



A Proud Chapter of
Romance Writers of America®

May 2016

Volume XXVIII, Issue 5

WELCOME TO CENTRAL OHIO FICTION WRITERS

COFW's May presentation was a special screening of the documentary film, "Love Between the Covers" - an inside look at romance novel authors, readers, and the community of (mostly) women who make up the Romance Writers of America.

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 5-14-2016

by Julia Blaine

Our May meeting was held at the Norwich Township Safety and Services Building, 5181 Northwest Parkway, Hilliard, Ohio 43026

The meeting was called to order by President Jane Conner. She reminded us to turn down our cell phones, fill out a name tag, and contribute to Works in Progress as to your current writing.

In attendance were, Jane Conner, Stacy McKittrick, Robin Gianakopoulos, Julia Blaine, Saralee Etter, Jenessa McRoy, Susan Heino, Jeanne Estridge, Lillian Zoller, Linda Rice, Becky Barker, Karen Harper, Cindy Stonebrook, J. Paulette Forshey, Samantha Barker, Sandy Kachurek, Andrea McConnell, and Linda Culbertson. Others arrived later to view the film, "Love Between the Covers."

Susan will do the recap of the film for the Newsletter.

One more volunteer coordinator is needed for Ignite the Flame. No one volunteered.

Incentives: Lisa Stevens reported that their baby has arrived. That is why she is not present at the meeting. Becky Barker has a new release this month. Sheri Atkinson has received two requests for her YA books. Julia Blaine included information on the Crossroads Library in her Newsletter article about the Book Fair held there. That made the Library Board very happy.

Saralee asked for craft articles for the Newsletter. We pay \$15 for material that is accepted. The deadline is May 22. Articles should be 500 to 1000 words. Should anyone have difficulty receiving the Newsletter, contact Saralee. Her email is on the last page of every newsletter this year.

Robin reported on the upcoming meetings:

June – Liz Heiter will make a presentation about Romantic Suspense.

July – Beth Daniels, aka Beth Henderson, offers a program on Procrastination.

August – RWA Convention report.

September – Alicia Raisley will be our speaker.

Linda Rice announced we have 60 members. COFW membership is from January to December. RWA membership lasts one year beginning on the date an individual joined. It must be renewed on the anniversary of joining, so the two memberships usually do not coincide. COFW has no pro-rated refunds.

There was discussion of planning for a Workshop/Conference in 2017. Linda Rice volunteered to contact the previous organizers and find out about any plans.

The next meeting will be **June 18**.

COFW MEETING MINUTES (CONT'D)

Most likely we will be meeting again at the firehouse on Davidson Rd, Hilliard.

The meeting was adjourned for screening of the movie, "Love between the Covers," created for RWA by Blueberry Hill Productions.

A QUICK NOTE FROM COFW PRESIDENT JANE CONNER:

Board Meeting Highlights

I'm pleased to report that COFW business is running smoothly. The Board met at 11:45 on May 14th, before the chapter meeting. We made some small updates to the Policy and Procedures Manual, as well as decided to make a call for a chairman for a Fall 2017 event. We decided to let the chairman (or co-chairmen) decide on the scope of that event.

Next month we will need to form a nominating committee. If you are interested in serving on the committee, please e-mail me at djconner@earthlink.net.

Respectfully,

Jane



PAN AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT

by Susan Gee Heino,
COFW Published Author Network Liaison

Our PAN Author Spotlight shines on Marcia James this month. Marcia is a long-time COFW member and has been a helpful resource for marketing tips, promo advice, and infectious laughter. She has a background in advertising and writes romance articles for her local weekly newspaper. Don't merely be envious of Marcia's business savvy, though. She actually spent an evening as the media escort for Tom Selleck during a televised U.S.O. event held at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC!



Marcia writes sexy, humorous contemporary romance and is known for her dedication to supporting charities. Thanks, Marcia, for sharing with us this month. I'm sure we're all eager to get to know you better!

Q: When did you join COFW and what brought you to the group?

A: I joined in 1999. I moved to Columbus in 1998 and decided to give fiction writing a shot after spending the previous 25 years as a freelance advertising copywriter and corporate video scriptwriter. I chose romance writing to try because I love happy endings. I knew being in a supportive writing association would help me learn the craft, so I Googled and discovered RWA, where I found the link to COFW's website.

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

A: I was first published in 2006 and joined PAN that same year.



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

A: I write comic contemporary romances and romantic mysteries. Originally, I was published by Berkley (a Lori Foster benefit anthology) and three small presses. Now, however, I'm having a great time indie-publishing my books.

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

A: My favorite books to read are contemporary romances and mysteries, so I enjoy writing my own stories – especially mashing up romances and mysteries into R-rated comic romantic mysteries. And the research for some of my steamy romances takes me to "interesting" websites.

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

A: Don't chase trends. Write the type of stories you like to read, the stories that will be a joy for you to write, and don't focus solely on getting published or making lots of money. It's easy to burn out if you're stressed. Also, be sure to learn about the business side of writing at the same time you learn the craft of writing.

PAN SPOTLIGHT: MARCIA JAMES (CONT'D)

Understanding self-promotion, figuring out your brand, and networking with other authors will help your career in significant ways.

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

A: My first sale story is atypical in that it isn't the "Snoopy Dance" type of positive experience. I pitched to an editor from Ellora's Cave (EC) at an RWA National conference and got a request for a full manuscript. EC emailed me to say they liked my book (***At Her Command***), but they wanted me to add things (like threesomes with the hero, heroine, and some arbitrary character). I wouldn't do that, so they put my book in one of their less-popular lines (which sold fewer books than their main line) and gave the book a bad cover. The relationship with EC went downhill from there. So I'm one of the few authors who doesn't have a happy first-sale story.



Q: What events or life experiences have helped build your passion for writing and shaped your Voice and/or Core Story?

A: Several of my friends and family members have faced serious health issues, and reading upbeat, humorous books have helped them get through the stress and pain. For that reason, I love writing romances that include humor in addition to the guaranteed happy ending. As for my Core Story, I've always included pets in my books, because they reveal so much about the hero and/or heroine's character. Now, pets (especially dogs) play a larger role in my "Klein's K-9s Service Dogs" series. All of the pets in my books are rescue animals, and many of the protagonists work with animals, which makes researching and writing these stories a joy.

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'm a plotter, so I've concentrated on developing my characters – their goals, motivations, and conflicts – as well as writing in deep POV. My first drafts are more detailed and polished now, and I've received more reviews and emails from readers saying they've fallen in love with my characters. I think reading authors one admires is really important. Also, I enjoy listening to audio-books because you hear every word the author has written vs. possibly skimming some paragraphs while reading an ebook or print book.



PAN SPOTLIGHT: MARCIA JAMES (CONT'D)



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

A: Taking a home office deduction on my taxes. I'm only half kidding. I love working at home on my schedule vs. working for a company or publisher. I also enjoy having my own company as an indie author – making the decision about covers, release dates, etc. I've been a professional writer since I got my Master's in 1980, and I like adding "author" to my other writing skills. Seeing my books in print is cool, but my favorite thing is hearing from readers who love my series so much they are clamoring for the next book. Now if I could just figure out how to write more books a year without sacrificing time with family and friends...

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: Yes. Marcia James is my only pen name. My real first name is "Marcia," which makes it easier when attending author and reader events. For example, if I chose a different name – such as "Claire James" – I would probably not respond quickly if someone said, "Hey, Claire,..." Keeping one's real first name (or nickname) just makes things less complicated. Although, several times, I've almost signed my real name when autographing a book or my pen name when signing a check. Pen names offer some privacy, too, since authors have been known to attract cyberstalkers. I have a Post Office Box for privacy reasons, too. When picking a pen name, it's helpful to pick a name that readers can easily spell or pronounce for when they're searching online for your website or ordering your books.

If you would like to know more about Marcia or her books, be sure to check out her website or follow her on social media.

Website: www.MarciaJames.net

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/MarciaJamesAuthor>

Twitter: http://twitter.com/Marcia_James

Pinterest: <http://pinterest.com/marcia-james/>

Amazon Author Central page: www.amazon.com/author/marciajames

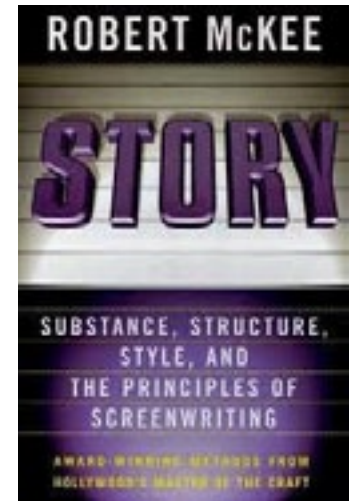


USING BEATS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR WRITING

by Jeanne Estridge

One of the challenges of writing romance (other than romantic suspense) is the need to escalate the tension without resorting to death threats or bullets flying. Using beats is one way to do this.

Screenwriting guru Robert McKee, author of **Story**, defines a beat as “an exchange of behavior in action/reaction. Beat by beat these changing behaviors shape the turning of a scene.” He gives an example of a couple who start out joking around with each other, escalate to arguing, then to physical violence. Each of those behavior changes represents a beat.



One character may exhibit a behavior (say, making a threat) and the other may offer a counter-action, but as long as they're at the same level (both making verbal threats), you're still within a beat. A change in behavior (to shouting, for example, or physical violence) represents a turning point to another beat. A beat can be very short—just a couple of lines of dialogue or action—or it can run for several pages.

Using **Lord of Scoundrels** by Loretta Chase, as an example, let's look at how this concept plays out in a romance novel.

In **Lord of Scoundrels**, the protagonist, Jessica Trent, is a beautiful and strong-minded young woman whose foolish brother, Bertie, has fallen under the influence of the infamous Marquess of Dain. Dain is causing Bertie to drink more than he should, gamble more than he can afford, and consort with prostitutes. Jess is determined to rescue her brother.



The scene takes place in a Parisian tea shop, where Jessica and Dain are haggling over a beautiful miniature Jessica unearthed in an antique store and which Dain desperately wants to acquire.

Beat One: Dain offers to buy the icon. Jessica offers to give it to him as a bribe to leave Bernie alone. The behavior for this beat is bribery.

“I shall gladly give it to you, my lord,” she said.

“No one gives me anything,” he said coldly. “Play your game—whatever it is—with someone else. Fifteen hundred is my offer. My only offer.”

“If you would send Bertie home, the icon is yours,” she said. “If you will not, it goes to auction at Christie’s.”

There follows several pages of internal monologue giving us his state of mind and

USING BEATS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR WRITING (CONT'D)

some fun dialogue. Then...

"No, you do not see clearly at all," he said. "There is always another way, Miss Trent. You think that because we're in a public place and you're a lady, I'll mind my manners. Perhaps you even think I have a regard for your reputation." He smiled evilly. "Miss Trent, perhaps you would like to take a moment to think again."

This is a turning point because we move from bribery to threats.

Beat Two: Dain threatens to ruin Jessica's reputation.

He leaned toward her. "I can crack your reputation in under thirty seconds. In three minutes I can reduce it to dust. We both know, don't we, that being who I am, I need not exert myself overmuch to accomplish this. You have already become an object of speculation simply by being seen in my company."

He paused briefly to let the words sink in.

She said nothing. Her slitted eyes were glinting furious sparks.

"Here is how it works," he went on. "If you accept my offer of fifteen hundred, I shall behave myself, escort you to a cabriolet, and see that you are taken safely home."

"And if I do not accept, you will attempt to destroy my reputation," she said.

"It will not be an attempt," he said.

She sat up very straight and folded her dainty gloved hands up on the table. "I should like to see you try," she said.

Then he slid his hand—his big, dark, bare hand, for he had removed his gloves to eat and hadn't put them back on—down the sleeve of her pelisse until he came to the first button of her frivolous pearl gray gloves.

This is a turning point because we move from verbal threat to action.

Beat Three: Dain pretends to make love (in the Georgette Heyer sense of the phrase) to Jessica in Italian in front of a cafe full of people.

And while in Italian he detailed his heated fantasies, he was slowly peeling the glove back, exposing a delicately voluptuous palm. Then he gave one small tug toward her knuckles. And paused. Then another tug. And paused. Then another tug...and the glove was off. He let it fall to the table, and took her small, cool, white hand in his great, warm one. She gave a tiny gasp. That was all. No struggle. Not that it would have made the least difference to him.

He was overwarm and short of breath, and his heart pounded as though he'd been running very hard after something.

And then Jess makes a counter-threat.

"Dain," she said in a low, hard voice, "if you do not release my hand this instant, I shall kiss you. In front of everybody."

USING BEATS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR WRITING (CONT'D)

As they're playing out this beat, Jess's brother, Bertie arrives and sees what's going on.

Trent gave Dain an apologetic look. "Don't pay it any mind, Dain. She does that to all the chaps. I don't know why she does it, when she don't want 'em. Just like them fool cats of Aunt Louisa's. Go to all the bother of catching a mouse, and then the confounded things won't eat 'em. Just leave the corpses lying about for someone else to pick up."

This is a turning point because Dain moves from the fog of sexual attraction to humiliation.

Turning Point: Jessica (almost) laughs, humiliating Dain.

Climax: Dain invites Bernie over for an evening of dissipation.

This is a scene climax because Dain has refused Jessica's offer of the icon, instead choosing to keep Bernie within his sphere of influence.

Beats are a great way to fix a scene that's not escalating. Think about your protagonist and antagonist in the scene. What is their conflict? How can their behavior (not just their dialogue, but their emotions as reflected through their actions) change to demonstrate a rising level of tension and commitment to achieving their goals? They can start out lighthearted, grow serious and then angry. They can start out angry, then threatening, then violent. They can begin warm, grow cold and then icy.

In this way, scenes are a microcosm of the book as a whole. Just as your novel turns on the act turning points, beat turning points twist the action within a scene. Think about how each character's behavioral choices affects the other. At what point does the antagonist's behavior flip a switch for the protagonist, forcing her to try a new and different method to reach her goal? Where do the protagonist's choices affect the antagonist, causing him to up the ante and change the action?

The next time you're having problems with a scene, try beating it out!



Jeanne Estridge is a member of COFW. After years of working as a computer programmer and writing as a hobby, in 2012 Jeanne returned to college and earned a Master's Certificate in Romance Writing from McDaniel College in Baltimore. In 2015 her romantic comedy, **Demons Don't**, won the RWA® Golden Heart® for Paranormal Romance. In addition to her programmer job, she teaches plotting at Words Worth Writing Center in Dayton, Ohio (www.wordsworthdayton.com). Visit her at The Raisin Chronicles (<http://raisinchronicles.blogspot.com>) or follow her on Instagram to see her wildflower photography.

NEW RELEASES BY COFW MEMBERS!

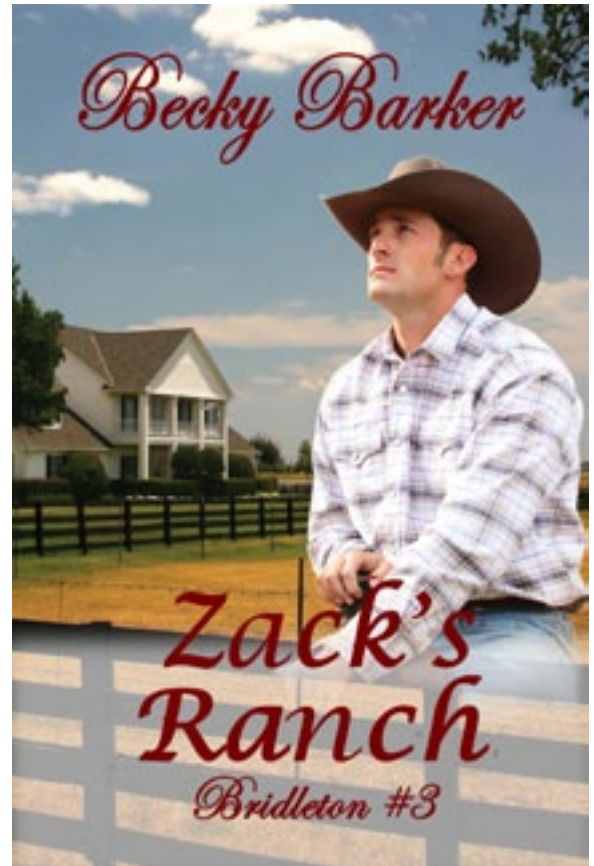
ZACK'S RANCH

by Becky Barker

Zack Bartell is a strong, determined Texan who knows what he wants and is willing to fight for it. What he wants most in life is Meredith Courtland and a chance to develop his share of the family ranch at Bridleton.

Meri has experienced the deep heartache of a lost love. She's emotionally wary and unwilling to risk her safe, secure position at Bridleton by having an affair with the incredibly desirable Bartell heir despite the fact that he's a walking, breathing temptation.

But when her volunteer work with wounded veterans tangles the threads of their relationship, they work together to defuse the threat to their lives and happiness.



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?

NEW RELEASES BY COFW MEMBERS!



THE ROYAL NANNY

by Karen Harper

Are you missing **Downton Abbey** already?

Step into the true story of the lower class Edwardian woman who reared the children of the royals, including two kings.

Karen Harper's THE ROYAL NANNY, on sale June 21, is "an intensely intimate, yet epic tale spanning decades, continents, and divides that only love can cross."

RT reviewer Kathe Robins says, "Harper at her best."

COFW MEMBER CHEERS AND CONGRATS!



COFW member Donna MacMeans' paranormal time travel, CHARMING THE PROFESSOR, is a finalist for the National Reader's Choice Award – Paranormal Category!

CHARMING THE PROFESSOR is also a finalist in the time-travel/steampunk division of the Prism Awards, sponsored by RWA's FF&P chapter.

Prism award winners will be announced in San Diego at "the gathering" (FF&P's banquet).

HEAR & NOW

Karen Harper is the prolific author of contemporary and historical fiction. A former college and high school English teacher, her books include *Broken Bonds*, *Fall from Pride*, *Dark Crossings*, *The Queen's Governess* and *The Last Boleyn*.

Smart, strong-willed women feature prominently in her works, which include a mystery series featuring Queen Elizabeth I. Her new novel, *The Royal Nanny*, will be published on June 21.



KAREN HARPER

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MOVIE SCREENING AND AUTHOR NETWORKING EVENT

by Susan Gee Heino

COFW held a special event at our monthly meeting in May. Following the regular business meeting, we were privileged to host a special screening of "Love Between the Covers", a feature-length film chronicling the vast, funny, and savvy community of romance writing. This was open to the public and we were encouraged to invite friends.

After the movie, everyone in attendance was invited to participate in our Published Author Networking Event.



"Love stories are powerful. And so are the women who write them."

This belief is held firmly by the producers of Love Between the Covers, and it shows in every scene. 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. Their lives and their work represent the diverse reality of the romance-writing industry.

The film opens with a montage of romance lovers lining up to meet their favorite authors, authors discussing the various sub-genres within romance, and everyone

agreeing that our passion for reading romance has made it the top-grossing genre in publishing. Through the course of the film, producers pull back the covers on this billion-dollar industry and let us see the very heart of it.

Much footage has been shot at the RWA National Conferences. The excitement and awe of the event is clearly conveyed on the screen, and familiar faces are plenty. For those of us who have been involved in the romance industry many years now, this brought a warm sense of nostalgia and belonging, while viewers who are less familiar with the industry expressed amazement at the crowds



MOVIE SCREENING / AUTHOR NETWORKING EVENT (CONT'D)

and the grand scale. Also, the film manages to capture the honesty and generosity that romance writers have become known for. It was heart-warming to hear authors tell over and over how many times other writers--as well as readers--had supported them through some very difficult times.

Author Beverly Jenkins credits her community of readers for helping her get through the recent loss of her husband. The film lets us peek into the fairytale romance Beverly experienced. "I had a happily-ever-after for thirty years," she tell us with a wistful smile. She and her readers communicate frequently, and have even taken trips together. The films lets us tag along on one and it is deeply touching.

The wide range of diversity in romance was very evident throughout the film. Author Len Barot, who writes as Radclyffe, tells of her coming-of-age during a time when lesbian fiction was nearly non-existent. She stumbled through life, trying to figure out who she was and where she fit in until she discovered that she could write her own story. Not only did she become a successful, well-known author of lesbian romance, but she left her job as a surgeon and became a publisher of it, as well.

With all the positives of romance, though, the movie boldly confronts some of the negatives. One recurring theme is the perception many people have that romance is "trashy" or that romance writers just crank out hack formulas. Unfortunately, I'm sure we're all aware of the unflattering clichés about romance writers.

Author Eloisa James tells of her childhood growing up in a family of poets and professors. She herself joined academia and became a Shakespeare professor at an ivy league school. Her decision to write romance was not, at first, well-accepted by her parents and colleagues. They thought she ought to write books with more substance, but she proudly proclaims that her books do have substance, and that a happy ending does not diminish this.

Happy endings are what romance is all about. The film questions why there seems to be such a prejudice against this in the literary world. No other genre seems to



MOVIE SCREENING / AUTHOR NETWORKING EVENT (CONT'D)



be so easily dismissed as romance, and the film proposes one possible reason. "Romance is written for women, about women and, usually, by women." Perhaps this is seen as a strike against the industry by some, but for others it's a definite plus.

Authors Susan Donovan and Celeste Bradley shared stories of their struggles. Both of them had suffered difficulties in their lives, coming through divorces and health issues while still working to keep their careers going. At one point, their editor introduced them and said, "You two are just alike. You need to meet each other." It turned out to be true!

As their friendship grew, so did their interest in writing together. The film follows them as they brainstorm, plot, and develop

characters and storylines. It is a fascinating process and easy to see how the two of them, working together, not only have come to create great books, but have been able to rebuild their lives.

One of the most fascinating people in the film is Australian author, Joanne Lockyer. When the film's director began following her, Joanne was an unpublished author, struggling to learn the craft and get her work seen by editors and agents. Through the course of the movie, we get to see Joanne grow and develop. We get to meet her critique partner, author Elizabeth Essex, and learn a bit of her journey from unpublished writer to published author. As the film draws to a close, it touches on the very timely topic of self-publishing. We learn that Ms. Lockyer has decided to go this route, as have several other multi-published, successful writers.

The romance publishing industry has gone through many changes recently, and we see this clearly throughout the film. In the end, though, there is no doubt that it will survive and that it is thriving. As we see the images of newly-published Joanne Lockyer tearfully holding the very first print copy of her very first book, we feel the joy and hope that she's obviously feeling.

It was on this "high" that the movie comes to a triumphant close. I know everyone who attended the showing was impressed not only with the quality of the film, but with the quality of what it is that we do as romance writers. We really do put love between the covers, and that's what keeps our readers begging for more.

Following the movie, attendees were invited to mix and mingle with each other and with COFW's published authors. Authors had set up at tables, displaying their work and offering any promotional materials they wished to bring. It was a great time for authors to get to know each other better, to share tips and tricks of the trade, and for readers and aspiring writers to learn more and make friends. The success of this event just proved what was indicated in the film: romance writers are warm, passionate people.

Love Between the Covers has already received critical acclaim from film festivals and critics. It may even have changed a few minds. Reviewer Tracy Mumford of MPR (Minnesota Public Radio) News has said that the film "...explores the global

MOVIE SCREENING / AUTHOR NETWORKING EVENT (CONT'D)

community of romance writers and readers and pokes holes in people's assumptions about the genre." Well-known feminist blogger, Eleanor J. Bader of *Rewire* has said it "...made me reconsider my knee-jerk assumptions about these books and the people who read them." A special screening will be held at the RWA National Convention on July 14, 2016, in San Diego, California.

For more information about *Love Between the Covers*, please visit the website for Blueberry Hill Productions at www.blueberryhillproductions.com. Click on the "News" button to sign up for their newsletter and find out what exciting projects producer Laurie Kahn is working on next.

HOW MANY VIEWPOINTS DO YOU NEED?

by Isabo Kelly

*This article was first published in the RWA/NYC May 2012 **Keynotes** newsletter. Used by permission.*

How Many Viewpoints Do You Need? The easy answer—it depends. A lot of people will bandy about advice on this topic, stating "rules" that dictate you can only have one, at most two, point of view characters in romance. If you have more, you'll never get the book sold.

Well, we all know that's not true.

Romance readers do tend to expect a more focused POV list than say fantasy or science fiction readers. In fact, there are workshops galore on the topic of deep POV and avoidance of head-hopping in romance. So when deciding how many to use, you do have to take the genre you're writing in into consideration. Readers come to specific genres with certain expectations. You can blow through those expectations with a well written story. But you do need to keep them in mind before tossing them to the wind so you are making conscious choices.

Beyond genre conventions, how many POVs you use depends entirely on the needs of your story. And here's where it gets a little trickier—does your story really need all the viewpoint characters you have?

While making these decisions, ask yourself a series of questions and take a hard look at the requirements of your story.

First and foremost, decide who your main character is. Is it the hero? The heroine? Both people involved in the romance—or if writing poly-relationships—all the people involved in the relationship? Which of those main characters needs to show their thoughts to the reader for the sake of plot development and tension? Does it increase the tension level to limit the view-



VIEWPOINTS ARTICLE (CONT'D)

points of the main characters or will the conflict be better served by showing the thoughts of more than one protagonist?

In many romances, the main POVs used are those of the primary couple (one or both of them gets to show us their thoughts). That's pretty easy and relatively straight forward. But then you have to ask yourself, do you need any more viewpoint characters? Can you tell your story without anyone else's thoughts? Or do you have to show the thoughts of the antagonist? Maybe a significant secondary character? Does so much happen beyond the view of the hero/heroine that the story would make no sense without at least one more POV?

To that last point, be careful about having too much story take place outside of your main character's life. To have a novel, the plot should be about your main characters so they should experience most of the story's main events.

Okay back to POVs. Giving the plot requirements due consideration, next decide if there are any viewpoints you can cut? Is the heroine's best friend really required, or is that just fun for you so you've left it in? Is the antagonist's viewpoint necessary? Do any of the scenes feel repetitive or superfluous to the plot? Each scene of your novel needs to do multiple things. So indulging in a POV because you like the character's voice, even though their scenes add nothing to the story, is just that—an indulgence. If you love that character's voice that much, give them their own book! Your readers will love it.

Asking these questions before you start writing is important, but if you're an organic writer who goes with the flow on the first draft, you may have to solidify your choices on the second draft. At that point, you need to take a hard look at what you've written and decide if you've gone a little overboard with the viewpoint characters, a little underboard, or found the exact right balance.

If you're not sure, ask those trusted beta readers and critique partners. They can help with a fresh perspective when you've found yourself too close to your story. Additionally, consider carefully the opinions of any agents or editors who give you feedback. I am not saying absolutely follow what they tell you. You have to write the story you have to write. But if several of them tell you the same thing, and if what they tell you jives with what you have suspected all along, consider altering the number of viewpoints you use.

Making a conscious, thought out decision about the number of point of view characters will allow you to focus the story and keep readers thoroughly engaged.♥



Isabo Kelly's most recent release, BRIGHTARROW BURNING, has only one POV character. But she went mad in her upcoming June release, THE SECRET OF NARAVA, and used five! (All very important, she swears.) For more on Isabo and her books, visit her at www.isabokelly.com, follow her on Twitter @IsaboKelly, or friend her on Facebook www.facebook.com/IsaboKelly.

TECHNO-TIPS FOR THE TECHNO-CHALLENGED

by Anne Marie Novark

*The following article first appeared in the June 2012 issue of **In Print!**, the monthly newsletter of Houston Bay Area RWA. Used with permission.*

How to Insert Hyperlinks into an MS Word Document

In this new paradigm of publishing, many authors (myself included) format their own documents to upload to Amazon, B&N, Smashwords, Apple iTunes and All Romance eBooks, just to name a few. There are a myriad of small details to tend to before Word documents are ready for prime time.

Back matter in ebooks can include the author's website, blog, Author pages, mailing lists, and probably the most important: Clickable links to buy the author's other books at each of the respective retailers.

Inserting hyperlinks in Word documents isn't difficult once you learn a couple of tricks. Once again, my instructions are for MS Word 2008 on an Apple machine. You will need to adjust the directions to whichever version of MS Word you use.

So, say you're formatting a book for Kindle. After the last sentence of the story, you might want to put something like this:

###

For more books by Anne Marie Novark,
Go to Amazon.com.

1. To make Amazon.com a live hyperlink for readers, first get online and link to your Amazon Author Central page (you have one, don't you?) or search for your books on Amazon and locate the page where all of your works are listed on Kindle.
2. Copy the web address located in the long "box" showing the URL (highlight the web address, right click and choose Copy).
3. Go back to your Word document and highlight "Amazon.com."
4. Go to the top tool bar where it says File, Edit, View, Insert, etc. and click on Insert.
5. Choose Hyperlink from the drop-down box.
6. In the pop-up window, "Amazon.com" should be in the Display box.
7. In the pop-up window, place the cursor in the Link to box.
8. Press Command (or Control) V. (Right clicking and pasting will not work.)
9. The web address to your books at Amazon will appear in the Link to box.
10. Press OKAY, and you will have a live hyperlink to your list of books at the end of your ebook.

###

TECHNO-TIPS ARTICLE (CONT'D)

Of course, it goes without saying: You don't want to link to B&N at the back of the Kindle Edition or vice versa.

It's also better IMO, not to provide live links to your books in the Smashwords Edition since that version will be sent to other distributors. I do link to my website, but I just list the titles of my other works in the back matter on Smashwords.

Yes, this takes a bit more time and effort when you're publishing your ebooks. But providing hyperlinks to your backlist will make it easier for readers to find and read more of your books.

Happy Writing!!!

Anne Marie writes Contemporary, Regency and Lone Star Romances. Her bestselling novels and novellas are available on Kindle, Nook, Sony, Kobo and Smashwords. To find out more, visit her at <http://www.annemarienovark.com>.

NOTE: ADDING A LIVE LINK TO YOUR EMAIL SIGNATURE

by Saralee Etter

You can also add a live hyperlink to your emails by including a signature line.

- Go to your email account
- Look for the "Settings" tab (often a gear icon in the top right-hand corner of the screen)
- Find the "Signature" dialog box and type in your name. Under it, you can write any text line you want. Example:

Saralee Etter

[A Fine Mystery Indeed](#)

Investigate Victorian London with sleuth Lucy Turner.

- Once you type in the text — any text — you **highlight** the words you want to be the link. Here, "A Fine Mystery Indeed" is the text under which I hide my URL.
- Look for the little chain-link "**Link**" icon (usually up where the Bold, Italic, and other text modification options are). Click on the icon to get a pop-up box.
- In the Link pop-up box, write in your chosen URL. In the example you see above, my actual blog URL (web address) is www.saraleeetter.com/blog
- The visible text can be anything you want: A Fine Mystery Indeed, Sign up for my newsletter, Explore my bookshelf, or whatever. Click to accept it.
- Because it's the "link" color, people will know to click on the words.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Becky Barker: Working on cover art and programs for Createspace projects, as well as promotional new release, "Zack's Ranch," Book 3. Bridleton Series.

Samantha Barker: Working on Paranormal.

Julia Blaine: Writing a little bit of this, a little of that. Finally solved a plot problem.

Jane Conner: Reading book on revising and editing.

Linda Culbertson: Contemporary mature heroine. Getting ready for Yale Writer's Workshop with Julia Quinn.

Jeanne Estridge: Contemporary Romance.

Saralee Etter: Victorian mystery short story and full-length story. Plus, new cover for Regency Christmas.

J. Paulette Forshey: "Dead in the Water."

Robin Gianna: Starting a new medical romance set in Venice that will be part of a duet.

Karen Harper: Finishing a Romantic Suspense trilogy out from Mira in December, February and May. June 21, a new Historical "The Royal Nanny."

Sandy Kachurek: Revising a mermaid novel.

Andrea McConnell: (w/a Lena Welston) Sent requested partial to agent.

Stacy McKittrick: Revising "Ghostly Interlude." Getting ready to publish "A Vampire Wedding."

Donna MacMeans: Seems I'm to write a novella due August 1 for an anthology. I'm plotting.

Jenessa McRay: Steam punk novella and editing Historical Spy work in progress

Linda Rice: Shaking off an illness.

Cindy Stonebrook: Working on Urban Fantasy.

Lillian Zoller: Time-Travel Romance; Historical work in progress.



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