



April 2020

Issue 3

## 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.

## **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](http://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: May 16, 2020; A Crash Course in Online Advertising For Authors**

February 14th, 2020 - Business meeting at 12:30 pm, Discussion at 1:30 pm  
Norwich Township Fire Station 83, 4283 Davidson Rd, Hilliard, OH 43026

- *Please note that we are at the smaller location this month – and 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](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)

**Minutes of the Central Ohio Fiction Writers  
Zoom Call  
April 18,2020**

**Welcome.**

**Attendance:** Andrea, Anne, Bernie, Janet, Janice, Jeanne, Jenessa, Linda, Rachel/Juliette, Rochelle/Gina, Sandy, Saralee, Shari, Susan.

**Reports:**

A. President, Janice Beckett:

1.a. RWA Elections are complete, in part, with Allyssa Day as President. The Board is strongly diverse and equitable, which would give RWA a chance to come from this recent crisis. Jeanne and Janet stated they chose to renew their RWA memberships in response to the new Board.

1.b. RWA National Convention in San Fransisco offers sign-up pages but no schedules. Someone heard that RWA is trying to work with the hotel in the date change to July 29-August 2.

2. Chapter Affiliation Agreements are due July 31; COFW will send it in.

3. Plotters Group West went online recently for its monthly session. COFW has an unlimited Zoom account, making it possible for all members to join a plotters group gathering. Perhaps, a Zoom Plotters gathering will be held periodically even after the shut-in order is lifted to make it accessible to everyone.

B. Treasurer, Stacy McKitrick (absent):

Members: 36

Assets: Checking: \$6985.38 + PayPal: \$541.96 = \$7527.34

Perseverance Fund: \$1519. 78

Total: \$9047.12

C. Programming:

Jeanne Estridge volunteered to help direct programming.

Scheduled:

~Today: Rachel Dye: "Understanding the Federal Law Enforcement and Intelligence Community for Writers."

~May: Pub Craft: "Enhance Your Presence on Social Media." Canadian firm will offer tips and tools for you to use to expand yourself online.

Sure possibility:

~October, Grace Burrowes [[graceburrowes.com](http://graceburrowes.com)] can attend in person and has a few programs she's willing to present. Suggestion is to publicize and sell tickets to her program.

Other ideas:

~April Wilson [[aprilwilsonauthor.com](http://aprilwilsonauthor.com)] from Dayton Romance Writers on field for Amazon ads.

~Alicia Rasley [[aliciarasley.com](http://aliciarasley.com)] from Indiana is a good speaker.

~Patricia Sargeant [[patriciasargeant.com](http://patriciasargeant.com)] is local.

Panel made up of COFW members on a topic.

#### D. Incentives:

Stacy McKittrick won the Magic Spreadsheet for the month.

#### E. Social Media:

Rachel has been conducting 20-minute writing sprints Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays on COFW closed FB site.

#### F. Newsletter, Rachel Dye:

If you have a new release, please send Rachel your cover, blurb, and release date.

Sandy Kachurek volunteered to recap today's program.

#### **Unfinished Business:**

1. COFW Chapter Status: Stay or Go? Has the RWA election of new officers changed your vote?

Stay: COFW shouldn't be hasty to leave since RWA is making a great effort to diversify and be equitable; RWA carries a lot of clout and a nationwide reputation, which impresses people; solid belief that support for RWA will come back.

Go: too soon to believe RWA has changed; needing definite proof of change.

COFW as an RWA affiliate requiring \$99 RWA dues + \$30 COFW dues:

- \*attract more diverse members by offering to pay their dues in some way

- \*use grants to pay younger, beginning writers

[Note: RWA offers students a dues discount of \$39.]

- \*partner with a nonRWA group

2. Non-RWA group, Ohio Fiction Writers OFW: Officially a Non-Profit: What's next?

- \*Needed: Bylaws, Laws of Incorporation, Bank Accounts, Officers, Dues.

- \*Committee: Susan G Heino, Andrea McConnell, Rochelle/Gina and others

- \*Possibility of OFW partnering with COFW.

- \*Attracting non-romance writers and programs

- \*Keep OFW moving and give it life

Adjournment: 1:32.

# April Recap: Authenticity in Romance Using the FBI and CIA Community

by

Sandy Kachurek

Rachel Dye, writing as Juliette Hyland, loved watching her grandmother's favorite television show, NCIS, with her. But as she followed the agents outwitting the enemies, she was often rolling her eyes.

If you don't want readers' eyes to roll when they read your romantic suspense/thriller where your character is an intelligence analyst or law enforcement agent, then maybe you should talk to Rachel. She's spent fifteen years as an intel analyst for the US Air Force working with the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) and the National Air and Space Intelligence Center (NASIC) at Wright Patterson Air Force Base. Her intel schoolhouse t-shirt motto is "Making Pilots Look Competent since 1947."

Using Zoom due to the coronavirus shut-down for her presentation, Rachel shared her expertise with writers in mind in her "Understanding the Federal Law Enforcement and Intelligence Community for Writers."

She outlined the entire federal law enforcement and intelligence communities with a breakdown of each organization by departments and touched upon the definitions and responsibilities of each one. Along the way, she highlighted areas where the information could increase authenticity in a romantic suspense /thriller novel.

Her talk began with the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the mission of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), which is to protect the American people and to uphold the U.S. Constitution. The Director of National Intelligence is its head, and its primary focus is on domestic cases. When the FBI is overseas, it operates out of the US embassies.

Rachel stressed that when the FBI is overseas, it operates within agreements made by the host country. "The host country gets to decide whether or not the FBI will get involved and by how much," Rachel said. "You see the shows and novels where an agent goes rogue. IT DOES NOT HAPPEN." She explained. "Not only would the agent risk being PNGed [persona non grata] but if he or she did, the entire office could get PNGed as well."

An FBI agent can appear on the local scene in your story if a federal crime is suspected or if local law enforcement requests FBI support.

Your characters can come from anywhere to work in the intelligence community or law enforcement communities, which is larger than you think. "You don't need a degree in law enforcement to work for Federal Law Enforcement." Rachel has a bachelor's degree in history with a specialization in post-Communist Russian studies. She is one of thousands who are intel analysts, along with civilian attorneys, forensic accountants, surveillance specialists; tech specialists who work with the "cool spy

stuff"; scientists and engineers; linguists who translate and lots of retired military; along with the admin support who keep it all running.

Rachel thinks highly of the forensic accountants because in 100% of the cases involving the law enforcement community that she supported, "it all came down to Big Money, and these people know how to track the money. They are the legitimate whiz kids." Admin support, she added, is also very important in keeping everything all together. "Nothing gets done without admin support."

Keep in mind when you're writing your story or watching shows like NCIS that "when tests are sent to the surveillance specialist for analysis, they take SO much longer than what you see on television and in novels. It takes days, and many times weeks, to get results."

For the record, NCIS agents do love the NCIS TV shows. Mostly because they love telling people how they have a TV show.

Clothing is another aspect to keep in mind when writing about military agents; they don't wear uniforms on the job. "employees are a mix of military and civilian and are very insular. Even military agents wear civilian clothes." Rachel added. "If you walked into my department, you wouldn't know who was military and who was not by looking at our outfits."

She explained why. "A uniformed agent may create a tense atmosphere. If in an interrogation, for example, it's important to get the person in question to talk."

Interrogation may be what a lot of us think of when we think law enforcement. However, not every department does "sexy" work," said Rachel. The Department of Commerce (not to be confused with the Chamber of Commerce) focuses on export violations, investigating prohibited foreign buyouts, for example.

Which crimes or situations each department covers is fairly specific to the department. For example, FBI intelligence missions within the US in its investigation of terrorist attacks, foreign intelligence, cyber attacks, and significant crimes as they occur on US soil.

The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) focuses on drug traffic and distribution. US Marshalls still chase fugitives and deal with prison breaks; Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, Explosives (ATF) handles unlawful use and manufacture of arms, arson and bombing, and illegal traffic and tax evasion of alcohol and tobacco.

If you're looking for the ideal alpha male, suggested Rachel, look to the Secret Service. They do more than protect the president, though there's a location on the White House grounds. They're part of Homeland Security and cover protective missions, such as protecting highly valued US personnel. On investigative missions, the Secret Service deals with counterfeiting and e-crimes.

An interesting fact to add to your Secret Service agent in your romantic suspense/thriller story: protective agents have to sign a "significant non-disclosure agreement." This means, said Rachel, "they cannot speak about their missions for 75 years."

As distinctive as each department is there can be overlapping. Homeland Security (DHS) will sometimes take over an investigation with sweeping authority. As a side note, Immigration and Customs



Enforcement (ICE), a department within DHS, does not patrol US borders, Rachel mentioned. US Customs and Border Protection Officers (CBPOs) do.

Wrapping up the law enforcement community, Rachel gave a list of items to keep in mind.

## THESE DON'T HAPPEN

~Not telling a partner where you are

If your romantic twosome are both agents, not telling the other is a deep violation of policies and trust. It's essentially going rogue and there would be consequences, professionally and, in a romance, romantically. It would make a great black moment.

~An intelligence analyst arresting the "bad guy"

No analyst has the authority to arrest anyone, nor are they around with the arresting is done. The arresting is done by agents and/or police officers.

~FBI arguing with the CIA over whose case it is

The FBI and CIA don't work cases together because CIA is not a law enforcement entity. Within the FBI, however, there might be discussions and arguments over cases, such as the FBI and Homeland Security Investigation (HSI) disagreeing over jurisdictions.

~Labs producing immediate results

No such thing as one-hour turnarounds and a lab with no backlog

~Car chases that always catch the "bad guy"

No agency likes to risk collateral damage; therefore, most car chases end with the "bad guy" getting away.

~Agents working as hostage negotiators

They'll keep the "bad guy" talking until the pros, the Hostage Negotiators or Crisis Negotiators come. The FBI has an entire unit of Crisis Negotiators.

~Convictions

Don't happen as often as you're led to believe

~Collateral damage

Not financially worth shooting up everything

Rachel then moved on to the Intelligence Community, discussing the Central Intelligence Agency, or the CIA, and the intel units that operate under the Department of Defense (DOD).

It's the secretive nature of the Intelligence Community and law enforcement that tends to draw us into a suspense piece. Rachel talked about the levels of clearance used by the National Agency Check with Local Agency and Credit Checks (NACLC), which are various levels of background checks required for granting security clearances to personnel wanting access to intelligence information.

"Clearances" protect secret information and is needed to gain access to anything that's classified. "Confidential" is the level of clearance applied after weeks to months of investigative work into the person requesting it, a check that is renewable every 15 years. "Secret" is given after months to years of an investigation into a person's background and is renewed every 10 years. "Top Secret" is a background check given after six to 18 months of investigation, and "Single Scope Background Investigation (SSBI)" is reserved for employees who require a top secret security clearance and is renewable every five years.

Unlike the FBI's territory being the US or within US embassies, the CIA is primarily foreign intelligence. It gathers, processes, and analyzes national security information from around the world, primarily through the use of human intelligence. "They are," said Rachel, "the 'cubicle workers,' the collectors of information."

Many law enforcement agencies have small counterintelligence (CI) that involves dealing with spies, sabotage, assassination. These are your only individuals that are operating stateside.

Many CI investigations take a lot more time than is shown in most movies and books. Rachel pointed out the case of Walter Kendall Myers, where a joint investigation of the State Department and the FBI took three years before it was able to arrest Myers, a US State Department employee, and indict him on charges of spying for Cuba for nearly 30 years.

The Department of Defense's has multiple intel units including the Defense Intelligence Agency, the service level intel units, NASIC - Air Force, Office of Naval Intelligence (Navy), National Ground Intelligence Center (Army), and the National Security Agency (NSA), which is full of lawyers, analysts and NO agents.

Other non-DOD intel partners include the Departments of Energy (the brain trust), Treasury, Drug Enforcement (terrorism), and the Coast Guard (works closely with Drug Enforcement).

Rachel listed items to remember when writing your suspense/thriller romance. These items fit the law enforcement and Intelligence communities.

THESE DO HAPPEN:

~Missions among departments overlap (called "creep") and fights break out over authority. Not between the FBI and CIA, but among the departments within each.

~Budgets are limited.

~Technical equipment breaks down.

~The collecting of info is sexy, but the exploitation, or making the info usable, is not. A lot gets left on the cutting room floor.

THINGS THAT MAKE ONE GO "HMMM"

~Specialty collector (collector) is not an exploiter (analyst). There are distinct walls between the collector and the analyst.

~Random hacking while at one's desk. NO ANALYST HAS THIS AUTHORITY!

~ An intelligence employee cannot take work home, including notes.

~Spying on one's husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend--doesn't happen. AND WILL GET YOU IMMEDIATELY FIRED!

~Magical satellites that pick up anything at any time--orbits move slowly and regulate where and when they are in the sky.

~Immediate, crystal clear images via satellites--clouds cover a lot most of the time.

In the intelligence world the failures get the publicity. The wins do not.

When it comes to involving the law enforcement or intelligence community in your romance suspense/thriller, it's best to make sure you are aware of individual organization do. Providing accurate details will likely stop eye rolling from readers who know a lot about these communities. Authenticity may also make for some very romantic storytelling as well.

Rachel offered these helpful sites to find out more:

[www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)

[www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)

<https://www.dni.gov/>

<https://www.justice.gov/>

For more about Crisis Negotiators, here is an interview with the former head of that unit:

<https://www.thetrace.org/2016/08/crisis-negotiator-armed-hostage-taker/>

*Unlocking the Ex-Army Doc's Heart* is Juliette Hyland's debut romance releasing soon through Harlequin.

To Follow Juliette:

<https://www.juliettehyland.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/juliettehyland/>

<https://twitter.com/juliettehyland>

## New Releases:

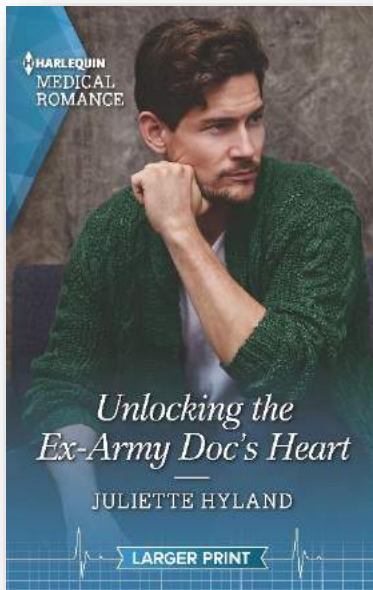


### *Original Sin by Jeanne Oates Estridge*

*In the beginning, God created Adam and...Lilith?*

Meet the founding member of the First Wives Club. Before Adam met Eve, he was married to Lilith. Created at the same time and from the same dust as her husband, Lilith views herself as Adam's equal.

What if the original sin wasn't curiosity?



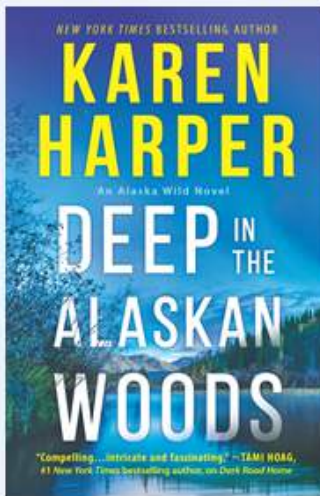
### *Unlocking the Ex-Army Doc's Heart by Juliette Hyland*

**It will take someone special...**

*...to thaw her frozen heart!*

The Arctic Circle's remote tranquility made it the perfect place for ex-army doc and former child star Annie Masters to open her clinic. But her cherished anonymity is ruined when celebrity surgeon Rafe Bradstone arrives in town! Seeing that she uses her work as a safe haven, dynamic Rafe seems determined to show her what she's missing out on. And it's working... She's beginning to imagine a future—with him!

## *Deep in the Alaskan Woods by Karen Harper*

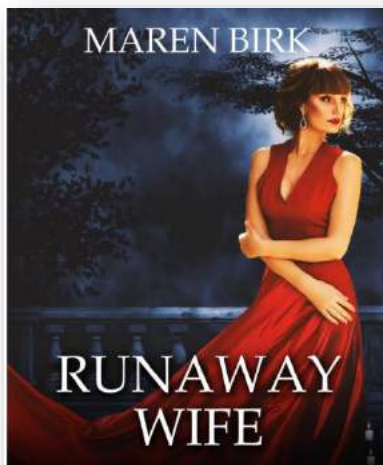


### **DEEP in the ALASKAN WOODS**

New York Time's bestselling author, Karen Harper.

In the wilds of Alaska, someone sinister is hunting...

Alexandra Collister came to Falls Lake, Alaska, looking for a fresh start. The surrounding forest can be unforgiving—luckily, rugged wilderness tracker Quinn Mantell offers to be her guide. Still recovering from a toxic previous relationship, Alex is wary of getting too close, but when savagely deep claw marks appear outside her bedroom window, keeping her distance from Quinn is no longer an option.



## *Runaway Wife by Maren Brik*

*Runaway Wife (2019)*

*Runaway wife...*

*Billionaire husband..*

*She must leave in order to save her family.*

Engineer Gabriela Ruiz de Alvarez's abusive past catches up to her. She has been running since she was a teen and her time just ran out. Can she save her family in time?

Investment trader Maximo Alvarez Estrada's perfect wife calmly walked out of the life they had built together in southern Spain. Finding her was a must, but will Max ever forgive her for not trusting him?

## **COFW now has a goal sheet!!!**

**Thanks to Erin Novotny 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>

March Winner: Rachel Dye

The winner gets Eddie!

## **January Newsletter:**

I sincerely apologize that the January newsletter had issues. It is loaded in our RWA forums and is on the Facebook page.

Respectfully,

Rachel Dye

COFW Newsletter Editor

A vintage yellow typewriter sits on a light-colored wooden desk. A hand is visible typing on the keyboard. To the left of the typewriter is a white bowl containing a red soup or sauce with some garnishes. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

# COFW

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