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#### Newsletter Editor. Sandra J. Kachurek

Central Ohio Fiction Writers (COFW) <a href="http://cofwevents.org">http://cofwevents.org</a> 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 <<u>jenessah1@gmail.com</u>>
Secretary, Susan Heino <<u>susan\_gee\_heino@yahoo.com</u>>
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Social Media Chair, Andrea McConnell <a href="mailto:syrothera">fyrefly93@gmail.com</a>
Incentives, Julia Blaine <a href="mailto:julmassie@aol.com">julmassie@aol.com</a>

#### Meetings

First "Teen" Saturday of the Month.
Social: Noon to 12:30. Business: 12:30. Guest Presentation: 1:30.
\*\*\*For October 13, 2018: Business Meeting begins at 11:30.\*\*\*

#### Location

Norwich Township Building 5181 Northwest Parkway. Hilliard, OH 43026

#### Dues [Must also join RWA.]

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

#### Follow COFW

Twitter <a href="https://twitter.com/COFWriters">https://twitter.com/COFWriters</a>
Facebook <a href="https://facebook.com/COFWriters">https://facebook.com/COFWriters</a>

Closed Facebook Group

https://www.facebook.com/groups/177462723049177/

#### Central Ohio Fiction Writers

P.O. Box 24254 Dayton, OH 45424



What have you done recently to get one step closer to achieving a contract, perfecting your business, connecting with your readers? Let's celebrate your efforts.

# ☆ Linda Munn passed her novel Another Love Story on to Julia Blaine, who generously offered to read it.

☆ Shari Heinrich did well during the Red Sneakers Presents Write Well Sell Well 2018 Conference in Oklahoma City, OK recently. Two of her submitted writings were selected to appear in the Spring 2019 issue of *Conclave*, a journal of writing and photography.

☆ Terra Rogerson received an offer from Harlequin Dare for a two-book contract.



# **Next COFW Meeting is October 13.**

\*\*\*Business Meeting Begins at 11:30\*\*\*

**Guest Presentation at 1:30:** 

## **Suzanne Sabol on Story Mapping**

<u>Suzanne M. Sabol</u> has been writing from age 16, when she finished her first full-length novel. She graduated from The Ohio State University with majors in Criminology, International Studies, Russian and Political Studies. She married her wonderful husband, Ross, who makes sure her books don't have too much gore because there could be more. They live in Columbus with their daughter, Scarlet.

#### November 10

# Special Day. Special Time. Special Presentation.

#### **ALLIE PLEITER**

#### THE CHUNKY WRITING METHOD

MORNING WORKSHOP AND AFTERNOON WRITING TIME FOR NANO WRITING PROJECT

### **Clintonville Woman's Club**

3951 N. High St., Columbus 43214

9:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Members: \$45. Non-Members: \$49. Includes Lunch.

Register Here: http://www.cofwevents.org/workshop

Bring laptops, extension cords and enthusiasm.

Do you find you can't seem to finish that book you've been writing?

Do you want to write faster and get published?

Allie's innovative Chunky Writing Method offers practical, real-world productivity advice in an easy-to-read and inspiring workbook. You will follow a step-by-step plan to identify your unique writing "chunk" and wield it to create a solid plan that works "even when life gets in the way."

It doesn't matter if this is your first manuscript or your 20th, writers of every experience level have "gotten Chunky" with dramatic results. Whatever your writing style, *The Chunky Method Handbook* will help you chart an individualized path to your creative writing goals.

http://www.alliepleiter.com/thechunky method.html

### **COFW Fiction Plotters Meet Monthly**

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

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

Not sure whether the antagonist is antag-ging enough?

Consider stopping by the COFW Fiction Plotters group.

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

To verify members are meeting and to stay in touch in between, they use this email: <a href="mailto:cofwplot@yahoogroups.com">cofwplot@yahoogroups.com</a>

If you have questions, contact:
Andrea McConnell: <a href="mailto:fyrefly93@gmail.com">fyrefly93@gmail.com</a>

Saralee Etter: saralee etter@yahoo.com



Please Attend the Business Meeting at 11:30 on October 13.

We'd love your input to discuss the future of COFW and other Issues.

Thank You.

# Works in Progress/Attendance for September 15

- 01. Stacy McKitrick: working on In Love With a Vampire.
- 02. Julia Blaine: working on a contemporary.
- 03. Laura Sponhour: historical short story.
- 04. Janice Beckett: second contemporary romance, Racing Toward Love.
- 05. Donna MacMeans: Victorian historical, To Bait a Rake.
- 06. Jessica Rappaport: contemporary romance novel.
- 07. Rachel Dye: working on The Prince's Lotto Bride.
- 08. Gina Smith: Fortuna, TX series Book 2 with the editor.
- 09. Erin Novotny: WIP Vicious Justice; need CP for cozy mystery.
- 10. Linda Rice: working on WWII non-fiction edit.
- 11. Jeanne Estridge: Touched by a Demon, Book 3.
- 12. Saralee Etter: writing Her Wild Irish Rogue.
- 13. Erika Anderson: working on literary fiction ("chic lit").
- 14. Jenessa McRoy: moved into new house!
- 15. Susan Gee Heino: writing *Rogue of the Greenwood* and Christmas short story.

# Minutes, Treasury Report, Attendance for Sept. 15, 2018 Norwich Township Building, Hilliard

Submitted by Susan Gee Heino, Secretary

President Jenessa McRoy brought the meeting to order. Works in Progress sheet was distributed.

#### **Continuing Business**

**Contest**: Jenessa brought up some ideas regarding our annual contest. For one thing, since we've had such a hard time finding judges perhaps we should make judging mandatory for members or contest entrants. It was discussed that some other contests do this. One contest being looked at is one sponsored by the RWA Kiss of Death chapter. They do not give negative critiques.

**Nominating Committee:** The board will be meeting soon to go over nominations for Board positions. Elections will be coming up soon!

**Code of Conduct Accepted:** a quorum was present so President Jenessa called for a vote to accept RWA's new Code of Conduct. Jeanne Estridge motioned to accept the code. Erin Novotny seconded the motion. Motion passed.

#### **Reports**

**Incentives Report:** Julia Blaine asked for news and milestones from our members. Many rewards were passed out and nearly everyone had something to celebrate.

**Newsletter Report:** Sandy Kachurek was not in attendance.

**Treasurer's Report:** Jeanne Estridge presented the treasurer's report. Our current bottom line is \$9,724.94.

**Programs Report:** Aleta Dodson was unfortunately out due to illness, so Jenessa gave a quick rundown of upcoming programs:

October 13: author Suzanne Sabol on "Mapping Your Series."

Sign up for our November 10<sup>th</sup> All-Day Event: In conjunction with National Novel Writing Month, COFW will be hosting Allie Pleiter who will present her "Chunky Writing Method" at the Clintonville Women's Club. The day will begin at 9:30 a.m. and include workshop, lunch, and writing time. Cost will be \$45 for COFW members and

\$49 for non-members. The event will end by 4:00 pm.

December Holiday Party! We love to celebrate the end of the year with a party for members only. Date, time, location details to come!

January 19, 2019: author Maddie James will speak to us about writing a series.

Damon Suede is one of the hottest authors out there and an excellent teacher, too. Aleta is working to bring Mr. Suede to present a workshop in 2019.

We are still working to schedule online workshops for 2019 as a way to increase income for COFW. Stay tuned!

#### **New Business**

RWA Website Hosting: Jenessa has put COFW on the list to be "migrated" to the new RWA web platform. The online chapters who have been migrated seem to have good things to say about this new platform. We also expect the forum features there to solve our Yahoo! Groups issues. The RWA forum should work through email for those who regularly receive loop communications that way.

**COFW Facebook Page:** Members raised questions regarding what to post there versus what to post on our loop/forum. Jenessa clarified that the Facebook page will still be used for general news and chatty stuff, but official COFW business will go through our loop/forum. Not everyone is on Facebook and we do not "own" our page there so we cannot count on it to be secure.

**COFW Branding Committee:** As we look toward shifting our website, we've been discussing our branding. To continue this, a branding committee was formed. New member, Jessica Rappaport, works in the areas of marketing and branding and she has volunteered to chair the committee.

Other committee members who stepped forward are Donna MacMeans, Gina Werner Smith, Erin Novotny, and Linda Rice. We thank them all! Discussion covered the importance of answering two key questions: 1) What is our brand? ("Love for All," "Romance Begins Here," "Happily Ever After," "Heart of Romance," etc.) and 2) What has drawn new members to the group? (Offering craft, our professionalism, camaraderie, location, etc.)

Introductions were made around the room.

Jeanne Estridge moved for the meeting to adjourn and Susan Gee Heino seconded this. Meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m. to prepare for our speaker, author J. Leigh Bailey, on "Mastering the Meet-Cute."

# J. Leigh Bailey: Creating the Meet-Cute in Romance

#### Recap by Julia Blaine

J. Leigh Bailey's first name is Jennifer. She just likes the way J. Leigh Bailey sounds. She is from Chicago where she sits in an office all day and finds time to write and be active in two RWA chapters.

Except when she is busy reading a book a day.

Everyone, she says, deserves a happy ending no matter their gender, age, sexual orientation or paranormal affiliation. Her YA shape-shifters include a buffalo and an owl. Her eight books also include New Adult and LGBT stories.

"Meet-Cute" is a term from the movie industry that may translate into "Cute-Meet" in the book writing business.

Meet-Cute isn't necessarily "cute."

A meet-cute is the place in the story where the hero and heroine are thrown together, not necessarily for the first time, and become aware of an attraction.

The meet-cute sets the foundation for everything. It can be funny, quirky, sexy, outrageous, dramatic and/or memorable. The meet-cute sets up the tone for the story and its conflicts.

At the meet-cute, the reader decides if she or he wants to continue reading.

*Tropes* are mechanisms commonly used in meet-cute plots. Mistaken Identity, Secret Baby, Good Samaritan, Forced Proximity, Full Body Contact such as a crash, Adverse Circumstances, and Unequal Positions in Society are all examples of tropes. Tropes, however, are used often enough to be considered stale.

It is the writer's job to put a new twist on these old situations. An author can add her unique variations using her own voice. For example, a new twist can come from layering a number of tropes together, such as A Good Samaritan with Mistaken Identity added to the Attraction of Unequals. The meet-cute should be clear and memorable, even if it is a cliché.

J. Leigh presented a number of movies to point out tropes. Two examples included the Mistaken Identity trope in *Maid in Manhattan*, where a hotel maid is talked into dressing up in a fancy dress only to be discovered by the hero who mistakes her for anyone but a maid. *How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days* is an example of Conflicting Goals as the plot presents a man and a woman who bet they can either break up with any guy, or make any girl fall for him in the time allotted.

Whatever the problem, J. Leigh said, it must be believable. There must be a good reason for the situation. For example, the writer can set up the challenge and then surprise the reader by taking the plot in an unexpected direction.

COFW members suggested other movies and their tropes. The meet-cute in *The Sound of Music* occurs when Maria applies to Captain von Trapp for employment. Both are desperate. He really needs help with his children. She needs to work and to escape the convent where she is obviously unsuited to become a nun. Their expectations and ways of doing things clash.

J. Leigh had asked the group to bring the meet-cute portion of their works in progress to be critiqued. Only one conscientious COFW member remembered to do so, but when asked to tell about their current meet-cute, members enthusiastically presented their work. Everyone offered suggestions and accolades. It was a very useful exercise and fun. When finished, we all wanted to read these great stories.

During Q&A, J. Leigh said she belongs to the Chicago North RWA Chapter and the Windy City Chapter where she leads a critique group.

When talking about critique groups, she emphasized making positive comments about others' writing. Her comment led to reminiscing about ridiculous past contest scores. J. Leigh definitely wants to encourage beginning writers, as does COFW.

The critique group J. Leigh leads has rules, which she outlined: members meet twice a month; new members must attend at least three meetings before commenting on others' material or before presenting their own writing to the group.

Only two writers may read their material aloud at a meeting; material should be about 4500 words and not necessarily the first chapter. (20 pages would be a long read. 1500 words would be a short read.) Everyone should have a copy of the material, and everyone should comment orally on the work.

Both suggestions and accolades should be included in the critique. Sometimes a critique might say, "I stopped reading when...." The writer should be silent during these oral comments.

Occasionally the critique group has a theme night. Just Historicals for example. Critique groups aren't always successful. Chicago North RWA attempted an online critique group, but it did not work.

J. Leigh Bailey finished her presentation answering a question about meetcutes. Can the hero, heroine and villain meet at the same time? Can that be a meet-cute?

Yes, replied J. Leigh Bailey. The hero and heroine do not need to be alone for cupid to strike. It can happen in a crowded room.

**Recap Writer, Julia Blaine** has been writing stories since before she could write. "I drew pictures until I mastered a few words." She lives in the country with a grumpy husband, a cantankerous computer, and too many ideas to take advantage of.

# The Red Sneakers Conference And Why You MUST Save the Date For Labor Day Weekend, 2019

By Shari Heinrich

If you're a veteran of writers' conferences, you might wonder why it's worth it to travel from Ohio to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, over the Labor Day weekend, August 31 through September 2, 2019, to attend the Write Well Sell Well Conference presented by Red Sneakers Writing Center.

Topping my list of reasons: A packed agenda of four sessions every hour, solid agents and editors among the presenters, and the "Ask an Expert" session ending each day, typically for two hours.

At the 2017 Midwest Writer's Workshop in Muncie, Indiana, I had seen something similar to "Ask an Expert." MidWest called theirs "Buttonhole the Expert." For ten minutes, a whole table of people vied for the attention of a

top expert, such as writer Angie Thomas speaking about setting as character. When the bell rang again, you and everyone else zoomed off to another table of people to listen to the expert for only ten minutes.

At the Write Well Sell Well Conference, you spent one-on-one time with the expert. Other people sat around the table, too, and listened to you and the expert, soaking in whatever the expert shared, until it was another person's one-on-one time to talk.



It wouldn't be a writing conference if the suitcase wasn't made heavier with new books. (Photo by Shari)

There was no frantically running from table to table. The more relaxed atmosphere set folks at ease. I had popped my head in the door looking for a specific expert who wasn't on the list but hoping he might be there. The setup impressed me—lots of tables with names, and you wandered over to each person you wanted to talk to about the business of writing. It did require you to do your homework, however, so you talked with the right expert, including publishers and agents.



Shari won writing awards in Poetry and Young Readers. Her work will appear in the journal, Conclave. (Photo by Shari)

Two keynote speakers during lunch on Friday and Saturday were writer Dan Millman (*Way of the Peaceful Warrior*) and Donald Maass (founder of the Donald Maass Literary Agency). They were but a few of the writers who had more than a dozen books to their names.

The conference covered a number of genres, including at least three sessions on fantasy. Each session lasted forty-five minutes, with fifteen minutes to run out to look at the books on the sales table or catch a few minutes chatting with the presenter. Room moderators tried to

keep the schedule humming along.

At the book signings I spoke with fantasy writers Sabrina Fish and Tamara Grantham.

Some sessions were panels, including a pitch slam.

During the Pitch Slam, literary agents Donald Maass, Marcy Posner, and Mary C. Moore read the pitches we had printed in triplicate. They raised their hands at the point they would have stopped reading then explained why. If they found a confusion of information, such as a writer adding sub-plot to muddy the premise, they called out the salient detail that interested them.

It was nerve-wracking to hear your words read, but you have blessed anonymity. My piece needed help, but it was one of the few where no one raised a hand!

We had three full days of these sessions, typically running from around 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Here's a smattering of the conference topics I attended: "Top 5 Ways to Keep the Reader's Attention" by Annie Donahue; "Fantasy & Sci-Fi" by RJ Johnson; "Watt's Hot in the World of Books: WattPad, InstaPoets, Podcasts, Fan Fiction, Audiobooks, etc.," a panel with William Bernhardt as moderator; and "Five Factors for Fantastic Fiction" by William Bernhardt.

The conference provided a plated lunch with salad, dessert, and iced tea on two of the days. This basic but thorough conference, which ran from Friday through Sunday, cost about \$340.

On day four, Labor Day Monday, as an added expense, you could attend three to six hour Master Craft classes, of which six were offered.

All sessions were recorded, and you could purchase the entire conference recordings for around \$200, with individual sessions at \$5.



Conference organizers, Bill and Lara Bernhardt, arranged a reconstructed crime scene for one session called "Murder Mystery." (Photo by Shari Heinrich)

The conference held writing contests in six different categories. You could enter as many categories as you wanted for \$20, with winners announced during the Saturday lunch.

From the excellent sessions to the chance to meet talented agents and writers to being able to talk shop regardless of your stage in the writing journey, I felt the Red Sneakers Write Well Sell Well 2018 Conference a phenomenal

conference. I'd love to attend it again in 2019.

**Shari Heinrich** writes young adult fantasy populated by characters full of sass and heart. She's hard at work on *Queen of Wands*, where teen thief Angela makes the unforgivable mistake of falling for her mark and activating the family's curse to the ancient Egyptian goddess of retribution. Contact Shari: <a href="https://www.ShariHeinrich.com">www.ShariHeinrich.com</a>.



