



January 2019

Issue 1

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.

2019 Leadership

President, Jeanne Estridge

Secretary, Sandra J. Kachurek

Treasurer, Stacy McKittrick

Program Chair, Aleta Dodson

Newsletter Editor, Rachel Dye

Membership Chair, Linda Rice

Social Media Chair, Andrea McConnell

Incentives, Julia Blaine

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.

- Membership with Romance Writers of America required.

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

P.O. Box 24254 Dayton, OH 45424

Next Meeting: February 16th, Workshop – in – a – Box: Dark Heart

All characters have pain in their past...a backstory which drives them inexorably into turmoil, jeopardy, and high-stakes choices. Fatal flaw, motivation, wound, scar, trauma, mistake, shadow, ghost...no matter what you call it, that inner void never stops sucking. Accessing your characters' darkness and danger dramatizes scenes and maximizes emotional legibility. Join Damon Suede for a two-hour RWA Workshop in a Box which teaches you to tap your story's power and bring any character to life.

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.

To verify members are meeting and to stay in touch in between, we use this email:

cofwplot@yahoogroups.com

If you have questions, contact:

Andrea McConnell: fyrefly93@gmail.com

Saralee Etter: saralee_etter@yahoo.com

COFW Fiction Plotters Meet Monthly – West

All the same fun as above but located in Huber Heights. We meet the second Monday of the month at 6:30 pm at the Panera Bread off I-70 exit 36.

If you have questions contact:

Jeanne Estridge: jeanneestridge@gmail.com

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

☆☆☆ Writing Opportunities ☆☆☆

#CarinaPitch

On the 6th of February get those tweets ready!

The Carina Press Editorial team will be holding their annual pitch event on Twitter via the #Carinapitch hashtag on Wednesday, February 6th from 9am to 9pm Eastern. More information available here: <http://bit.ly/2RLokZr>

2019 Sweetheart Pitch

Submit your three-line pitch to a host of agents and publishers on the SavvyAuthors blog from February 13 -15. More information available here: <https://savvyauthors.com/se-pitchrules/>

Hallmark Publishing

Hallmark Publishing is now open to unagented submissions of full-length novels. You can submit any time between Feb. 1 and Feb. 28, 2019. More information available here: <http://www.hallmarkchannel.com/hallmark-publishing/write-for-us>

Minutes, Treasury Report for January 26th

Minutes of the Central Ohio Fiction Writers

Norwich Township Fire Station 82. Hilliard.

January 26, 2019 [Rescheduled from January 19]

I. At 12: 35, President Jeanne Estridge welcomed everyone to the meeting.

II. Board Business.

A. Budget.

Treasurer Stacy McKittrick presented the 2019 budget summary: \$6,650 available; \$9,929 in potential expenses; -\$3,279 as a final figure. Although the outcome is in the negative, activities this year should generate enough income to raise the ending balance into the positive.

Jeanne said that the two online classes by Linnea Sinclair and the all-day workshop, all of which will be open to the public, should do better than expected.

B. RWA Site.

Jeanne took an RWA Leadership webinar and reported the site's offerings were very limited and full of holes. Member Erin Novotny said Kiss of Death ran into problems using RWA.com for money transactions for its contest and chose to remain with its own group's PayPal system. Stacy said COFW requested a waiver to not use RWA for its money transactions. COFW dues and activities will be paid through COFW Paypal. Stacy gave COFW web developer the necessary coding for buttons to be established for COFW events.

Jeanne added that RWA's intentions are to make the micro-sites look like local sites, but no manpower is available to develop them. RWA is now concentrating on its national convention registration. No timeline exists as to when the micro-sites will get done. As a result, COFW will continue with its local online site until at least the end of the year.

Jeanne asked the members who were present if they'd like to receive a training session on how to navigate the new RWA site and the COFW micro-site once both are fully functional. A majority of those present indicated they would like this, so it will be planned as part of one of our programs later in the year.

This summer, COFW's loop will move from Yahoo groups to RWA Forums. More information on what Forums has to offer will be coming. Keep in mind, in the event of a law suit, content of RWA Forums may be subpoenaed as evidence. Keep communication professional and respectful.

III. Introductions: Fourteen attendees introduced themselves and their writing genres.

IV. Minutes from November 2018 were approved.

V. Treasurer's Report:

A. December's activity: \$6,469.35 in Checking; \$1,255.98 in PayPal; \$1,519.63 in Financial Aid Savings Account.

B. Forty-two COFW members have renewed their membership. Invoices have been resent to those who have yet to renew.

C. The 2018 audit for COFW will take place before the February meeting.

COFW 2019 TREASURER REPORT			
REVENUE			
	Jan	YTD	Budget
Number of Active Members	46		56
Membership Dues	1125.00	1125.00	1400.00
Event Revenue			
Contest		0.00	1000.00
Convention		0.00	0.00
Online Classes	75.00	75.00	500.00
Programs		0.00	0.00
Retreat		0.00	0.00
Workshop		0.00	3750.00
TOTAL COFW REVENUE	1200.00	1200.00	6650.00
EXPENSES			
Bank Fees		0.00	33.00
Donations		0.00	0.00
Dues (RWA Membership)		0.00	56.00
Event			
Contest		0.00	450.00
Convention		0.00	0.00
Online Classes		0.00	250.00
Retreat		0.00	0.00
Workshop		0.00	4000.00
Financial Services (QuickBooks)	230.05	230.05	215.00
General Expenses (non event)			
Postal Box Rental	82.00	82.00	80.00
Supplies and Printing		0.00	150.00
Holiday Party		0.00	50.00
Incentives			
Basket	10.85	10.85	25.00
First Sale Pens		0.00	125.00
Member Recognition		0.00	80.00
Insurance - Westfield (RHK)	500.00	500.00	500.00
Licenses/Fees/Misc		0.00	0.00
Newsletter Articles		0.00	240.00
PayPal Fees	38.55	38.55	300.00
Programs			
Meeting Fees		0.00	0.00
Speaker Fees		0.00	1000.00
Speaker Reimbursements		0.00	500.00
Supplies		0.00	125.00
Promotion		0.00	250.00
RWA National Registration (President)		0.00	750.00
Website Maintenance	211.04	211.04	750.00
TOTAL COFW EXPENSES	1072.49	1072.49	9929.00
Total COFW Revenue	1200.00	1200.00	6650.00
Total COFW Expenses	1072.49	1072.49	9929.00
Net COFW	127.51	127.51	(3279.00)
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TREASURER REPORT			
REVENUE			
Donations		0.00	0.00
Interest Income	0.01	0.01	0.00
TOTAL FIA REVENUE	0.01	0.01	0.00
EXPENSES			
Payments for assistance		0.00	0.00
TOTAL FIA EXPENSES	0.00	0.00	0.00
Net Financial Assistance Account	0.01	0.01	0.00
CASH ON HAND			
Checking	5460.41		
PayPal	2245.83		
TOTAL CASH	7706.24		
PREPAIDS			
Prepaid Membership Dues (Current Liabilities)			
Prepaid PayPal Fees (Current Assets)			
ADJUSTED CASH BALANCE	0.00		
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SAVINGS	1519.64		

VI. Branding.

Andrea McConnell spoke for the Branding Committee. Initial discussion of preferences and research of other chapters' sites produced the basics of what COFW wanted. A graphic designer was contacted and material sent to her. Her fee is \$150. The committee was allotted \$250 for their work. The designer should complete at least five designs of logo, color, font to offer COFW. At that point, refinement suggestions and final decisions will be made through member feedback.

VII. Ignite the Flame Contest (ITF).

Linda Rice reported that the ITF ad is ready for the February-March *Romance Writers Report* (RWR), though changes can still be made. Our contest is completely different from other contests, which may make it appealing. Linda is confident that judges' comments, overall, will be "encouraging but realistic; positive and affirming." Judges can be any members and members' friends.

Based on points, three entries with the highest scores will be given to COFW member, NYT bestselling author Karen Harper to select the winner. The winning prize includes a refund of contest entry fee and free submission of the manuscript to a professional copy editor.

Contest committee co-chair Shari Heinrich and committee member Jenessa McRoy will help Linda facilitate the process of receiving entries, distributing them to judges, tabulating results, etc.

VIII. Incentives.

Julia Blaine offered treats to members who took any action toward publication, including Julia who is finishing a manuscript to submit to Harlequin, which will be open to un-agented work from February 1 to Labor Day.

IX. Social Media.

Due to her personal and work schedule, Andrea McConnell asked for help in posting COFW news to our various social media outlets. Erin Novotny, Gina Smith and Jenessa McRoy offered to help. Robin Gianna, an administrator on the COFW FB site, asked if she had authority to answer questions posed by those on the site, and Jeanne said she did.

X. Newsletter.

Rachel Dye, editor, asked for a recap writer and Jenessa volunteered.

XI. Programs.

A. In Aleta Dodson's absence, Jeanne announced a one-day workshop to feature a member of the RWA Board of Directors, award-winning author, Damon Suede. Jeanne thanked the absent Donna MacMeans who, because of her friendship with Damon, helped make the workshop happen. Workshop date and other details to come.

B. The next COFW meeting, February 16, will feature a "Workshop in a Box," a two-hour RWA video presentation by Damon Suede. This video will allow members who haven't seen one of Damon's presentations to get a sense of what our fall workshop will be like.

C. COFW is offering two, month-long digital classes, taught by romance science fiction, best-selling author Linnea Sinclair. The first one, "Internal Conflict," runs April 1-30. The range of fees include: \$25 for COFW members; \$30 for RWA (not COFW) members; \$35 anyone else. The second

digital class is "Blurbs." Both are fundraisers for COFW, and members are encouraged to publicize these classes.

XII. New Business/Announcements.

A. Jenessa mentioned that two California chapters charge an annual fee and an additional \$25 per meeting.

B. Robin announced that members check out Harlequin's Feel Good Project at feelgood.harlequin.com for paid opportunities through its Creator Fund. The Fund hopes "to attract and support up-and-coming and established female writers (in the US and Canada) of fiction, TV or movie scripts, who tell feel-good stories with a unique point of view. The first fund draws from a pool of \$30,000 USD and will focus on submissions in a wide range of genres, including, but not limited to, comedy, drama, suspense, adventure and historical. The stories must be character-driven and leave audiences feeling uplifted. The writers of the chosen submissions will receive funding and guidance for an opportunity to complete and package their story ideas for advancement."

XIII. Adjournment at 1:35.

XIV. Special Guest/Presentation. "Setting SMART Goals."

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Kachurek

Secretary

Works in Progress/Attendance for January 26th

1. Arianna James: first draft of *Lucky Break*.
2. Janice Beckett: first draft of third contemporary romance.
3. Shari Heinrich: fifth draft of YA, *Queen of Wands*.
4. Erin Novotny: final draft of romantic suspense, *Adrianna's Avenging Angel*.
5. Andrea McConnell: trying to finish editing of *The British Captain*.
6. Robin Gianna: working on revision.
7. Linda Rice: working on contest.
8. Julia Blaine: finished a contemporary to submit to Harlequin, *Tea and Sympathy and Emus*.
9. Rachel Dye: first draft of *The Spy's Unlikely Bride*.
10. Gina Smith w/a Rochelle Bradley: editing third book in my series.
11. Jenessa McRoy: editing for friends.
12. Jeanne Estridge: book 3 of *Touched by a Demon* series.

13. Stacy McKittrick: almost done with *Biting the Curse*.

14. Sandy Kachurek: final revision of a fantasy.

Meeting Recap for January 26th

Setting SMART Goals

By Jenessa McRoy



Studies have shown that SMART goals are achieved far more often than large ambiguous goals. It is important to have goals that are pertinent and have the possibility of being achieved. Use the following to create SMART goals that will benefit your career and keep productivity high.

SMART Goals: When setting writing goals they should be:

- **Specific:** Use action words to answer questions.
 - What will I achieve?
 - What does it look like?
 - What is the action step?
- **Measurable:** Be sure to break down the goal into smaller steps.
 - What are my specific action steps?
 - How do I evaluate the effectiveness of

each step?

- **Achievable:** Make sure the goal is achievable.
 - Do I have the resources to achieve this goal?
- **Relevant:** Determine the priority of the goal.
 - Why am I doing this? What is the outcome?
 - Is this a priority for me?
 - Will it compete with other goals for my life? Typically, yes. What are you willing to sacrifice to complete these goals?
- **Timely:** By creating a specific deadline, you are accountable.
 - What is my deadline?

What is the difference between a dream and a SMART Goal? The following are aspirational goals.

The Creative Penn Writing Goals

1. Attend At Least One writer's conference
 - C.S. Larking Indie Publishing Goals
2. Each eBook will be selling _____ copies per month and earning me \$_____ per month.
 - C.S. Larking Traditional Publishing Goals

3. I will have landed an agent contract by this date _____.

New York City Midnight Challenge – Shari loves this contest because one of her favorite novels came from this. She uses the exercises to figure out her characters. Costs \$45 and some critique, but it forces you out of your comfort zone. For more info visit <http://www.nycmidnight.com/>

12shortstories.com – Rachel Dye says you critique 4 short stories and you get critiqued on your short story. You get prompts on what to write. It is lots of fun and free. You can do as many or as few as you want. They do poetry as well. For more info visit <https://12shortstories.com/>

Final Step: Share the goals you set with someone so you are accountable!!! Arianna will set up a RWA forum. Erin will send out a word count Google Doc.

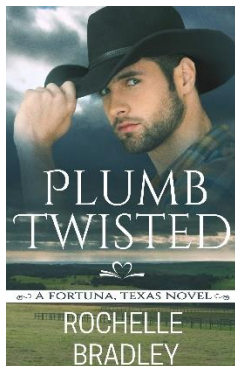
On a personal note Linda Rice explained that she had a terrible time with her first husband. She wrote down what she really wanted: A decent house, on a decent street, etc. Within four years she had all the things she had written.

Jeanne closed the meeting by inviting each of us to set five writing goals for the year.

Looking for a bit more, check out the following YouTube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-SvuFIQjK8>

☆☆☆ New Releases ☆☆☆



Plumb Twisted by Rochelle Bradley

Karaoke and Kidnapping...

Piper McCracken needs a fresh start. Her father's death, a failed engagement, and her ex-fiancé-turned-stalker prompt her to make a bold leap . . . from the Windy City to Fortuna, Texas. Piper feels ready to take on small town life—that is, until she's erroneously proclaimed a shy cowboy's mail-order bride.

Hired as a personal assistant to Jessie Barnes, Piper becomes much more: friend, beta tester, and . . . *intimate apparel model*? With a three-legged cat, fake news, drunken karaoke, romance novel obsessed men, a cocky old lady, and a perverted town prankster, Piper finds Fortuna plumb twisted.

All Cole Dart really needs is his family and job working at the Big Deal ranch. After surviving cancer, his life is like a pair of broken-in boots. Comfortable. He doesn't want the complication of a relationship now. Or ever. But when Piper's stalker catches up to her, Cole's protective instincts kick into high gear and he's determined to step between her and danger, no matter the cost.

A tornado rips through town and Cole's home is strewn across the county...

Can Piper help him pick up the pieces and find happily ever after or will the stalker tear them apart forever?

☆☆☆ Stellar News ☆☆☆

Donna MacMeans had great success with her Ryan Zee bookbub promotion. She had 141 bookbub followers when her promotion began and 479 bookbub followers at the end!

COFW now has goal sheets!!! Thanks to Erin Novotny & Arianna James 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 our Magic Spreadsheet here: <https://bit.ly/2Wprwt0>

Looking for a way to hit those goals: Did you know that studies have shown you're up to 66% more likely to achieve a goal if you write it down and up to 95%(!!) more likely to achieve a goal if you tell someone else what it is and have a deadline by which you need to meet it. List your goals here and Arianna will check in to see if you've hit it: <http://bit.ly/2HJoDNq>

The First Five Pages

by
Pamela Pitts

The following article first appeared in the January 2019 issue of *Happily Ever After*, the monthly newsletter of West Houston RWA. Permission granted to reprint or forward to sister RWA chapters with proper credit to author and chapter.

A new year means new resolutions. For many of us that could mean putting down on paper ideas we've been mulling over, finishing a manuscript, or the task of writing queries and editing first pages to submit to agents and editors. Every agent requests a query but when you have to submit your first five to ten pages it gets a bit trickier.

As readers we have the time to browse a book online or in a store, flipping through the pages to see if we connect with the writing and the characters, but an agent has only the pages you submit. You must WOW the agent in ten pages or less. What is the magic you need to grab their attention and not end up in the dreaded rejection pile? After reading countless blogs and posts by editors and agents I have noted certain points that all agree upon.

Make the reader fall in love with your main character. These are your characters, you created them. You need to know them inside and out. How will they react in any given situation? We all do the same things – get ready for work, eat breakfast... Make the reader connect with the character even if they're doing nothing more than brewing coffee. It might simply be familiarity that enables the reader to relate to the character, or there might be something in their backstory that causes them to act differently. What makes your character unique?

The character needs to have a compelling voice. You know what your characters are thinking and feeling, but until you put their thoughts on paper the heroine or hero is one dimensional. A strong voice allows the reader to get into the character's head and provides insight into their actions and why they make the

choices that they do. Give the reader a reason to travel with your characters from the beginning through the twists and turns until the end.

Set the mood and tone of the book in the first couple of paragraphs. The agent wants to know exactly what emotion your book will convey – is it sad or happy, full of suspense or humorous? You don't want an agent to assume that the book is a light-hearted read and then in the second chapter they discover that the character is a serial killer, although that could be an interesting plotline. The mood will shift throughout the book according to the scenes and plots. There will be ups and downs, but the overall tone of the book should be evident in the first couple of pages.

The hook is one of the most important elements in your story that an agent looks for. You must grab the agent's attention in the first few paragraphs, if not in the first couple of sentences. The hook doesn't need to be drawn out, but you need to include enough to raise the questions of why is the character doing this, what will happen, and what is the final outcome? This is what makes an agent take a closer look. Look at your first twenty to thirty pages. Where does the inciting action or pivotal moment take place? Maybe it's in the second chapter or even the third. You might find that the first chapter is backstory and the book really begins in the second chapter. Backstory can always be dripped in throughout the book. It doesn't need to be at the beginning.

There are countless other things agents are looking and unfortunately there is no magic formula. Maybe they just read a romantic suspense and want more, or they watched *Outlander* and want to read about dashing highlanders and damsels in distress. Perhaps they want something completely different. Writing is a subjective business, but you will find that one agent who's as passionate about your book as you are.

