



April 01, 2018.

Volume XXX. Issue 03.

## Welcome to Central Ohio Fiction Writers Newsletter

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Newsletter Editor, Sandra J. Kachurek

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.

**♥ Central Ohio Fiction Writers ♥**  
**Proud Chapter of the Romance Writers of America®**

**2018 Leadership**

President, Jenessa McRoy <[jenessah1@gmail.com](mailto:jenessah1@gmail.com)>  
Secretary, Susan Heino <[susan\\_gee\\_heino@yahoo.com](mailto:susan_gee_heino@yahoo.com)>  
Treasurer, Jeanne Estridge <[jeanne.estrIDGE.author@gmail.com](mailto:jeanne.estrIDGE.author@gmail.com)>

Program Chair, Aleta Dodson <[aletawrites@hotmail.com](mailto:aletawrites@hotmail.com)>  
Newsletter Editor, Sandra J. Kachurek <[sandrajkachurek@gmail.com](mailto:sandrajkachurek@gmail.com)>  
Membership Chair, Linda Rice <[lindarice05@gmail.com](mailto:lindarice05@gmail.com)>  
Social Media Chair, Andrea McConnell <[fyrefly93@gmail.com](mailto:fyrefly93@gmail.com)>  
Incentives, Julia Blaine <[julmassie@aol.com](mailto:julmassie@aol.com)>

**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.

**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**

April 01, 2018/Issue 03/Volume XXX/2

P.O. Box 24254  
Dayton, OH 45424  
**COFW's Next Program**

**April 14**

**COFW Member, Maddie James**

***Just One More: The Series Addiction***

Writing a series can be addicting—for the author and the reader. Having a series in your front/back list can boost sales, provide marketing opportunities, and keep readers coming back for the next book.

But what does it take to pull off a successful series? This workshop will share some strategies, tools, and behind the scenes logistics that work for Maddie James, and might work for you.

[Maddie James](#) writes to silence the people in her head. Unfortunately, they all have stories and want them told at once! From sexy contemporary cowboy to steamy romantic suspense, Maddie strives to get their stories right.

RT Book Review says James "deftly combines romance and suspense." Affaire de Coeur claims, "James has a special talent for traditional romance."

Published in print, ebook, audiobook and in at least seven languages, Maddie has been listed as a Top 100 Romance Author on Amazon and as an iBooks rising star in Western Romance.

As [Sophie Jacobs](#), she writes contemporary romance and women's fiction.



May 19

## Brainstorming and Critiquing Stories and Story Ideas



Unsure about the next plot point?

Questioning how your story sounds so far?

Wondering if a story possibility is possible?

Members will form small groups.

Everyone will have an opportunity to share where she is in her story writing and to ask the group for input.

Someone will take notes, if needed.

Bring your stories, your outlines, your ideas.

**June 16**

**Danielle Barclay**

## **Publicity and Marketing Tips**

**Danielle Barclay, Owner and Marketing and Publicity Director of Barclay Publicity.**



Danielle is the owner of [Barclay Publicity](#), a boutique public relations agency specializing in author publicity and book promotion. She started her career in publishing close to 20 years ago, honing her sales skills as an advertising account executive and working as a freelance marketing consultant.

Before founding Barclay Publicity, she held the position of publicity director at Entangled Publishing, helping launch and brand six of the company's twelve imprints. She also provided publicity support for the RT Booklovers Convention in 2010 and 2011.

As an industry recognized award winning social media expert, she has created and implemented over 700 publicity campaigns. She conducts presentations for writers groups and has a passion for mentoring aspiring and debut authors.

As a public relations professional, Danielle strives to get her clients in the right place to connect with readers so they can tell their story to as many people as possible. Aside from her marketing responsibilities, she also acts as copywriter, media buyer, and graphic designer for the company.

She has worked with numerous *New York Times* bestselling authors including

Shannon McKenna, Sarah Castille, Sharon Hamilton, Tracy Wolff, Noelle Adams, Katee Robert, Gina Maxwell, Jennifer Probst, Laura Kaye, Jennifer L. Armentrout, and Tawny Weber.

**July 14**

**Robin Yocum**

Part of the Thurber House Evenings with Authors Series, April 25.

Robin Yocum is an award-winning author whose critically acclaimed novel *Favorite Sons* was named the 2011 USA Book News Book of the Year for Mystery/Suspense and a Choose to Read Ohio Selection for 2013-14.



*Dead Before Deadline* is a compilation of stories from his days as a crime beat reporter with the *Columbus-Dispatch*. His latest and fifth novel, *A Perfect Shot*, will be available in April 2018. Its setting is the industrial town of Mingo Junction, Ohio.

Robin draws inspiration for his stories from a life growing up in the steel mill towns of the Ohio River Valley with its unique landmarks, neighborhoods and people. Robin joined the *Columbus-Dispatch* as a reporter in 1980 and worked there for 11 years, spent four years on the crime beat, followed by a post as a reporter on the investigative desk. He has won over 30 local, state and national awards while at the paper.



**August 18**

**2018 RWA National Conference Recap**

Listen to the stories from members who attended sessions you couldn't fit into your schedule or if you weren't able to experience RWA's event of the year yourself.



**September 15**

**J. Leigh Bailey**

## **Mastering the Meet-Cute in Romance Fiction**

The very first encounter between the romantic leads of your story sets the tone for the rest of the book. This encounter either pulls the reader deeper into the story or makes them decide the book isn't for them.

The meet-cute is the quirky, funny, sexy, and/or memorable way two people meet for the first time. It has been used for decades in film, television, and novels as a way to get the audience immediately sucked into the romantic storyline.

This presentation will use examples from popular movies, television shows, and books to identify the main characteristics of an effective meet-cute, to recognize the basic formulas and tropes of the meet-cute, and to explore ways to create fresh versions of this classic plot device.

[J. Leigh Bailey](#) is an office drone by day and the author of Young Adult and New Adult LGBT Romance by night. She can usually be found with her nose in a book or pressed up against her computer monitor.



A book-a-day reading habit sometimes gets in the way of ... well, everything ... but some habits aren't worth breaking.



J. Leigh Bailey's a firm believer that everyone, no matter their gender, age, sexual orientation or paranormal affiliation, deserves a happy ending.

**October 13**  
**Suzanne Sabol on Story Mapping**



Suzanne has been writing from age 16 when she finished her first full-length novel. She graduated from The Ohio State University with a major in Criminology, International Studies, Russian and Political Studies.

♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥



**Bring laptops, paper, pencils, pens.  
Together, we'll create the motivation.**





**Members-Only Holiday Party**  
**Bring food to share.**  
**Date and Location to be Set.**

## **COFW Fiction Plotters Meet Monthly**

Can't get your protagonist out of a hole you've written her into?

Not sure whether the antagonist is antag-ing enough?

Need a boost with a story idea that has yet to see words on a page?

Consider stopping by the COFW Fiction Plotters group.

They meet the first Wednesday of the month at 10 a.m. at the Panera Bread in Taylor Square in Reynoldsburg, Ohio, 43068.

To ensure members are meeting and to stay in touch in between, they 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)

## **Rules for Closed Facebook Group @COFWriters**

Same rules apply in the FB group as apply on our COFW email loop.

♥ You must be a COFW member to join.

- ♥ No one can see the posts unless they are a member of the group.
- ♥ This does NOT replace the email loop.
- ♥ This does NOT replace the COFW website.
- ♥ You need to go to the FB group page and click on the join button as FB Group membership is entirely optional.

- ♥ Find it here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/177462723049177/>

## **Minutes, Treasury Report, Attendance for March 17, 2018 Norwich Township Building, Hilliard**

Jeanne Estridge, Treasurer, brought the meeting to order in the absence of President Jenesssa McRoy. Julia Blaine agreed to do the minutes for Secretary Susan Heino who was also absent.

Works in Progress journal went around the room. We use this for attendance as well as keeping tabs on what we're working on.

Present were: Jeanne Estridge, Donna MacMeans, Donna Gawell, Stacy McKittrick, Andrea McConnell, Julia Blaine, Linda Rice, Aleta Dodson, Alice Vossbrinck, Janice Beckett, Lauren Connolly, Tanja Fazarri, Rachel Dye, Janet Lindsey and speaker Sara Porter.

Jeanne as Treasurer reported \$7,780.50 in checking; \$1082.73 in PayPal; and \$1564.53 in Financial Aid Assistance for a total in Assets of \$10,427.76.

Jeanne asked for a chair to lead a committee to discuss reworking our Ignite the Flame contest. This is the contest for 2019. We have no contest in 2018. Ignite the Flame is the biggest money maker for COF, and it offers a way of giving back to the RWA community by providing feedback and affirmation to writers.

Janice Beckett agreed to chair the committee. A number of members plan to help. Virtual meetings are possible for their discussion. Janice will report back to COFW members.

Jeanne expressed praise for our chapter. COFW does not need a Code of Conduct to treat each other with kindness and respect. RWA is addressing this issue, which is a problem in some chapters, apparently. Any discussion of this situation is tabled until next meeting if it is necessary to make it a point of discussion.

Julia offered incentives for members who are finishing work, starting work, editing, submitting material to publishers and agents, signing up for workshops and receiving rejections.

Andrea, our Social Media Chair, discussed the proposed COFW Face Book page. Should it be closed or secret? After a discussion, a motion was made by Sandy Kachurek for a closed page. Tanja Fazzari seconded the motion. It passed.

Tanja reported that the date of the current meeting was not on the COFW heading on the COFW website online. Jeanne will look into this. Online information should include all meeting locations and dates.

Aleta Dodson, our Program Chair, reported on speakers and programs for upcoming meetings:

April: Maddie James on How to Write a Series; May: Critiquing and Brainstorming Stories and Story Ideas; June: Danielle Barclay on Publishing and Marketing; July: Robin Yocum; August: 2018 RWA National Conference Recap; September: J. Leigh Bailey on Mastering the Meet-Cute; October: Suzanne Sabol on Story Mapping; November: Corresponding with NaNoWriMo, a write-in. January 2019 meeting: Maddie James on How to Market Your Series. [See this newsletter for more detailed info on programs.]

Sandy Kachurek, our Newsletter Editor, asked for a recap writer for the guest

presentation and Rachel Dye agreed to do it.

Aleta moved to adjourn. Stacy seconded this. We reassembled for Sara Portman's presentation about Historical Characterization at 1:30.

Respectfully submitted, Julia Blaine acting secretary

## **Attendance and Works in Progress**

01. Jeanne Estridge: starting on *Touched by a Demon*, Book 3 in her series.
02. Stacy McKittrick: working on *In Love With a Vampire*.
03. Rachel Dye: finishing *Marked by Fae* and *His Misplaced Wife*.
04. Donna Gawell: *In the Shadow of Golem* to be released June 2018.
05. Sandy Kachurek: polishing short stories.
06. Julia Blaine: heard from my "long lost publisher" that publishing might happen. And I'm over my flu!
07. Lauren Connelly: editing *You Only Need One*.
08. Aleta Dodson: Now in a box set, *The Billionaire's Club* releases May 20; received a rejection from Harlequin Romance Contest.
09. Linda Rice: getting ready for Kiss of Death's Book-in-a-Week.



*A lucky group of members meet with Sara Portman (middle) for the day.*

## **Hoping to Network and Interact with other Romance Writers,** **New Member and Municipal Liaison for NaNoWriMo,** **Gina R. Smith w/a Rochelle Bradley**

Writing from "warm and cheerful" Centerville, Gina R. Smith writes as Rochelle Bradley, using her middle name Rochelle and her husband's name Bradley. A few years ago, a friend invited her to be a guest at a COFW meeting, but she was already familiar with COFW because of the RWA chapter list.



Gina's first novel *Double D Ranch* was published

in December 2017. The book is filled with puns and innuendo--think an Austin Powers movie set in a small Texas town. The story started two days before NaNoWriMo in 2013. She chunked her original idea and months of planning and wrote DD anyway.

It was fun to write about men falling in love with romance novels, starting book clubs and acting out their favorite heroes.

**Q: What are your favorite genres to write in?**

**A:** Contemporary small town romance with a heap of humor has been my go-to for the past few years. I've written two books in an epic fantasy series and several paranormal romances.

**Q: What is your writing regimen?**

**A:** I make a large mug of coffee (or wine depending on the day) and turn on classical music. I have to listen to music without lyrics, or I'll sing along and/or pick the words apart. I try to write/edit each day but that doesn't always happen.

I'll meet with other writers on Monday mornings and Thursday evenings (we actually write) so I know I'll be productive on those days. I also love to write in coffee shops or anywhere I'm away from laundry and other household distractions.

**Q: What or who inspires you to write?**

**A:** All my stories evolve from epic dreams. I don't know anyone in the dreams, and I view the dream through another's perspective (sometimes a man). From the vivid details I'll weave together an outline then stretch it to novel length. Real life inspires me too because, let's face it, life can be stranger than fiction.

**Q: Describe at least one goal you hope to achieve this year or sooner.**

**A:** I plan to publish the second in my *Fortuna, Texas* series, *Plumb Twisted*.

**Q: Who's your favorite author?**

**A:** Geesh, this is hard. There are so many great authors. Do I really have to pick one? James Rollins, C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Rick Riordan and because she got me through a tough time, Grace Livingston Hill.

**Q: What are your favorite books?**

**A:** I'm a serial reader. A few of my favorites: James Rollins's *Sigma Force* is great, action-packed, saving-the-world adventure. If you like fairy tales mixed with other lore/legends, you'll love Jennifer Blackstream's *Blood Prince* series. I recently read the first two books in *The Cotiere Chronicles* by Michelle Bolanger.

**Q: What other information about yourself are you willing to share?**

**A:** I was born and raised in Cincinnati and made a huge migration north to Dayton when I married (LOL). By schooling, I'm an interior decorator. I share my home with one cat, three lizards, two high schoolers and my prince, Aaron. That's right, three lizards: an eyelash crested gecko, a rainbow chameleon and a bearded dragon.

**Q: What else would you like the members of COFW to know about you?**

**A:** I volunteer as a Municipal Liaison (ML) for National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo). I co-chair the Dayton region. Basically, I promote writing and encourage writers during the month of November.

Writing can be solitary so I coordinate times for writers to come together and do what they love to do. I find being an ML fulfilling and a blessing.

<https://rochellebradley.com/> (blog is part of the website)

<https://twitter.com/AuthorRochelleB>

<https://www.facebook.com/RochelleBradleyAuthor/> (author page)

<https://www.facebook.com/author.rochelle.bradley> (friend page)

<https://www.pinterest.com/BradleyRochelle/>


































<https://www.instagram.com/rochelle.bradley/>

<https://www.tumblr.com/blog/rochellebradley>





















































## Let's celebrate your efforts.



























































































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## Sara Portman: Seven Points for Characterization in

# any Genre and Three Points for Historic Heroine Accuracy

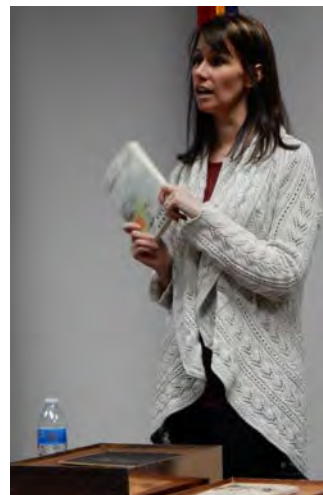
Recap by Rachel Dye

On March 17, COFW was fortunate to have author Sara Portman present *Creating Female Characters for Historicals*.

Sara is an award-winning author of historical and contemporary romance. Her debut novel, *The Reunion*, was named 2015 winner in the Historical Category of the Romance Writers of America® Golden Heart® contest.

While Sara focused on female historical characters, much of her information can be used for designing well-developed characters in all genres.

Sara briefly outlined her process and reminded us that processes, including hers, are constantly changing as we learn and continue to write. She uses dialogue to add more historical notes to her books and almost never writes paragraphs of pure description.



*Sara shares her favorite resources for writing historical stories.*

As she eloquently stated, “Crafting historical romance is more layered than simply making your hero a duke, describing empire-waisted dresses, and having your characters refer to Almack’s.”

When describing her characterization process, Sara admitted to not being creative in an orderly fashion. Instead she often uses multiple brainstorming techniques to build out her character ideas before turning to a few tools to finish the job.

These tools include: *Save the Cat* Beat sheet, Story Genius Scene Cards, Michael Hague’s *Story Structure* and Elizabeth Hoyt’s *How to Build a Hero*.

In order to define historical characters, or really any character, Sara uses the following seven points she must know about her character before starting:

1. Her moral choices.
2. Her impact on the community: How do her moral choices alter the community, as well as the hero? Sara urged us to think of this as a ripple effect.
3. Her ethical position and just desserts: Here, historical characters need to be believable. As Sara pointed out, it is not only

difficult but nearly impossible for a heroine in the early 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century campaign represent women's suffrage. The vote was extremely limited among men of the time, and the idea that women should join this elite strata would be extreme.

4. Her general temperament: How does your character act in the story? Also, ensure that her general temperament aligns with the issues you have outlined in 1-3. If she is for helping the working poor but treats her servants cruelly, it will make little sense.

5. Her essential nature: Is she prideful, selfish, impulsive, self-sacrificing, kind?

6. Her defining characteristics.

7. Her meaningful acts in the story:

This includes her backstory and the active story and how

those acts drive her character development to the happily-ever-after.



*Sara passes out her Historical Character Study points with members, including Aleta Dodson and Donna MacMeans.*

Sara's discussion also revolved around three parts to building a

historical heroine for a modern reader.

I. Make setting part of who your characters are. Setting should never separate from your characters.

To be immersive, time and place must be integral to the story.

If you can pick the characters up and deposit them into another time without them seeming out of time, then there is a problem with your setting.

Don't forget; your settings consist not just of the historical places but the people of the heroine's community who are reinforced by that time period and setting.

II. Get the details right with research.

If you are writing historical novels, you must do some research. Know the laws, events and locations that your heroine would have experienced in this

place and time. The authenticity of your characters depends on getting this right.

Great news! With the Internet this information is easier to achieve than ever.

III. Create historical heroines who appeal to modern readers.

Historical heroines must live up to their heroic name. They must satisfy our desire for inspiration and empowerment.

While it is important to understand the restrictions placed on women in your chosen era, focus on what your heroine could do rather than what she couldn't.

Powerful historical women often used money, sex and social clout to bend society to their ways.

Ensure you know the distinction between improbable and

impossible. Your heroine does not have to be bound by what is likely, but her community probably should be.

Don't confuse unlikely with untrue. Your historical facts still need to be correct or it may bring the reader out of the story.

Sara Portman reminded us that modernity lies in attitude more than action. We can appeal to modern sensibilities even when our character is behaving in a predictable way for her time.

Sara maintains her website: [www.saraportman.com](http://www.saraportman.com) . Her Twitter account is: @saraportmanauth



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*Sara Portman displays her key resource books for creating authentic historical settings and characters.*





**Recap Writer, Rachel Dye**, writing as Juliette Hyland, is an aspiring romance author. She holds a bachelor's degree in history. When she's not putting pen to paper, she can usually be found behind her sewing machine. She lives in Ohio with her husband, two children and a pair of giant dogs.

## **New Release for Karen Harper**

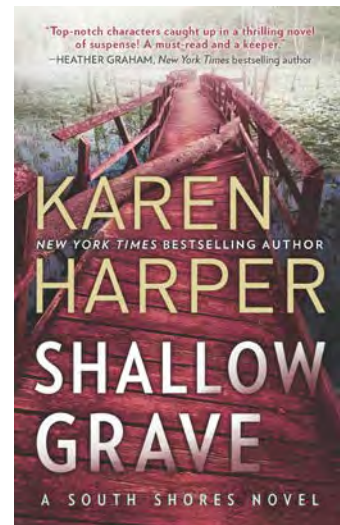
### **Book 4 in South Shores Series**

#### **Shallow Grave**

It's been four months since forensic psychologist Claire Britten last crossed paths with danger. Together with her partner, criminal lawyer Nick Markwood, Claire has settled into a new role, volunteering with a support group for children stressed by domestic violence.

But a leisurely field trip to a wildlife sanctuary turns deadly, leaving Claire to question whether the death was an accident, suicide—or something far more sinister.

Nick gets the South Shore team on the case. Their investigation turns wild when other attacks come too close to home. With a predator on the loose, Nick and Claire will have to race



to unbury the truth before a killer wipes them from the endangered-species list for good.

**Karen Harper is a founding member of COFW**, so she has been there from the start. She was first published in 1982. "Travel and family demands get in the way of attending meetings sometimes, but it's great to still have some of the original friends over the years. Yet, new people and new ideas are also the bedrock of COFW."



A *New York Times* and *USA Today* best-selling author, Karen Harper is a former college English instructor (The Ohio State University) and high school literature and writing teacher. A lifelong Ohioan, Karen and her husband Don divide their time between the midwest and the southeast; both locations she has used in her books.

[Karen Harper](#)

Released March 17

Still Waters

A Garza Security Novel

By Tobi Doyle

Sara Waters's best friend needs to disappear from her abusive ex-husband, and Sara knows the Garza brothers have connections to make that happen. They agree but only if Sara uses her network security skills at Garza Security for six weeks consulting. Six weeks working private sector versus government and getting paid with benefits attract the adventurous twenty-six-year-old.



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Joaquin Garza plans to expand the DC-based security business. Enter Sara, the doe-eyed techie, who makes Princess Anna from *Frozen* look street savvy. Her stellar network security skills, accurate roundhouse and brain in exchange for some fake identification? Fate.

But when the best friend's ex threatens Sara in a grocery parking lot, Joaquin feels responsible and his team intends to guard her. Except she's not one to cooperate. Oppositional defiance? Sara's got it in boatloads.

**Erin Novotny** writing as Tobi Doyle was born in Massachusetts, grew up in California, went to school in Texas and raised her children in Indiana and West Virginia. She's held many jobs, her favorite was teaching. She is a happily married empty-nester with two dogs, three cats and a tortoise.

"**I joined COFW** because I found myself attending the conferences and loving the people I met there. I live in Huntington, WV with no local RWA. I get super energized from the meetings and hope to make as many as possible."

<http://tobidoylemacbrayne.com/>

## **Local Author Fair in Marion**

**by Susan Gee Heino**

On Saturday, March 24, I participated in the "ReadLocal Author Fair," hosted by the Marion Public Library. As Marion is less than a half-hour away from my house, I was thrilled to hear about an author event so close to home.

This was the second year they have held their author fair, but the first year I have been able to be involved. Their focus is on authors from the Marion and Central Ohio area and all sorts of books are welcome. More than two dozen authors participated in the day, some coming from as far away as Dayton and Canal Winchester.

Past COFW member Abbie Roads was the featured Keynote Speaker for the

event. Not only was Abbie on hand to meet her fans and sign books, but she gave a wonderful presentation highlighting the importance of persistence.

She shared the story of her journey to publication, a long-held dream of hers since childhood. Despite self-doubt and a few shattering critiques, Abbie persevered and never gave up on her dream to be traditionally published.

Obviously Abbie eventually reached that goal, signing a multi-book deal with Sourcebooks. She will see the release of her fourth book later this year and she's busily working on her fifth. She encouraged everyone to keep chasing their dreams despite setbacks and brick walls.



*Past member Abbie Roads is keynote speaker at a recent local author fair in Marion.*

The Marion Public Library is planning to host this event each year. The library's on-site BookMarket staff generously handled book sales for the event.

BookMarket is a not-for-profit retail space within the library that is run entirely by a friends-of-the-library group called "BookMarks." They were able to contact some publishers to provide books for the signing, but other authors supplied their own books.

I was impressed with how smoothly things ran during the event and enjoyed meeting the steady stream of readers who passed by my table. The library staff and volunteers at the BookMarket were very helpful and friendly.

Another COFW author involved in this event was Stacy McKittrick. There were several types of romance, mystery, non-fiction, children's books, and more.

Readers seemed to enjoy the variety of genres represented at the fair.. The

open atmosphere allowed for plenty of interaction between authors, which is always a bonus for me.

I love meeting fellow writers and hearing about their stories! I sold a few books and gained some new readers, too. Of the library book fairs I have participated in, this one is among the best. The hardest part of my day, in fact, was keeping my own BookMarket purchases to a minimum!



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