's Quicken computer software over spreadsheets and PayPal for its great cost activity reports. However, she pointed out the drawbacks, too.

Additional record-keeping advice included the importance of taking business deductions from automobile mileage, trips, books and video purchases and the home office.

"The IRS is offering an easier way to calculate the home office deduction this year," Donna explained. Rather than just the percentage of square footage of the office (with a mandatory, closable door), "there's now a standard rate that you can apply to the square footage of your home office."

On the subject of cheating on deductions or lying about income, Donna warned, "If the IRS catches you lying about your deductions, they'll slap you with a penalty and a tax bill. If the IRS catches you lying [significantly] about your income, they'll slap you in prison."

No tax talk would be official without the forms themselves. Donna had displays of the W2, Schedule C and the 1099.

It's tax season and Donna is busy. She sees her clients. She writes her novels. She manages both her writing and CPA businesses. On a gray, freezing day in January, she also took a few hours and a lengthy packet of valuable information and shared her best tax tips for the writer.



PAN SPOTLIGHT: DONNA MACMEANS

by Susan Gee Heino,

COFW Published Author Network Liaison

This month we are proud to spotlight our own long-time member and mutli-published author, Donna MacMeans. She is an RWA Golden Heart Award® winner and her first book was published with Berkley Sensations (Penguin) in October of 2007. She has published in historical romance, historical paranormal romance, time travel romance, and contemporary paranormal romance. Her books have been published by Berkley,



Samhain, LTD Press, and recently she's become independently published, with her time travel, **CHARMING THE PROFESSOR**.

Aside from her busy writing schedule, Donna is a CPA and she also serves on the RWA National Board as Treasurer. COFW is lucky to have her as an active and vital member of our local chapter, and I'm thrilled that she's taken the time to let us get to know her a little better here.

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

A: One of my tax clients saw an article in the paper about COFW and told me. She knew that I was working on a romance. At the time, we were meeting at Ga-hanna Library fairly exclusively (one of our members worked there). I remember meeting Christine Stahurski who later became my critique partner. She was talking about historical names for a "manroot" (grin) and commented on "male physiques watching" at the community pool. I really wondered what kind of group I had stumbled into :). I think discovering COFW and RWA are the keys to my being published and I will be eternally grateful for having discovered them both.

Q: Tell us what you love most about the specific sub-genres you write in?

A: I love writing more than writing in a particular subgenre. Just saying. I love the craft of telling a good story. But beyond that, I love the lack of cellphones & automobiles in historicals as it makes the suspense easier :) . I love the clothes in my Victorians and the difficulty in removing said clothes in historicals :) . I love the absolute freedom of imagination in paranormals. You can do anything in that genre. I love the suspense of discovering the villain in romantic suspense. I'd like to try a cozy mystery one of these days. Like I said, I love all the sub-genres – as long as they're romance.

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

A: Write a good book. You've got to sell books to hit the PAN entry level. You can do that easier with a good book. Now this next line of advice is inspired by the book I'm currently reading which is sort of "meh." Plot will not sell your book as

PAN SPOTLIGHT: DONNA MACMEANS (CONT'D)

much as good characterization and very good storytelling (craft). Just saying.

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

I love call stories! Let me set the stage. I had written this really sexy, really fun romance called THE EDUCATION OF MRS. BRIMLEY and sent it around to every traditional romance editor. Everyone and their dog rejected the manuscript. The final straw came in 2006. Kate Duffy at Kensington had requested my full manuscript in the fall of the previous year, but I'd heard nothing from her. Then I learned I was a finalist in the Golden Heart contest. I sent a note to Kate Duffy (whom I had high hopes for and had every digit crossed that she'd say she wanted the manuscript) that I was a GH finalist. She responded with a rejection letter. A very nice and personal rejection letter, but a rejection all the same. I was devastated. I figured it was a sign that this manuscript was not something NY was interested in and started an historical paranormal – a totally different genre. I went to Nationals a bit depressed that year. I went primarily because I knew there were perks with being a finalist, having been a finalist before, but I didn't bother with a new dress for the ceremony or spandex – I figured I didn't stand a chance at a win (after all Kate Duffy rejected it). I didn't do much with my hair and makeup AND to top it off – I accidentally insulted Nora Roberts who was the emcee that year. (another long story)

Needless to say, I won the Golden Heart for long historical that year. I think the fates arranged it so Nora would recognize who the idiot was that suggested she'd gained weight. Let me say here that Nora is one of the most gracious, classy women I've ever known. It was a stupid comment! Anyway, I had pitched Mrs. Brimley to Dorchester earlier that day (they had lost the manuscript when I'd sent it in the previous year) and Leah Hultenschmidt (Dorchester editor) and I jumped up and down in celebration at the win. About three weeks later, I got a phone call. I thought it was the agent I'd been playing phone tag with, but it was Leah. She offered for the manuscript. Fortunately, I had the presence of thought to say I'd think about publishing with Dorchester, but then I immediately called that agent, Cori Deyoe of Three Seas Literary. Cori said she could get a better deal, but I'd have to sign her. I did. The next day, Cori called to say that St. Martin's offered for the manuscript. I was ecstatic, but I told her Cindy Hwang at Berkley had the full and while I didn't think she was interested, she needed to be advised of the offer. Turns out Cindy was interested. I was in an auction. It took more than a week to work out, but Berkley prevailed with a three book contract. This really is a roller coaster business.

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

A: I'm the RWA Treasurer and a member of their board plus I have an active tax practice which makes it difficult to write about three months out of the year. I find during those times if I open up my file every single day and change one thing – I'll make progress on my manuscript. Of course, when you try to change one thing, you'll end up changing more – but if I change one thing, I've kept the promise to myself.

PAN SPOTLIGHT: DONNA MACMEANS (CONT'D)

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

A: Fans. Hands down – absolute best thing ever. Fan mail. Fans at a book signing. We write in an isolated environment but the hope that someone will appreciate our efforts keeps us going. When that happens...it justifies all the anxiety and effort.

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

A: I wish I'd realized that writing the manuscript is only a small part of being published. Promotion takes more time and equal talent in my opinion. You will be pushed to promote, promote, promote – but it's the next manuscript that is really the important thing to consider and it can't get lost in all that promotion. I also wished I'd realized that editors are not gods :) and they are not writers. They can tell you if something isn't working for them in a story, but often they don't know how to fix it – that's your job.

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

A: Yes, I have an agent, Cori Deyoe at Three Seas Literary. An agent is important if you plan to sell to NY, but not absolutely critical. An agent is not important if you self-publish or sell to Harlequin. All agents are not equal. Some are big on editing a manuscript, others aren't. Some are cheerleaders (I needed a cheerleader!), others are more like sharks. Different writers need different agents at different stages of their career. Be careful which one you choose, if you choose one at all.

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: I've done all three. I've learned a small press will take more time promoting you and providing forums for you to talk to other authors, but they don't necessarily do the best job in editing. They can get you into a bookstore, however and that's a biggie. A small press is a great way to start a career, in my opinion.

A large press is great for editing and issuing a quality product, but you don't get much input into the important things like the cover or promotion venues. You will get much more visibility, your book (if they do a book) will be in the bookstore, you get reviews with RT, you can do signings, the publishers will host a publisher book signing at National, they provide some really nice perks – but you won't earn a lot of money per book. Plus, the big publishers are only interested in books that will appeal to a large market. They will ignore niche markets. These days, the big publishers are leaning to digital publishing only and not doing a book at all. Often a big press is accused of throwing new authors up against a wall to see what sticks. There's some truth to that. They do very little in educating you about a writing career – that you must do on your own. However, if a big publisher would guarantee a printed book, I'd stay with them because they allow room for writing – but not much.

With indie publishing, you have to do it all – from finding editors, proofreaders, cover artists, and formatters – to, of course, writing a really good book and promoting it. I like the control this brings. I like being able to pick my cover and then tailor my story to reflect the cover image. I also like having my own self-imposed deadlines, which are very flexible to my needs :) . I especially like the money you earn per book as you earn both the writer's and the publisher's portion – but I don't like the amount of work necessary in

PAN SPOTLIGHT: DONNA MACMEANS (CONT'D)

production and promotion, and I don't like the stress of the constant output.

What I'd really like is to be allowed to write a good book, hand it over to my publisher and then let them sell multi-millions of the book for me without my input. LOL. Never going to happen. :)

What I've learned is that you get better and stronger with every book you write. You can't publish a book unless you spend time in the chair with a keyboard. The more you write, the more you'll be able to determine your own strengths and weaknesses and the more you'll recognize your core story. A series of books are hot right now, but writing the necessary books takes time. The payoff comes with the third book in a series. Still, everything hinges on writing the book – a good book.

Thanks, Donna, for letting us shine the spotlight on you this month! If anyone wants to know more about Donna and what she writes, please check out her website at www.DonnaMacMeans.com. She can be found on social media at <https://www.facebook.com/donna.macmeans> and her Facebook Fan Page is <https://www.facebook.com/Donna-MacMeans-152106361521316/>.

NEW RELEASES BY COFW MEMBERS!



BY THE ENCHANTMENT OF MOONLIGHT

by Serena Gilley

Available Feb. 2, 2016, from Grand Central Forever Yours

In a world where desire is forbidden and passion can turn deadly, two Fairies begin a dangerous dance with both . . .

Swift, Enforcer for the Fairy Council, knows something is amiss. Not only does he sense the Realm is in danger, but his own magical abilities are under attack. It's as if his strong, steely will is being replaced by human characteristics like need, want, and lust. Especially after he reunites with his sexy rule-following colleague . . .

Career-minded Pimma is shocked when Swift reveals a secret conspiracy within their own Fairy Council. But even more mind-blowing are the erotic emotions that overcome her as they begin their investigation. Something is stirring their most illicit fantasies, negating their powers, and threatening the balance between the human and magical realms. To save themselves and their people, Swift and Pimma will tangle with temptation and experience feelings more exhilarating than any magic they've ever known. But their enemy may be closer-and more seductive-than they realize . . .

NEW RELEASES BY COFW MEMBERS!



HIS THRILLING TOUCH

by Lynn Gale

To please his dying father, Brice Chandler agrees to an arranged marriage to Miranda Smith, believing no father in his right mind would give his daughter to a stranger. Miranda's father, however, is more than happy to accept the proposal, leaving Brice engaged to a woman he's never met.

Learning of her father's betrayal, Miranda runs away. On the banks of a river in Tennessee, ruthless outlaws attack. Miranda is saved by a handsome stranger. She accepts his offer of help, unaware he is her intended husband.

Led to believe Miranda is a widow, Brice feels obligated to help her reach her destination. Spending many days and nights together, mutual attraction blooms. Each fight against the growing desire, aware of the promise to wed another. The circumstances which brought them together may be the ones to drive them apart forever.

SHATTERED DREAMS

By Sandy Loyd

It's all fun and games until someone dies. . .

Claire doesn't miss her lying, cheating husband, but that doesn't mean she killed him. Someone else committed the crime and framed her for it, and she prays it was anyone but her twin sister, who had motive and opportunity.

Jason wants to believe Claire, but a lie of omission destroys his trust in her. Is she truly innocent and deserving of his heart, or is she seducing him to ensure he defends her? With doubts assailing him, Jason is determined to solve the murder, even if it means hardening his heart and pushing Claire out of his life.

Shards of lies and betrayal can shatter anyone's dreams, but her mistake just might destroy him.



NEW RELEASES BY COFW MEMBERS!



WICKED GAME (REINDEER GAMES)

by Lily Vega

All's fair in love and war when the Reindeer Games are in play!

Santa didn't give bad boy Elf Brody his Christmas wish. Instead of sexy Beryl, he's stuck with goody-goody Holly for a partner. But Brody discovers the best gifts aren't always wrapped in the fanciest paper and Holly is so sweet, she melts on his tongue.

GOING ALL IN (1 NIGHT STAND)

by Lily Vega

Ian Harding didn't gamble on getting expelled from the poker room for defending a gorgeous cocktail waitress. Another loss and he'll be forced to face the past he escaped to Sin City to avoid. But Lady Luck is finally on his side when he wins a date arranged by the 1Night Stand dating service.

Jaded by the men she meets at the casino, Kira Marchi bets on Madame Eve to set her up with the right guy to work through her sexual bucket list. When her date turns out to be the sexy poker player who came to her rescue in the poker room, she can't wait to get started on that list.

One night isn't enough for Ian or Kira, but he has a past to face and she doesn't think a future for them is in the cards. Can he convince her to go all in?

Going All In (1Night Stand) came in second place in the Oklahoma Romance Writer's short erotic category of the International Digital Awards Contest.



NEW RELEASES BY COFW MEMBERS!



8 HOUNDS A-HOWLING

by Marcia James

Celebrity photographer "Jax" Jackson volunteers to shoot the Klein's K-9s' dog-themed "12 Days of Christmas" fundraising calendar.

His hidden agenda: Convince past love and calendar coordinator Amy Walters to give him a second chance.



RACING HEARTS

by Marcia James

Stock car legend, Tom "Torque" Tyler, faces a bleak future following a traumatic head injury and seizures. Determined to drag her high-school crush from his self-imposed solitude, service dog trainer, Meg Klein, and a tiny but talented seizure response dog bring Tom hope and love.



WORKS IN PROGRESS

Ally Scott & Wendy Thorn-Smith —“Lucy Abrams” “His Highland Prize” in finishing stages. Book cover done. Close to self-publish.

Alicia Anthony – Working on second novel in mainstream suspense genre. It is called Inheritance

Nancy White – Melting Carrie’s Heart historical western

Susan Gee Heino – working on plotting next Regency, preparing for Feb. release of “By the Enchantment of Moonlight under pen name, Serena Gilley

Andrea McConnell – one month layoff from writing for holidays. Back to editing again The British Captain.

Donna MacMeans – published Charming the Professor last month, still promoting. Editing and revising In A Heartbeat for spring release. Writing to Bait a Rake (whew!)

Becky Barker – finished my third book in my Bridleton series, Zack’s Ranch should be released in March. Concentrating on edits and cover art now.

Kris Branch – working on my second and third chapters of my single title paranormal

Lisa Thompson – blog about travel at whileawaythehours. I am also finishing up revising my first novel, A Sunday Kind of Love. Will send it off to a publisher who is interested next month.

Lisa Coffey – working on Leah’s story.

Linda Rice – Looking forward to more time to write.

Sandy Kachurek – seeking a rep for my mermaid novel and working on Book 2.

Robin Gianna – Doing final revision of book 8 for Harlequin Medical Romance and about to begin a new Christmas story.

Julia Blaine – finally have a critique partner

Saralee Etter –drafting novella for beginning of historical cozy mystery series featuring Gilbert and Sullivan. Blogging on Victorian history with emphasis on Gilbert and Sullivan at my blog, A Fine Mystery Indeed. saraleeetter.com/blog/ Began critique partnership with Julia Blaine.

Stacy McKittrick – Polishing novella A Vampire Wedding for publishing. Editing/ revising “Ghostly Interlude” with a goal to finish by March 31st.

COFW 2016 LEADERSHIP

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| | | |
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