



May 2020

Issue 4

Welcome to Central Ohio Fiction Writers Newsletter

Contents

1. COFW Basics: Contact and Meeting Info. Dues. Media Connections
2. June Meeting
3. COFW Fiction Plotters
4. May Minutes
5. May Recap: A CRASH COURSE IN ONLINE ADVERTISING FOR AUTHORS by Pubcraft
6. A note on Karen Harper's passing and the Ignite the Flame contest
7. New Releases
8. Spotlight Corner
9. COFW Goal Sheets

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.

2020 Leadership

Board

President: Janice Beckett.

Secretary: Sandy Kachurek

Treasurer: Stacy McKittrick

Non-Board Positions

Newsletter Editor: Rachel Dye

Programs Chair: Vacant

Education Chair: Erin Novotny

Social Media Chair: Gina Smith

Incentives Coordinator: Julia Blaine

Ignite the Flame Contest Chair: Shari Heinrich

Monthly Meetings Facility Coordinator: Vacant

Equipment Inventory Coordinator: Robin Gianna

Meetings

First "Teen" Saturday of the Month. Social: Noon to 12:30. Business: 12:30. Guest Presentation: 1:30. Location: Check www.cofwevents.org

Dues

New Members: \$35

Renewal before January 31: \$30. After January 31: \$35.

- Dues run January to December
- Membership with Romance Writers of America required.

Follow COFW

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

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

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/cofwriters/>

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

Central Ohio Fiction Writers

P.O. Box 24254 Dayton, OH 45424

Next Meeting: June 13, 2020; Audio Books

A panel of authors will share their experiences producing and selling audiobooks.

Business meeting at 12:30 pm, Discussion at 1:30 pm

Norwich Township Safety & Services Building

5181 Northwest Parkway, Hilliard, OH 43026

- *Please note this meeting may shift to a zoom call depending on the COVID-19 situation*

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.

If you have questions, contact:

Andrea McConnell: fyrefly93@gmail.com

Saralee Etter: 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

Rachel Dye: juliette.r.hyland@gmail.com

Minutes of the Central Ohio Fiction Writers

via Zoom
May 16, 2020

Welcome.

Attendance/WIP: Janice Beckett, Sandy Kachurek, Holly Cortelyou, Erin Novotny, Rachel Dye, Bernie Miller, Erin Birkhimer, Saralee Etter, Jeanne Estridge, Gina/Rochelle Brady, Julia Blaine, Shari Heinrich, Linda Rice, Marisa "Mo" Dillon, Susan Gee Heino, Becky Barker.

WIP:

Rochelle: kudos to plotting meetings, the talking and flushing out of ideas have helped a lot on her fairy tale story.

Marisa: writing sprints are great in helping with her WIP and the sprints apply to the Chunky Method of writing she follows.

Linda: she's written 35,000 words since she began doing sprints in March; other writers commented that Linda "sets the bar" during sprint nights on COFW Closed Group.

Shari: sprint nights have gotten her to where she's 44 pages to "the end."

Julia: cleaning not writing.

Sprints:

COFW Closed Group on Facebook, 7 PM, Monday. Wednesday. Friday.

Sprint #1: 7:05 PM.

Four, 20 Minutes writing times for whatever "writing time" means to you. Editing is okay.

10-minute breaks between sprints.

It's also time for getting together.

April Minutes:

Erin made a motion to accept the minutes as posted; seconded by Julia; passed.

President's Report:

1. RWA National Town Hall Meeting:

Full recap posted in Forum Library and Loop. Key words, "open," "transparency," "outreach," "chapter leadership" were expressed in concrete ways in the holding of the first Town Hall meeting for chapter leaders and the RWA Board via GoToMeeting. The Chapter Leadership Training Task Force is underway and will include a certificated program with DEIA-trained influences. Chapter Affiliation Agreement language under discussion for improvement. The RWA code of conduct is broad and enforceable within RWA events, but, within local chapters, the code of conduct is not enforceable (a misunderstanding that seems to have been a problem in the past). The current board calls itself a Crisis Board and is working quickly to produce equitable language, but it is not going so fast as to make mistakes. RWA's Diversity Team is working to attract young writers, stressing inclusivity. In the Town Hall Q&A, the majority of questions involved chapter disaffiliation.

2. From June 4-11, voting on RWA bylaw language opens. Make your voice heard.

3. Leslie Scantlebury appointed Executive Director by RWA Board on May 1.

4. RWA National Convention for 2020 is cancelled. Many agents are helping out at local levels.

Question is whether RWA is hurting financially. Some say no; they've got at two million in the bank. Some say yes, they've lost revenue without offering the Golden Heart. The RITA is under examination.

5. Plotting Group West is open to every member since it meets via Zoom. Second Monday of the Month at 7 PM.

Treasurer's Report:

Members: 35

Assets: Checking \$6785.38. + PayPal \$541.96 = \$7327.34

Perseverance Fund (Savings): \$1519.79

Programs Report: Jeanne Estridge

Today: Pub-Craft via Zoom.

June: Audio Books with Erin Novotny, Janice Beckett, Justine Covington and Becky Bartley via Zoom.

July: BookBrush, ads and social media images, tutorial via Zoom

August: If not a recap of RWA National Convention then something else.

September: "Stronger Scenes" with Jeanne Estridge.

October: Grace Burrowes.

November: "Fun With Plotting" with Patricia Matthews [fantasticfiction.com]

December: Holiday party.

Bernie will contact author Sherry Thomas of The Lady Sherlock series who can do a presentation on evoking emotions in character in January or February 2021.

ITF Report: Shari Heinrich

Shari felt a nod to recently passed COFW Founder, Karen Harper, would be fitting. Next year, the contest will be called "The Karen Harper Memorial Ignite the Flame Contest." The submission will remain an unpublished work, but discussion involved whether the never published author could compete equally with published authors. Perhaps a badge of recognition for unpublished authors will be given. Erin volunteered to help Shari with the published and unpublished writers and with her suggestion that the submission be a synopsis and the first 5,000 words, making it easy to judge.

Education Report: Erin Novotny

Erin hasn't heard from Lisa Cron but can reach out to Jessica Brody, author of Save the Cat Writes a Novel, a program already set up for Zoom. It's been "weird," many online instructors are overwhelmed at being at home with their day jobs. Will schedule Linnea Sinclair in June or July and fill in the rest of the year.

Incentives: Julia

Bernie sent in a submission, currently named The Heart's Bidding, to Sara Megibow, his "dream" agent, and she asked for more pages. He also has a 12-book series underway. Shari

confessed that the chocolates she'd been giving away as incentives when she filled in for Julia have been eaten--they were delicious. Gina/Rochelle will have stories out in two anthologies. Magic Spreadsheet Winner: Janice with 300 points. Everyone is encouraged to enter. See COFW Closed Group on FB for info.

Newsletter: Rachel

Julia will write the recap of today's presentation from Pub-Craft.

Send Rachel your cover and blurb for May and June new releases. Anthologies count.

Ohio Fiction Writers (OFW): Susan, Saralee, Gina, Bernie

Susan reported having collected bylaws from other writing groups; she'll go through them and come up with a sample compilation as a starting point. Most direct way to contact her is her email: susan_gee_heino@yahoo.com Her goal for the week is getting her group connected.

OFW will be in addition to COFW, not a replacement; it will not be affiliated with RWA or be focused solely on the romance genre.

Adjournment: 1:25

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy

Sandy Kachurek

A CRASH COURSE IN ONLINE ADVERTISING FOR AUTHORS

By Julia Blaine and Sandy Kachurek

The COFW Zoom meeting on May 16 featured speakers Laurie Cooper and Marissa Caldwell owners of “Pub-Craft: Marketing for Books & Brands” from Ottawa, Canada.

Launched in October 2013, Pub-Craft is a boutique digital marketing agency specializing in brand development and book promotion. Pub-Craft offers online advertising and coaching services to promote, assist and inspire over-extended, do-it-all authors and entrepreneurs.

Neither Laurie and Marissa are authors but since writing is a business, they know what is needed to put your product – your book – before the public. Think “over-extended, do-it-all authors,” as stated above. Their backgrounds are in PR.

Information included:

1. How to Book Ads Online.
2. How to Create Your Social Network.
3. How to Affordably Promote Your Work.

Laurie first described a “cheat sheet” to be used to keep track of how you promote your books. This will be prepared ahead of time, before you are ready to search for a promotion site. You need the title, cover, release date, your budget, blurb, price, a 2000-word excerpt and a short (one sentence) biography of the author. Use this pre-prepared info when you contact promotion companies, or for other promotion opportunities.

1. How to Book Ads Online.

Marissa concurs with Laurie about keeping track, describing a spread sheet on perhaps Excel, that will keep you organized about the companies you contact called a Promotion Calendar. On this sheet you will include the title, company you are contacting including contact info, current date, date of book release, prices they charge for what, details and notes about the results of this contact.

Pro-Craft has lists of companies in many price ranges. For example, “Awesome” (awesomebookpromotion.com) and “Pretty Hot,” (pretty-hot.com/submit-your-book) are companies charging lower prices, depending on what you need. “ENT” (<https://authors.ereadernewstoday.com>) is an example of companies charging over \$100. “Book Bub” is expensive but very popular.

Plan ahead for when your ads and promotion will appear. Four to five months ahead is a good place to start. Look up the companies and what they have to offer. You can find promotion companies within 2-3 days of release, if necessary.

On your Promotion Calendar, compile any details you plan, such as freebees or prizes, when you want to implement them, and how long you want this promotion to last.

Watch your time. With a several day promotion, send reminders and make contacts more than once.

Blog Tours are not as popular as they used to be for promotion.

2. Building Contacts.

Laurie describes “Street Teams” that are groups of fans willing to pass the information along when your next book arrives. This can be a large group or as few as three but they must be positive about you and your writing and can always be relied on.

These “groupies” can be a focus group, provide free market research, and fan mail which may yield promotion quotes. Create a Google Forum. Ten to twenty people is a good number. Try to have four-five reviews on Amazon. Put reviews on your website.

Newsletters create “Street Teams.” Newsletters are better than Twitter because you are messaging directly with your fans. Length should be reasonable and relevant. Keep your newsletter up-to-date regularly. Include contact info.

You can put good quotes about previous books in the back of your next book or put them on your web page.

Marissa suggests using Gazelle, (<https://www.gazelle.com/reviews>), Netgalley (<https://www.netgalley.com>) and your advance readers to get reviews.

Keep a list of which advance readers have your book, when you sent it, when they returned the review, and if they liked the book. Keep details. If the review is not returned or the review is not what you want, mark this. Don't let your book disappear or be stolen. Have perhaps five trusted reviewers.

Book Sprout (<https://www.netgalley.com>) and Goodreads are good review sites.

Face Book pages are for small bits of info.

Lead Magnets: Something to attract people to sign up for your newsletter or other contact.

Use review sites to make a niche. Attract people to your brand, not necessarily to a specific book. Give them just a taste of what you write. Readers can unsubscribe to your newsletter if they care to.

Cross Promotion: Find another author who appears to be a friend with willingness to share time and talent. If you like another author's work, ask them. You and your Cross

Promotion friend can work together whether you write the same genre or not. You just need the same attitudes and goals.

Be genuine, sincere, and start on a positive note. This can be effective for both you and others.

Use your own newsletter for cross promotion. Make it mostly about you and what you are doing but include info from your Cross Promotion friend.

Melissa spoke about online retailers and web sites such as Amazon that has ads. Most authors don't have an Amazon representative, but if you have reason to contact Amazon about a problem, for example, ask the person you talk with if you can contact them again.

3. How to Affordably Promote Your Work.

You should be on several media platforms. You don't need to be on all of them. That is too time-consuming. One or two at least.

Do things that work for you. Start with what you like.

It is hard to tell if your promotion is working, particularly if you are with a traditional publisher. Keep your eye on what is going on.

Melissa and Laurie took questions and gave helpful answers. Before ending, they reminded us again of the need for preparation in creating a budget, a range of resources, and available time allotments, all key elements to marketing you and your work.

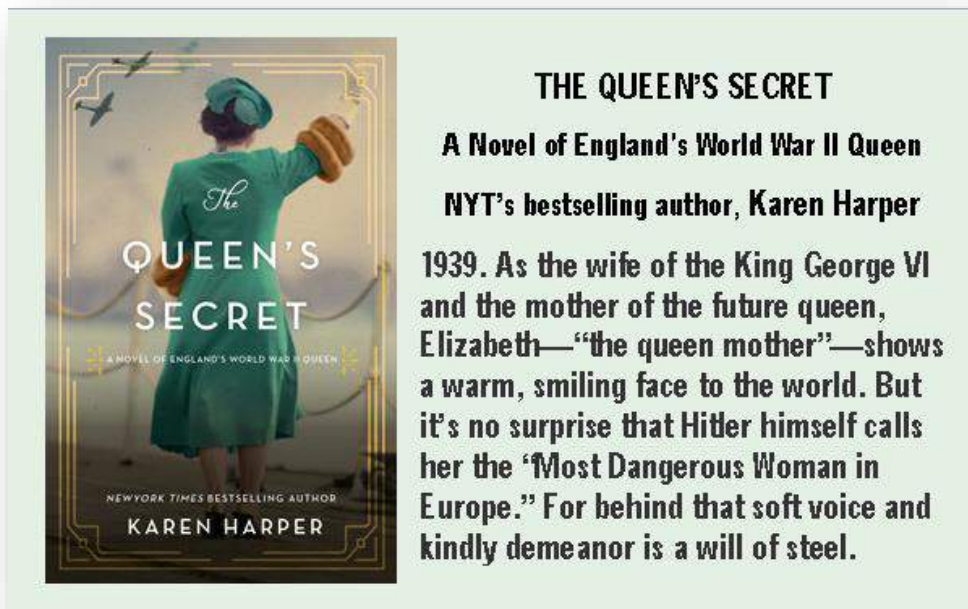
Laurie@Pub-Craft.com

A Note on Karen Harper:

Karen Harper, a founding member and staunch supporter of the COFW, lost a brief, but hard-fought battle with Pancreatic cancer in mid-April. Due to her husband's ill health, the family is not accepting condolences at this time, but a memorial service will be planned at a later date. Karen was a New York Times bestselling author with a 35 year publishing career. She's had both a contemporary suspense, *DEEP IN THE ALASKAN WOODS*, and an historical, *THE QUEEN'S SECRET*, published posthumously. We voted to rename the Ignite the Flame in honor of Karen and all her support to COFW. She will be missed by so many.

New Releases:

The Queen's Secret by Karen Harper



COFW has a goal sheet!!!



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>

April Winner: Stacy McKittrick

The winner gets Eddie!

