

August 2017.

Volume XXIX, Issue 7.

Welcome to Central Ohio Fiction Writers

The Columbus Metropolitan Public Library was the setting for Laurie Schnebly, July's guest speaker. Laurie presented four intense sessions using psychological constructs to explore conflict, motivation and plot, finishing with alpha males. Open to the public, the workshop welcomed at least a dozen non-members.

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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.

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Recap by Saralee Etter

Well-known and popular writing instructor Laurie Schnebly presented four excellent sessions for fiction writers during her all-day workshop. Held in the spacious new auditorium at the Main Branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library, those who attended the workshop learned Laurie's approach to "Building Conflict from the Head Down," "Plotting Via Motivation," "From Plot to Finish," and "Alpha Males from Abe to Zeus."

Throughout the day, participants were given writing exercises that provided us with opportunities to explore the principles Laurie taught. For those who missed this chance to hear Laurie speak live and in person, she also presents her workshops online at WriterUniv.com.

The day began with "Building Conflict from the Head Down," a discussion on how to create plausible, likeable characters who have potentially problematic ways of dealing with the external situations they are faced with. By basing the character's personality traits on well-researched psychological factors, the writer can create a hero or heroine that readers will believe in and root for.



Margaret Crowley introduces Laurie Schnebly to COFW and guests.

Conflict is key to making an interesting story. However, it is not enough for an author to take a simple, one-dimensional character and plunge them into one perilous situation after another.

Fictional characters who face devastating experiences don't necessarily awaken sympathy or identification in the reader. It's how the character chooses to handle the crisis that makes them unique and believable. Therefore, in order to make the character fascinating to the reader, it is important to explore the character's internal make-up.

We must build the conflict from the character's head down, from their own beliefs, fears, goals and motivations.

When we know what our main character's priorities are in life: their birth order; whether they approach life from a mental, emotional, or action-oriented standpoint; and even what their enneagram or Myers-Briggs indicators are, then

we know how the character will deal with whatever external problem we give them.

Therefore, in the workshop, Laurie took us through a variety of tools that are used by psychologists to evaluate an individual's personality and showed us how to use those tools to create a rounded and interesting character. Time was allotted for us to make notes on our own characters' inner development.

Next, we began the process of "Plotting via Motivation." Motivation is what makes a characters' actions credible. Readers care about why our characters do the things they do. If a character's actions seem unmotivated, they will probably lose interest in the story.

The difference between goals and motivations is an important distinction, and it's one that lots of writers struggle with.

Briefly, goals are what a person wants in the short term, but their motivation is why they want to achieve that short-term goal. Even though a character may often not recognize their motivations for seeking their goals at the beginning of a story, over the course of the story the character will come to understand the real, underlying motivation for their actions.

However, it's important to note that readers want to see the character actually solving the problems that they uncover within themselves. It's not enough for them to just notice their motivation and have the problem solve itself without any effort on their part.

The whole class then worked together to create a character from scratch and elaborate on their motivation, the life lesson the character will learn, and a variety of other elements that play into the creation of the character's story arc.

Once a writer knows what the main character wants, what their real deep-down motivation is, then the story begins to build itself as the character takes action to move toward their goal, and is thwarted, and tries something new only to be thwarted again.

Characters have to suffer, so readers can experience their joy at the end when they finally get what they deserve!

The "Plot to Finish" session provided participants with a chance to develop an entire story plot, using a series of worksheets to be filled out.

After dividing the story into four parts, the worksheets started with the story's beginning, where we set up the characters, the situation, and the theme or "lesson to be learned."



Guests engage in Laurie Schnebly's presentation.

In the second part, we elaborated on the complications faced by the main character until they reached the midpoint. The third part covered the ways in which the characters tried to deal with the central story question, and the fourth part addressed how the characters faced the final struggle, and what they did to learn their lesson and achieve ultimate success.

By working through the worksheets, it was possible to end up with the skeleton of a well-constructed story that could serve as a guide for the finished work. The process was very enlightening! Also, since the worksheets only led to an outline of the story, many writers could make use of this "plot to finish" technique. Even pantsers can use it, since it isn't too rigid a structure.

The final session of the day was "Alpha Heroes from Abe to Zeus," in which we focused specifically on the character of the Alpha Male hero.

Alpha males are the most popular type of hero in a romance novel. But what exactly is an alpha male?

In many ways, he's whatever the reader wants him to be, which leads to numerous contradictions when it comes to defining the alpha's nature. Many readers see him as commanding yet also nurturing. A leader but also a loner. Tough but also tender...how can one person be all these things?

Laurie led us through the steps of character creation that we learned in her first lecture. She pointed out the attributes and qualities that are most often found in an alpha male, and how those things related to birth order, enneagrams, mind/body/heart characteristics, and the other tools she used in creating a rounded and realistic character.

Are villains always alpha in nature? Sometimes, they are. If your hero is an alpha male, he probably should be opposed by someone who is a credible threat to him, which means another alpha.

In the end, romance readers enjoy strong, realistic heroes who can take charge in a crisis, come up with a plan to lead others out of trouble, and protect the people they care about. Those heroes shouldn't be always perfect. They don't always have to be bossy. Alphas can lead by charisma, or they can lead by being calm and smart. Their styles of leadership may differ, but they are still the top dog!



RECAP WRITER: **Saralee Etter** is the author of three traditional Regency romances. Her next book, coming later this summer, is A SHORT SHARP SHOCK, the first book in a Victorian-set mystery series featuring sleuth Lucy Turner and her friends, William S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan. You can visit her on the web at www.saraleeetter.com.

Minutes for July 15, Columbus Metropolitan Library

By Jeanne Estridge, Secretary

Attendees of the all-day workshop with Laurie Schnebly that began at 9 a.m. convened for lunch. COFW members and anyone else interested were invited to stay for the general meeting.

At noon, President Jenessa McRoy welcomed everyone to the Columbus Metropolitan Library Auditorium and sent around the Works in Progress/Attendance notebook.

Saralee Etter moved that the minutes from June be approved, seconded by Treasurer Stacy McKitrick, and approved by all.

Treasurer Stacy reported \$10,004.87 in checking; \$1523.50 in PayPal; and \$1564.45 in savings.

August's meeting will be a recap of the 2017 Romance Writers of America Conference in Florida. September's meeting will feature self-publishing information with Aleta Dodson/Lita Lawson on editing and formatting and Kat Sheridan on writing back cover blurbs. An all-day workshop with Larry Brooks is set for October. Nothing yet is scheduled for November. The holiday party will be held in December.



Laurie Schnebly gives an animated workshop on motivation, conflict, plot and alpha males.

Saralee will be the recap writer of today's speaker and her presentation for the newsletter.

Linda Rice gave updates on the October workshop with Larry Brooks. She's asking Larry Brooks to hype up the workshop as well. So far ten people have signed up with room capacity at 72. Information has been sent to other chapters. Linda mentioned that NEORWA is hosting Margie Lawson in September and is charging the same rate for any Ohio chapter member--\$85.

Julia Blaine offered incentives to the following (though not all were recorded):

·Shari Heinrich is 35K into her book; attended a writing retreat where, for the first time, she shared two chapters; and she participated in Pitch Wars on Twitter. Go, Shari!

- ·Stacy finally sent her book to her editor.
- ·Jeanne won in Contemporary in the Ignite the Flame Contest; however, the same manuscript lost in the Molly contest.
 - ·Catherine Matuszak drove in from Cleveland and received an incentive for planning to pitch

at the 2017 conference.

In a media update Andrea McConnell gave credit to Margaret Crowley and Robin Gianna for promoting today's event on social media, which helped bring in 12 non-member attendees. She asked us to share our events through Facebook www.facebook.com/cofwwriters. Google is also used for new releases. Please send her links to promote members' blog posts.

Sandy Kachurek, newsletter editor, thanked the members, such as Julia Blaine and Karen Harper, who have contributed to the newsletter recently. The next issue will be late because she is attending the 2017 conference. She asked other conference attendees to please send her articles and photographs. She wondered if the newsletter could be sent to a larger audience, and the president said she would check the rules. Sometime around July 20, send her new releases, including a bio picture, cover design, blurb about the author, and COFW involvement information.

Jane Conner, contest coordinator with Nancy White, gave a final report on the Ignite the Flame Contest. It received 39 entries and 42 volunteer judges assisted.

2017 Ignite the Flame Finalists and Winners included:

<u>Contemporary</u>: First: Jeanne Estridge. Second: Josee Telfer. Third: Becke Turner.

Historical: First: Teresia Derlen. Second: David J. Nix. Third: Celeste de Sales.

Paranormal/Fantasy/Futuristic/Time Travel: First: Raiss Greywood. Second: Tolden Rhys.

Third: Patsy Pratt-Herzog.

<u>Romantic Suspense</u>: First: Barbara Forenza. Second: Harper McDavid. Third: A.I.R. Court. Young Adult/New Adult: First: Eva Greenleigh. Second: Rachel Hallaran. Third: Randi Flynn.

Grand Prize Winner: Eva Greenleigh, Young Adult, Festival of Shadows.

Someone asked about funding assistance for COFW activities. Stacy provided the guidelines. See later in this newsletter on page 17 for the seven rules entitled "Financial Aid Funding."

With no further questions, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30.



COFW Secretary, Jeanne Oates Estridge writes paranormal romance she describes as "dark, snarky and happy ever after." Her first novel *The Demon Always Wins* won the RWA® Golden Heart® in 2015 and will be released in September 2018.

Works in Progress and Attendance for July 15

- 1. Jeanne Estridge: editing The Demon Always Wins.
- 2. Jenessa McRoy: Urban Fantasy WIP.
- 3. Stacy McKitrick: between projects.
- 4. Sandy Kachurek: querying agents.
- 5. Linda Rice: working on October workshop.
- 6. Aleta Dodson: working on Valentine novel for box set releasing in February 2018.
- 7. Alicia Anthony: working on a suspense novel, titled *Fractals*.
- 8. Rachel Dye: Contemporary WIP.
- 9. Saralee Etter: making progress on my Victorian Mystery!
- 10. Andrea McConnell: Day-job will hopefully allow me to finish edit of *The British Captain*.
- 11. Linda Culbertson: getting back to my story with Nora and Geoff.
- 12. Janice Beckett: Contemporary Romance *Dressage Dreaming* is the working title. SoulMate Publishing will release it in Spring 2018.
- 13. Jamie Mason: co-chairing ITF and getting back into my NANO manuscript.
- 14. Julia Blaine: finished "Angel Cat," a short story.
- 15. Cathy Matuszak: editing my thesis novel and finishing last semester of my MFA at Seton Hill University.



COFW and friends at the Columbus Metro Library (Photo by Shari Heinrich).



Coordinators Nancy White and Jane Conner

Grand Prize Winner

Festival of Shadows by Eva Greenleigh

Finalists

Contemporary

First Place: *Girl's Best Friend* by Jeanne Estridge Second Place: *Grasping Hope* by Josee Telfer Third Place: *Bad Medicine* by Becke Turner

Historical

First Place: *Prince of the Underworld* by Teresia Derlen Second Place: *Finding Wychwood* by David J. Nix Third Place: *Miss Bryson Heads for a Fall* by Celeste de Sales

Paranormal, Fantasy, Futuristic, Time Travel

First Place: *Wicked Deception* by Raisa Greywood Second Place: *Wolf's Bane* by Tolden Rhys Third Place: *Mag Mor* by Patsy Pratt-Herzog

Romantic Suspense

First Place: *Beyond Paradise* by Barbara Forenza Second Place: *Zapata* by Harper McDavid Third Place: *Blood Rights* by A.I.R. Court

Young Adult, New Adult

First Place: Festival of Shadows by Eva Greenleigh Second Place: Senior Year by Rachel Hallaran Third Place: Letting Go by Randy Flynn

Spotlighting New Member in Q&A Rachel Dye Writing as Juliette Hyland

Rachel Dye writes as Juliette Hyland from her home in Troy, Ohio, and discovered COFW on a Facebook page when investigating Ohio writing groups.

"I wanted to find additional writers and authors who are going through the writing and publishing process," she said.

COFW asked her a few questions.

Q: What are your favorite genres to write in?

A: I write historical and contemporary romance and fantasy.

Q: What is your preferred writing regimen? A: Man, I wish I could describe a disciplined regimen. Mostly, I try to write or edit everyday. Some days are better than others.

Q: What or who has inspired you to write? A: I write for the young girl in me who always dreamed of seeing her name on the spine of a book.

Years ago, a teacher told me to "do something" with my writing, but I let fear of failure silence my pen.

When my girls started getting old enough to say what they wanted to be, my oldest said, "Author." I realized I was telling my girls they could be anything they wanted. I truly believed that for them. Why not for me?



Q: What one writing goal do you hope to achieve this year? A: I want to keep moving forward on the path to publication--even if it just means more rejections.

Q: Who is your favorite author?

A: Diana Gabaldon.

Q: Do you have favorite books?

A: *The Outlander* series by Diana Gabaldon. *The Song of Fire and Ice* series by George R.R. Martin. *Chance Sisters* series by Anne Gracie. Harry Potter.

Q: What are you reading now?

A: Seven Stones to Stand or Fall, a collection of Outlander fiction by Diana Gabaldon and Escaping North Korea by Mike Kim.

Q: Would you tell us something about yourself?

A: I have been married to my wonderfully supportive husband for ten years, and we have two daughters, eight and five. I have two giant dogs--who think they help in the writing process.

I have three writing tattoos: One Harry Potter inspired. One Outlander inspired. A typewriter with a blank sheet of paper for my own journey.

When not writing, I sew (but use a seam ripper A LOT).

Q: Anything else you'd like to add?

A: I attend a weekly writing group. If you find yourself in the Northern Dayton area on Thursdays at 6:30, please join us. We meet at the Piqua Library and are open to all genres and ages.



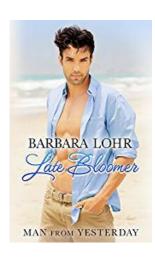
New COFW member Rachel Dye w/a Juliette Hyland discusses character motivation with special guest Laurie Schnebly.

New Release from Barbara Lohr

Late Bloomer

Now Available

Brody Wolf was a hellion in Carolyn's English class. He set a record for detentions and made her first year of teaching miserable. Ten years later she visits Santa Fe to nurse her widowed grandmother and bumps into Brody again. Her world tilts. Miraculously recovered, Mama V has traded her walker for a new beau. And Carolyn's student has matured into a caring man who helps her conquer a paralyzing fear of heights.



But can Brody convince his former teacher he's not a kid anymore?



Barbara Lohr writes contemporary romance with a flair for fun and subtly sexy love scenes. In her *Windy City Romance series*, the Kirkpatrick family and friends take on love and life's issues. Set on the shores of Lake Michigan, the *Man from Yesterday* series provides a provocative glance back at "what if." When she's not writing, she loves to golf, bike, kayak or cook. She makes a mean popover. Formerly a resident of Cincinnati, Barbara now lives in Savannah with her husband and a cat that insists he was Heathcliff in a former life.

A **COFW member** for at least ten years, she was also a member of the Cincinnati RWA chapter before it folded. "She says, "There is no RWA chapter in Savannah so I retain my COFW membership just to keep up on things!"

For more information on the author and her work, please see http://www.BarbaraLohrAuthor.com/.

August 10 Release by Susan Gee Heino The Marquis of Thunder

Book 6: The Heart of a Hero Series

What if your favorite superheroes had Regency-era doppelgangers? And what if a group of them were recruited by the Duke of Wellington to gather intelligence for him during the Napoleonic Wars while they protected their own parts of the realm?

You'd get The Heart of a Hero series.

Meet the Marquis of Thunder:

Lord Thorston is a libertine and a wastrel. At least, that's what he lets people think. In reality, he is hunting smugglers and spies. When his search leads him to a beautiful woman in a crumbling

house, more than just his life is in danger. Will he do his duty and destroy her, or will his own heart betray him?



Although her first love is lighthearted Regency romance, **Susan Gee Heino** also writes contemporary. Under her pen name, Serena Gilley, she writes "The Forbidden Realm" fantasy romance series. In 2008 she won the RWA Golden Heart® Award for Best Regency Historical.

Susan has been a COFW member since 2003. "I joined the group after I finished my second manuscript. If I was going to seriously pursue publication, I had a lot to learn. I joined RWA and informed my husband that he WOULD clear his calendar for COFW meeting days and stay with the kids while I drove down to the 'big city.'

I got so much out of those meetings! It amazed me to discover that I wasn't a freak, that there were a lot of smart, talented, romance-loving women who were just as determined to write as I was. And the published authors in the group were so amazingly helpful!

I quickly made lifelong friends in COFW and learned everything I know about writing romance. If not for COFW, I don't think I ever would have realized my dream of being published. I still get so much out of our meetings and the relationships I have built within the group. And wow, the new members bring so much energy and enthusiasm! I really need that sometimes."

Susan would love to know you. Follow her at www.SusanGH.com and www.SerenaGilley.com.

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SUSAN GEE HEÎNO

Twenty-two Thousand Librarians in One Place!

by Karen Harper

For the first time in my three-decade writing career, I was able to attend the American Library Association (ALA) this year in Chicago. The conference was titled "Our Diversity Is Our Strength" and was held at the massive McCormick Place exhibition center.

My publisher HarperCollins (HC) sent me and two other authors to give a talk on our work and to sign copies—freebies, which librarians love as much as regular readers. Long lines!



The ALA packed McCormick Place Exhibition Center in Chicago.

The convention was huge, not only in numbers of attenders (Actual count registered was 22,701.) but in workshops offered to members, huge publishers' displays and many awards events.

I must admit the high profile speakers, such as Hilary Clinton and Sarah Jessica Parker, the latter who is now beginning an Oprah-like book club, did not include me. The new Librarian of Congress, Carla Hayden, attended and spoke.

Romance Writers of America® had a booth, and it seemed to me

every publisher in the universe did also. I got my exercise just walking around the display areas and talking to marketing people.

And what a great opportunity to meet the great marketing force from my own publisher. They worked so hard to set everything up—bookshelves and structures—which came by truck from New York City.

I did one signing of Advanced Reading Copies (ARCs, also called galleys) of my October release, *The It Girls*, in the HC area and one after the talk near one of the stages. It was so interesting to see where the librarians were from. Closest to my home base, of course, Columbus, Ohio. The person I talked to who came from the farthest—Bangladesh!

Chicago traffic was the worst I have ever seen, including New York City, but the hotel where HC booked me overlooked a park and Lake Michigan with sailboats on it was really relaxing. The convention, however busy and crowded, was great for people watching.

Workshops available for the members were listed in a book an inch thick and included everything from using technology in libraries to "Daytime Astronomy at Your Library" and "Spotlight on: Library Artist Residencies."

There were many workshops about serving diverse readers and children. "Mother Goose on the Loose" was one workshop. Illustrators and gamers also had displays and presentations.

It was a five-day conference, June 22 - 27, but I only stayed two days. Besides being great publicity for my novels, I really learned a lot about behind the scenes at libraries. This was the librarians' answer to the RWA Conference, Mystery Writers of America gathering or the International Thriller Writers annual bash in July in NYC.



Karen Harper holds The Royal Nanny, released June 2016, and an Advanced Reading copy of her October 2017 release, The It Girls.

Karen Harper is a founding member of COFW. Her romance suspense publisher is Mira Books, part of Harlequin, which is now part of HarperCollins, so she actually writes in two genres for one publisher.

On September 16, COFW Presents Self-Publishing

with

Lita Lawson and Kat Sheridan

Editing and Formatting

Lita Lawson, self-published, contemporary author and COFW member, will discuss how to hire an editor and format your work, along with other handy tips regarding publishing your own work. www.litalawson.net.

A **COFW member** off and on for over 15 years, Lita says, "I love COFW as we have so many great speakers at our monthly meetings, annual conference or workshop. COFW has an amazing group of authors willing to share their experience in writing romance. COFW rocks!"

https://www.facebook.com/authorlitalawson

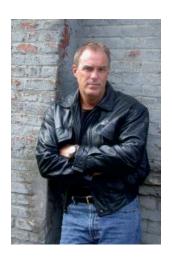
Writing the Back Cover Blurb

Kat Sheridan, self-published historical author, will discuss how to write a back cover blurb for your book.

Kat is addicted to historical, gothic novels and any romance that includes storms, castles, bat-shit

crazy villains and a high body count. Heroes and heroines must be larger than life. She's excessively fond of shiny things and bourbon and is non-functioning until she's had her coffee.

Her latest release is a Victorian Gothic Romance *Echoes in Stone*. www.facebook.com/Kat-Sheridan



*Saturday, October 21, 2017 All-day Workshop. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with

Larry Brooks

Author of Story Fix and Story Engineering

Location: The Courtyard Marriott 2350 Westbest Drive, Columbus.

Fee: COFW Members: \$55. Non-members: \$75 (includes continental breakfast, lunch, raffle).

To Register and Pay: COFW Website: http://www.cofwevents.org/workshop.

Workshop Topics:

☆ The Hidden Secrets of Story Structure.

- ☆ The Beautiful Collision of Concept and Premise.
- ☆ Dramatic Arc as the Key to Everything (Including Character).
- **☆** When Every Month is NanoWriMo.

Larry Brooks is a career writer from the corporate sector who had nourished a fiction-writing dream the entire time. He's published six novels and two

best-selling books on writing, *Story Engineering* and *Story Physics* and the 2015 release *Story Fix*, all through *Writer's Digest*.

For Questions: Linda Rice: lindarice05@gmail.com.

SIURY
LUX

TRANSFORM YOUR NOVEL
FROM BRUKEN TO BRILLIANT
LARRY BROOKS
HERORE FROM A NO.

*Note: COFW will not meet on its usual first "teen" Saturday in October.

On the Craft and Business of Writing

♥ Fiction Plotting with COFW Members

- ~First Wednesdays, 10 a.m.
- ~Panera Bread, 2374 Taylor Square Drive, Reynoldsburg, 43068.
- ~Sharing and discussing plots. Giving constructive advice on improvements.
- ~Between meetings, attendees stay in touch and ask questions via cofwplot@yahoogroups.com

Plot Problems? Questions? Re-energize Your Writing!

♥ Live Q & A on Facebook with Author Assistant, Melissa Jolly

- ~Every Wednesday, 2:30 p.m. Eastern
- ~Request to be her Friend on Facebook. Click on it when it pops up in your feed. Or go to her page and click on the "play" icon hovering over her picture.
- ~She takes questions for 30 minutes or until people stop asking.
- ~To ask your question, simply type.
- ~If you can't make it during that time, email her at melissa(at)authorrx(dot)com -- melissa@authorrx.com. She'll try to answer your question during one of her weekly chats.

\$ Financial Aid Funding \$

- 1. COFW maintains a fund to be used by qualified applicants for the payment COFW Chapter Workshops, Conferences, other events or COFW membership dues.
- 2. Funding is obtained from member donations and is kept separate from RWA chapter funds.
- 3. To qualify for an award from the fund, an applicant must be a member of COFW for one full calendar year prior to applying. The applicant will submit the required form stating their need for assistance to the Chapter President. The letter shall contain a statement of the applicant's financial need as well as a description of the applicant's serious pursuit of a writing career.
- 4. An individual needing financial assistance may be awarded up to \$75.00 from the fund once every three calendar years.
- 5. Funds are to be distributed by the Board on a first-come, first-served basis; "first" being defined as the first applicant to submit a letter to the Board following the guidelines.
- 6. Funds shall be disbursed only to the extent there are available funds and qualified applicants. There shall be no limit to the number of applicants who receive funds in any year.
- 7. Requests will be reviewed by the Board President and Treasurer and are confidential.

2017 COFW Leadership

Executive Board

President: <u>Jenessa McRoy</u> (jenessah@gmail.com)

Secretary: <u>Jeanne Estridge</u> (jeanne.estridge.author@gmail.com)

Treasurer: <u>Stacy McKitrick</u> (semckitrick@aol.com)



Committees

Programs Chair: <u>Sheri Adkins</u> (sherirenaeadkins@gmail.com)
Newsletter Editor: <u>Sandy Kachurek</u> (sandrajkachurek@gmail.com)
Membership Chair: <u>Linda Rice</u> (lindarice05@gmail.com)
Social Media Chair: <u>Andrea McConnell</u> (fyrefly93@gmail.com)

Incentives: <u>Julia Blaine</u> (julmassie@aol.com)

Ignite the Flame Contest Coordinators

Nancy White (nancywhite0529@gmail.com) and Jane Conner (djconner@earthlink.net)



Central Ohio Fiction Writers

P.O. Box 24254 Dayton, OH 45424

https://twitter.com/COFWriters https://www.facebook.com/COFWriters

Meeting Days:

The first "teen" Saturday of the month.

