



August 2019

Issue 8

## Welcome to Central Ohio Fiction Writers Newsletter

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Newsletter Editor: Rachel Dye

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.

## **2019 Leadership**

President, Jeanne Estridge

Secretary, Sandra J. Kachurek

Treasurer, Stacy McKittrick

Program Chair, Aleta Dodson

Newsletter Editor, Rachel Dye

Membership Chair, Linda Rice

Social Media Chair, Gina Smith

Incentives, Julia Blaine

## **Meetings**

First "Teen" Saturday of the Month. Social: Noon to 12:30. Business: 12:30. Guest Presentation: 1:30. Location Norwich Township Building 5181 Northwest Parkway. Hilliard, OH 43026

## **Dues**

Renewal before January 31: \$25. After January 31: \$30.

- Membership with Romance Writers of America required.

## **Follow COFW**

Twitter <https://twitter.com/COFWriters>

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/COFWriters>

Closed Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/177462723049177/>

## **Central Ohio Fiction Writers**

P.O. Box 24254 Dayton, OH 45424

## **Next Meeting: September 14<sup>th</sup>**

Norwich Township Safety & Services Building

5181 Northwest Parkway

Hilliard, OH 43026

**Time:** Networking at 12:00 pm, Business meeting at 12:30 pm, Speaker at 1:30 pm

**Topic:** Michael Hague and Chris Vogler speaking on **Hero's Two Journeys** via a DVD

## **COFW Fiction Plotters Meet Monthly - East**

Need a boost with a story idea that has yet to see words on a page? Can't get your protagonist out of a hole you've written her into? Not sure whether the antagonist is antag-ging enough? Consider stopping by the COFW Fiction Plotters group. We meet the first Wednesday of the month at 10 a.m. at the Panera Bread in Taylor Square in Reynoldsburg, Ohio, 43068.

To verify members are meeting and to stay in touch in between, we use this email:

[cofwplot@yahoo.com](mailto:cofwplot@yahoo.com)

If you have questions, contact:

Andrea McConnell: [fyrefly93@gmail.com](mailto:fyrefly93@gmail.com)

Saralee Etter: [saralee\\_etter@yahoo.com](mailto:saralee_etter@yahoo.com)

## **COFW Fiction Plotters Meet Monthly - West**

All the same fun as above but located in Huber Heights. We meet the second Monday of the month at 6:30 pm at the Panera Bread off I-70 exit 36.

If you have questions contact:

Jeanne Estridge: [jeanneestridge@gmail.com](mailto:jeanneestridge@gmail.com)

Rachel Dye: [juliette.r.hyland@gmail.com](mailto:juliette.r.hyland@gmail.com)

**Meeting of COFW**  
**August 17, 2019**  
**5181 Northwest Parkway, Hilliard**

**I. Welcome. WIP.**

**II. Minutes, Secretary Sandy Kachurek.**

The minutes of the July 13, 2019 meeting were accepted as posted.

**III. Reports:**

A. President Jeanne Estridge.

1. Key takeaways from RWA were diversity and declining chapter membership.
2. Report on the RWA Annual General Meeting (AGM) began with an overview of finances showing that although RWA has seen a six percent drop in membership this year, there is no evidence of financial problems. Other AGM notes included (a) a publishing industry in flux, which continues to impact the livelihoods of members and organizations; (b) dealing with issues of fairness, fostering career growth of all members; (c) the revamping of the RITA awards, including changes in judges and training judges; (d) Brenda Drake, founder of Pitch Wars, is consulting in the effort to replace the elimination of the Golden Heart with a new program to serve unpublished and under-published authors; (e) increased advocacy efforts; and (f) chapter assessments.

A discussion by COFW members followed on the elements of making a chapter strong. Some members gave a past history of RWA and its connection with its local chapters. Currently, due to staff changes, RWA won't be giving serious attention to chapters, at least in the next year. The discussion ended with Donna MacMeans reminding us that RWA offers \$500 chapter grants to help pay for programs.

3. Two plotting/brainstorming groups, East and West, continue to meet when members are available. Plotters East meets the first Wednesday of the month, 10 AM, at Panera on Taylor Road in Reynoldsburg. Plotters West meets the second Monday of the month at 6:30 PM at Panera in Huber Heights on Rte 202.

B. Treasurer Stacy McKitrick was absent.

1. Cash on Hand: Checking: \$6498.19. PayPal: \$1419.18. Financial Assistance: \$1519.70.
2. Current Membership: 49.

C. Programs, Aleta Dodson was absent.

September 14: Brainstorming Story Ideas.

October 19: Alessandra Torre's online video, "5 Secrets of Self-Publishing Success," followed by a live Skype with Alessandra for Q&A.

\*November 2: Workshop with Damon Suede, "Bringing Your A-Game and Tropes," 9-4 at Dublin Rec Center, \$75 for COFW members and \$85 for non-members, includes lunch. Members discussed the need to increase the publicity of the event. Robin Gianna stated that hand flyers had been an effective part of the advertising for a workshop with Eloisa James a few years ago. Hand flyers may also help with Damon Suede. Others agreed.

D. Ignite the Flame (ITF), Linda Rice and Shari Heinrich.

Linda said that prizes have been sent out, and she appreciated the group's effort to be judges. Jeanne praised Linda's work to make ITF successful.

E. Education, Erin was absent.

F. Incentives, Julia Blaine.

Sweet treats went to everyone, such as Donna MacMeans for completing a "crappy" first draft, Karin Shah's ninth book being out, and a character sketch that Linda Rice really loves.

G. Magic Spreadsheet Winner.

Rachel Dye earned Eddie the Emu. Jeanne suggested a new criterion for earning Eddie, rather than who wrote the most words, perhaps most improved writer each month would be better, so members are competing with themselves rather than amongst each other.

H. Social Media, Gina Smith was absent.

Gina set up an Instagram account for COFW. Members were reminded that you can see material on Instagram using any electronic equipment but can only post material to Instagram through non-computer type devices, such as cell phones or iPads and tablets.

I. Newsletter, Rachel Dye.

Julia Blaine volunteered to be the recap writer.

J. Nominating Committee, Sandy Kachurek.

The slate is mostly complete. Unconfirmed positions include President, Programs Chair, and Education Chair.

**IV. Unfinished Business.**

None.

**V. New Business.**

1. Donna suggested showing a DVD for the programs part of the meeting. She has a copy of Hero's Two Journeys by Michael Hauge and Chris Vogler.

2. Julia suggested a program idea of how a writer keeps track of her plot ideas, also called a bible.

**VI. Announcements.**

1. Robin Gianna, inventory keeper, asked what should be done with the old, old red COFW banner. Agreement was to trash it.

**Adjournment:**

Motion made by Donna, seconded by Rachel. Business Meeting adjourned at 1:55.

Today's Program: 2019 RWA National Conference Highlights.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy

Sandy Kachurek

Secretary

## *Works in Progress/Attendance for August 17<sup>th</sup>*

Attendance/WIP for August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019

1. Jeanne Estridge: demon short story.
2. Sandy Kachurek: new novel in the brainstorming stage, contemporary women's fiction.
3. Karin Shah: *Chimera 7*.
4. Donna MacMeans: editing/revising Christmas novella.
5. Linda Rice: finished ITF contest.
6. Rachel Dye: editing *The Doctor's Star*.
7. Becky Barker: finishing revisions for Western Dreams.
8. Julia Blaine: finished Tea and Sympathy and Emus and looking for a critique partner.
9. Robin Gianna: working on revision.
10. Janice Beckett: finished editing *Lionel's Leap of Faith*.

# RWA Recap

By Julia Blaine

Recap of the 2019 RWA Conference in New York City, July 24-27, 2019. Those attending from COFW and reporting to our group were, Robin Gianakopoulos, Donna MacMeans, Jeanne Estridge, Karin Shaw and Janice Bennett.

There was general discussion among the members present about RWA issues such as finances (RWA is well situated), declining membership locally and nationally, and politics involving the Rita award.

Robin reported on three workshops:

1. Becca Symes is a personal coach.
2. Sherry Thomas is entertaining. She pointed out that for pacing, there should be more “turning points” or “disruptions” as Sherry described them, earlier in the novel to move the plot. Fewer towards the end as situations are resolved.
3. Maisey Yates spoke about dictation as opposed to typing in the words of a novel. Maisey has a handicap that limits her amount of time on the computer. Her hand-held device actually plugs into the computer. It took getting used to but by this method she has turned out a phenomenal number of titles. Dragon Dictate is not compatible with Mac.

Jeanne Estridge brought 2 videos:

1. The first was a selective attention test. You can watch it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJG698U2Mvo>
2. This video was about the Ladder of Inference that explains how people process events. As an event unfolds, a person interprets what they experience, makes assumptions with emotions and may adjust their beliefs leading to an action. with seven steps. As an event unfolds, a person interprets what they experience, makes assumptions with emotions and may adjust their beliefs leading to an action. It is a Ted-ed, based on “Love Your Enemies” by Arthur C. Brooks. You can watch it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJLqOclPqis&t=59s>

Jeanne attended “Instagram for Authors.”

Essentially, authors should choose three topics on which to post pictures, drawn from relevant parts of their life; for example, their garden, their pets and of course their books. Instagram is designed to be used from a phone or tablet. There is a website where you can review posts, but you can’t post new content from there.

Karin Shaw attended: “Bestselling Book Launch” presented by Skye Warren.

Skye has a background in Marketing and Development. She sleeps 18 hrs. a day due to a disability. She hires help.

“Do what makes you uncomfortable on social media.” As an Indy publisher Karin was challenged. Karen is published through Soul Mate as well as being an Indy publisher.

The two pillars of advertising are becoming visible and converting people to buy.

Market to people who are looking for your book. To do this, look at Amazon and Author websites. You can determine this by looking at an Amazon page section that says, “Readers who bought this book also bought...”

On your FB ads, target people who read similar material. FB charges for ads. (So does Amazon.) Appeal to the familiar. Mention current Best Sellers. Make your ads short and punchy. Piggyback what is popular. Include short biographical and plot info and links to your website. Look at other FB ads for ideas. Have photos of readers holding up your book cover. FB can also do ads on mobile media – only in a different shape.

The Saturday before a book launch, send out a newsletter. Then another newsletter thanking readers for buying. Keep up with your newsletter or blog.

Have multiple revenue streams.

Bestseller authors spend 100K to 200K on advertising. Sky spends 35K.

How to price – Skye’s tests and research lends itself to \$3.99 as the price of an Indy book. On a pre-launch, authors can gross 70%. In advertising, capitalize on the novelty of a new release.

Per Skye, lighter covers do best nowadays. (There was discussion of this among the group.)

Authors can send in information to Publisher’s Weekly or Kirkus who may or may not use it. There may be a cost.

Becky Barker added that BookBub has information about your return on your money.

Final advice:

“If you are not growing your readership, you are declining, and eventually you will have no readers,” quoted from Jane Ryland.

Janice Beckett reported on two workshops:

“Going Deep”

This presenter dealt with character building.

Exploring Core Words:

1. Abuse – can be verbal or sexual. Character is looking for a safe place
2. Neglect—Character is looking for attention
3. Co-dependence – Others’ happiness is more important than their own. Character is looking for freedom.
4. Loss – Someone they care about has disappeared. Character is trying to regain that loss to become whole again.

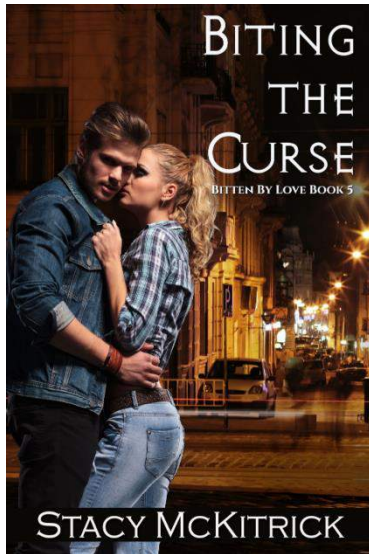
“Lee Kneupper” dealt with legal issues for authors.

Donna MacMeans reported on Damon Suede on tropes

Readers have certain expectations as to what they want. He said he extensively shortened his 2 day workshop.



## New Releases:



*Biting the Curse* by Stacy McKittrick

### ***Can a vampire break a curse?***

When Janie Robinson says, “I do,” she might as well call the morgue. Two days after her wedding, David died in a car accident. The day after she accepted his proposal, Justin fell to his death at work. The day after she agreed to move in, Aaron died in a freakish drone accident. Now Sam wants to date her because she’s some kind of Perfect Mate. If she’s perfectly anything, she’s perfectly cursed and she’s not about to risk Sam’s life.

Sam Kincaid is a vampire. He has been searching for Janie since the day he let her go. Her so-called curse doesn't bother him until he becomes the killer's next target. He's never feared for his life before, but if he lets her go again, it wouldn't be worth living.

**Available now on Amazon, B&N, Apple, Kobo, Smashwords, and in print only at Books a Million**

COFW has a spreadsheet for new releases. With the demise of the Yahoo Group, please put your information on the spreadsheet:

<http://bit.ly/COFWNewrelease>

## COFW now has goal sheets!!!

Thanks to Erin Novotny & Arianna James for setting this up.



Want to track a daily word count and compete with your fellow COFW members for the highest point total? Add your name and goals to our Magic Spreadsheet here:

<https://bit.ly/2Wprwt0>

July Winner: Rachel Dye, 225 points, 29107 words

The winner gets Eddie!

Looking for a way to hit those goals: Did you know that studies have shown you're up to 66% more likely to achieve a goal if you write it down and up to 95%(!!) more likely to achieve a goal if you tell someone else what it is and have a deadline by which you need to meet it. List your goals here and Arianna will check in to see if you've hit them: <http://bit.ly/2HJoDNq>

## Updating Your RWA Profile Information:

The new RWA website (rwa.org) is two different software packages. One is for communicating information about what's going on at RWA. (aka the RWA website). The other is used for chapter portals (We have one of these: cofw.rwa.org) and microsites (We don't yet have one of these). Each of these sites has a spot for profile information for members.

You can update your profile at: [www.rwa.org](http://www.rwa.org) and the forum profiles at: <https://community.rwa.org/update-profile>.

*You can also access the profile update page by logging in to rwa.org and selecting "Update Profile" at the top of the page.*

1. First update your RWA membership profile.
  - a. Click on the pencil beside the little silhouette.
  - b. In the "change picture" dialogue box, click Select.
    - i. From your computer, choose a picture with a file extension of one of the following:
      - .GIF
      - .JPG
      - .PNG
      - .BMP
    - ii. Click Open
    - iii. Click Save & Close
2. Click on the "About Me" tab and then click on the little pencils to update each section. Save each section after completing.
3. Click on the Preferences tab to update your communication preferences. Be sure to save your changes.
4. Review the other tabs to ensure the information is correct. If it's something you don't have access to change, click on Contact RWA at the bottom of the page to send Donna Mathoslah an email.
5. Update your RWA Community Profile (You should still have the original tab with the links to both profiles open)
  - a. Click on the little silhouette and upload your picture.
    - i. On this page, you have the option of pulling in a picture from your computer or Facebook or Instagram or Dropbox or a host of other places. Load your picture and save it.
6. Update your My Profile information:
  - a. Click on the little pencil next to Bio and share a little about yourself.
  - b. If you've been a finalist or winner in any contests, enter that under Honors and Awards.
  - c. If you belong to other professional organizations, enter the information under Professional Associations.

- d. Add or update your social media links.
- 7. Some information was loaded from the old website. Verify everything is correct and up-to-date.
- 8. Click on Communities and then choose My Communities. You should see an entry for Chapter: Central Ohio Fiction Writers (along with any other communities you belong to, such as PAN).
  - a. Click on Central Ohio Fiction Writers.
  - b. Click on Settings and set up your preferences for the discussion forum.

**As of January 1, 2019, Treasurer's Reports, Meeting Minutes and presentation documentation will be posted in our COFW community on the RWA site.**

**Reminder: On June 1, the Board stopped posting to the Yahoo loop and we will stop monitoring the Yahoo loop. Please have yourself set up on RWA COFW discussion loop prior to that date.**

## THE PERILS OF BEING PUBLISHED - Birthing Your Baby

*by Gerry Bartlett*

I just released a new book. Self-published. It's not the first one I've done, no, it's the sixth. You'd think I'd be used to it by now, but I'm not. No, I freak out each time. For a couple of reasons. First, I'm a perfectionist. No, don't laugh. You take a look at my office, which is clutter central and you can't believe I care about anything being perfect. But, believe it or not, I do. I write fast. Spew on the page. Then I go over and over that product. Obsessively. I can't stand the idea that there could be a mistake in my work.

So, you can imagine the stress involved when I get ready to let my story go out into the wild, um, to the public. I read through the entire manuscript over and over again. I tweak words, just to clarify things. I take out the little words like "that" and "up" and "down." You know what I mean? A character sits. You don't need to say he sits down. Get it? And then there are the things I do because I write fast. I tend to repeat myself. My critique partners catch a lot of those things. But we have a rule: we only read work once. So, after I "fix" my scene, I can be guilty of adding more scenes that are nothing but repeats. Because I love my words. Bad, Gerry.

This time when I self-published, I hired a company to do the production. I had them make the cover last October. Sad that it took me until this July to finish the book. Even more sad that this is a Christmas book. I had optimistically thought I'd finish it last Christmas. I even mentioned it to fans. Dumb move. I had whipped them into a frenzy way too early. So, I had to periodically give them little scenes and quotes to keep them motivated. Why was the book so late? Well, I had a contract to write romantic suspense for a traditional publisher. I wrote two of those from October to June. The vampire book was put on the back burner. I was productive, just not for my vamp fans.

So here I am, promoting a Christmas book in July. I had to rely on a popular company that might not have time to put my book out there when I finally decided I NEEDED it out in a hurry. Luckily, they were responsive and so professional that I got my book out on July 31-Christmas in July as I'd hoped it would be. Even better, as I asked, they had the talent to put bats in the chapter headings and more in the paperback design. I was thrilled. Of course, I went through the proofs carefully, looking for mistakes. The fact is that if you send clean copy to Amazon, etc. it will come through as clean copy. You can't blame some mysterious uploading glitch for grammar mistakes, punctuation snafus or careless story lines. You are the one who did that stuff. Get it?

I stand behind my books. The production is the last step. I had a professional cover made that fit my series, then my file was uploaded by a professional (yes, I know I could learn, but I don't want to). If I do it right in my original file, there are chapter headers and proper space breaks. It took me a while to get the hang of inserting page breaks, but I know how now. I owe it to the people paying for my books, either e-version or paperback, to give them quality. I work hard at that. I am never in such a hurry that I fail to double check everything. This baby will be up forever. It will make me money. Hopefully that will be enough to pay for production and that cover. Now for the hard part, making sure everyone out there notices my new child. So, I'm boosting posts on Facebook and figuring out how to put up ads. Like a birth announcement. Yikes!

Gerry Bartlett is the national and internationally bestselling author of the Real Vampires series. Her latest release is Real Vampires: A Highland Christmas. Her latest romantic suspense from Kensington, Texas Trouble was a June, 2019 release.

A vintage yellow typewriter sits on a light-colored wooden desk. To its left is a small white bowl containing several pieces of fruit, including what looks like a kiwi and some berries. To the right of the typewriter, a person's hand is visible, wearing a dark blue wristband with a white floral pattern, and their fingers are resting on the typewriter's keyboard. The typewriter has a white sheet of paper in its carriage.

# COFW

*Professionals, Writers & Friends Perfecting the  
Happily Ever After*