



COFW

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

November 2021

Issue 11

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 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.

2021 Leadership Board

President: Bernie Miller

Secretary: Shari Heinrich

Treasurer: Michelle Orloff

Non-Board Positions

Newsletter Editor: Rachel Dye

Programs Chair: Vacant

Education Chair: Vacant

Social Media Chair: Vacant

Incentives Coordinator: Vacant

Ignite the Flame Contest Chair: Vacant

Monthly Meetings Facility Coordinator: Vacant

Equipment Inventory Coordinator: Vacant

Meetings

First "Teen" Saturday of the Month. Social: Noon to 12:30. Business: 12:30. Guest Presentation: 1:30. Location: Check www.cofwevents.org

Dues

Members: \$50

- Dues run January to December
- Membership fee waived for new member through Dec 31, 2021.

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: COFW Christmas Party! December 4th at The Forge Tavern

**Join us at 12:30
Forge Tavern: 1375 Bethel Rd. Columbus, OH**

Our meeting will also be held via Zoom for those unable to attend in person. The password will be posted on the Central Ohio Fiction Writers Group Facebook Group.

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

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

Central Ohio Fiction Writers

The mission of the Central Ohio Fiction Writers is to promote excellence in romantic fiction, help writers become published, and establish careers in the writing field.

Meeting Minutes
November 13, 2021 12:30 PM
On Zoom &
Live at The Forge Tavern
(Columbus, OH)

12:00 Networking

12:30 Call Business Meeting to Order

I. Welcome Visitors & Round Table: introduction of members and visitors.

II. Attendance/Works in Progress

- Linda Rice—Research
- Stacy McKittrick—*Ghostly Protector*
- Shari Heinrich—*Queen of Wands* (Querying)
- Bernie Miller—*Snowfall in Oz*
- Janice Beckett—*Winning Hailey's Heart*—may give her book again to editor! Has changed it so much.
- Sandy Kachurek—doing Nanowrimo, and trying to hit that daily count in the 1000s, contemporary women's fiction
- Julia Blaine—*Monster Under the Bed*, over 100 pp now)
- Michelle Orloff—*Forget Me* (NaNoWriMo)
- Jeannie—Finishing *Demon Wore Stilettos* (WWII novella); then back to the Demon's Secret Baby.
- Susan Yutzey—Had fractured fibula! So sitting with leg elevated in a cast! (time to think and talk with Liz about how their team-written novel is evolving, not so much writing)
- Susan Gee Heino—Just turned in *Texas Betrayal* to Harlequin Love-Inspired, comes out 10/22; getting ready for Dec. release of the *Earl's Holiday Homecoming*

III. Reports

1. President Bernie Miller:

- Noon for the 12/4 holiday event, at The Forge Tavern. Bernie will provide food and non-alcoholic drinks from restaurant. Any alcoholic drinks will be on the individual member.
- He has been in contact with a lot of presidents that are disaffiliating from RWA. Based on an Excel spreadsheet a group of former presidents are keeping, they believe RWA is down to below 12 chapters. Emerald City Writers just disaffiliated. Shari added that NEOWRA disaffiliated on 10/26 and are now “Great Lake Fiction Writers.”

2. Secretary Shari Heinrich: October minutes are accepted as published in the newsletter.

3. Treasurer Michelle Orloff: As shared in Google emails:

At the end of October, our current assets were as follows:

- Checking = \$3,208.90

- PayPal = \$804.49
- Available cash = \$4,013.39
- Balance in the Perseverance Fund = \$1,519.97

Changes to account balances this month:

- Payment of \$135 for website maintenance.
- Payment of \$77.50 to our October online class instructor (Laurie Brockway, Interfaith Weddings) and \$200 to our October program speaker, Jeffe Kennedy.

Membership for October increased by 2 to 35 members. Remember that membership is free to new members for the rest of 2021. And in December, Michelle will try to get us set up for the payments, due at end of January.

4. Programs Chair Jeanne Estridge:

- November— Storyteller's Toolkit, by Patricia Sargeant: The presentation will diagram premise, high concept, and conflict in a movie to demonstrate how the three elements work together to make a compelling story.
 - January 2022— Priscilla Oliveras, Emotion and Pacing.
 - February 2022—Brian Meeks—optimizing Amazon ads.
 - March 2022—Brainstorming session.
 - April 2022—Book Brush? Shari will pin the poll as an announcement and comment on it, give a deadline to chime in about whether we'll hold this as a program.
5. Ignite the Flame— Jan Irvin took the position, has been working through the file Shari handed off in October, and has ideas to run past us, though she is unable to be here as she is running an event herself today. Shari talked through her questions that Jan had for the chapter.
- **Judging:** Membership, please ask around—to your agents and your publishing houses, might any be willing to be final round judges?
 - **Prizes:**
 - Membership agrees, Jan can reach out to BookBaby and to her own publisher. Any other suggestions are welcome. Do we have to pay for this prize or can we get it donated? Answer, we've paid in the past. If we could get it donated, that would be great.
 - Chapter discussed what other prizes might draw contestants. We talked about figuring out what *does* draw us, to help us figure out the best prize, but we don't enter contests. For example, are writers looking to contact with industry professionals; are they looking for the prestige of the award? Maybe put a survey out of what the contestants are looking for? Since self-publishing is growing, someone in developmental editing, to set them up to be publishing ready? Maybe look at some other chapters and organizations running them, and see what THEY are offering for final judges or prizes.

- Stacy's husband would be willing to do the certificate for the copy edit, up to \$300 value; but the chapter does pay for it. Maybe a subscription for something?
- Maybe a year's membership to COFW as long as we keep thinking of doing zooms?
- In self-publishing, maybe that area—advertising, copy editing, creating ads/marketing; developmental editor!
- Or a monetary prize, so that THEY pick where the prize goes and we don't have to worry about fitting into someone's production schedule with that certificate for free x. And if you're traditionally published, they may not WANT a developmental edit. And the fact that they WON is part of the prize.
- Publicity—with so many folks doing indie publishing, then publicity we can provide might be a good prize. For example, maybe a winner then has the chance to speak in front of our meeting (get recognized; attend as zoom or in person) or something.
- We have created certificates as part of the top three writers, and last time, we reimbursed the event fee 1st through 3rd. Shari recommends DIGITAL payment, because checks were a hassle getting winners to cash them in.
- **For Jan's suggestion to pushing the contest back to fall.** That will allow more time to set everything up, consolidate our own membership and group dynamics, and find judges and prizes. We'll let Jan tell us—what fits in YOUR schedule, since you've been kind enough to take on this position? The good news is that we no longer have to follow RWA guidelines around promotion, timing to not collide with other RWA contests, and so on (though it would be nice if we didn't conflict with other contest timings, as much as possible).
- Members did not see anything that Jan had missed, from her list of questions that Shari relayed to them.

6. Education Chair—Janice Beckett

- Linnea Sinclair, who will teach Nov 2022, with the understanding that a few days around thanksgiving we will all take a break from it. Those present at the meeting did a show of hands of topic, and were allowed to raise hands for more than one. By a landslide, the program in November will be Character Torture 101 (GMC).
- The next hand poll, interest measured on Leslie Scott, "Series Bible" a way of organizing a series, month-long course. (she's doing it for contemporary romance authors soon). Janice will shoot for May, June, whatever she can get, but space it off from that contemporary authors one.

7. Newsletter Editor Rachel Dye: Jeanne Estridge will write the program recap for the newsletter. Sandy will do it!

8. Incentives—Julia Blaine. She has brought stickers, notebooks, candy, artisan soap samples.

- Michelle: published third book last week. Signed with an AGENT!

- Janice: passed her writers block!
- Sandy: hanging in there, collecting badges on nanowrimo!
- Shari: Doing the “From the Heart” flash fiction online course and getting good feedback. Doing the agent hunt again, and last night found two on her list who are open again for queries, so she’ll send their packages out Monday.
- Susan: Turned in her next book to Love Inspired (comes out next year. *Grave Secrets* is coming out first, and this one in the works is *Texas Betrayal*) and finishing up a regency that she is self-publishing for Christmas. Been working on it for a few years. And another batch of proposals for Love Inspired. AND doing NanoWrimo! (Laughinstock)
- Bernie: got COFW through 2021!
- Julia, 100 pages into *Monster Under the Bed*
- Linda: did 6000 words in the book-in-a-week

9. Social Media (plus spreadsheet):

- Spreadsheet:
 - Jeanne wrote to the lead in October, scoring 229 points and writing more than 22,000 words. Jennie wins Eddie!
 - Michelle is in the lead for November, with 3 others chasing her.
- Plotting: 2nd Monday of the month (Zoom at 7), and 3rd Tuesday, we do plotting (Live at Panera Bread in Huber Heights off 202, 5:30 dinner if you want, plotting at 6, and when Panera is closed, they meet at Fazoli’s.)

IV. Unfinished Business

- **Nominating committee**—for all the chair positions, Shari, Janice, and Jennie have not yet met to plan who to ask, given their various vacations. Shari will work on coordinating that.
- **Website**—Webmaster ported over to DreamHost, and now Rachel is waiting for us board members to make some decisions about how much info to port over (we’re starting with just 2021); and the “pages” that we are used to having for each author. Additionally, Rachel may be stepping back as our web admin due to other responsibilities, so more of the daily work on the website would be up to us (if Shari interpreted Rachel’s email correctly. Would still need to confirm with her). Membership agrees, we want the authors pages/members pages if at all possible—so Shari will look into the code of how to do the pages OURSELVES as volunteers, since it’s not a feature that Rachel can invest the time to set up. We’ll see what the new platform is capable of.
- **Buy links in the newsletter**, regarding whether COFW is a C6 or C3. Shari owed which designation COFW is, and included in minutes:
Shari performed a State of Ohio business search. We are listed as “CORPORATION FOR NON-PROFIT”
There is *no* designation of C6 or C3 on the COFW filings with the State of Ohio.

For a discussion of the differences, see <https://nonprofitlawblog.com/comparing-501c3-vs-501c6-for-nonprofit-startups/>

Shari will work with Donna MacMeans to see what she knows from the COFW history)

- Committee positions that the nominating committee will look to fill:
 - Newsletter Editor: Rachel would be willing to be nominated (but, is anyone else willing? She is stretched thin with her novel deadlines).
 - Programs Chair: vacant
 - Education Chair: Janice Beckett
 - Social Media Chair: vacant
 - Ignite the Flame Contest Chair: Jan Irvin
 - Workshop/Event Chair: vacant
 - Membership Coordinator: Linda will resume duties.
 - Incentives Coordinator: Julia will resume duties.
 - Monthly Meetings Facility Coordinator: vacant
 - Equipment Inventory Coordinator: vacant
- Elections: Shari moved that the officers be elected as a slate: Bernie Miller, President; Shari Heinrich, Secretary; Stacy McKitrick Treasurer. Seconded. Vote: Unanimously elected. Congratulations to our officers who serve, beginning (or continuing) January 1, 2022–Dec. 31, 2022.
- Member of the Year: PRESIDENT initiates that and needs to get going on that—submit your nominations to Cofwpresident@gmail.com

V. New Business

- Outreach program to get new members in—Jeanne Estridge will run this new chair program. Thank you, Jeanne!
- NO other new business

Adjourned at 1:20 pm.

At 1:30 join us for Patricia Sargeant, The Storyteller's Toolkit.

Patricia Sargeant is the national best-selling, award-winning author of more than 20 novels. Her work has been featured in national publications such as *Publishers Weekly*, *USA Today*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Suspense Magazine*, *Mystery Scene Magazine*, *Library Journal* and *RT Book Reviews*. She has also been interviewed on podcasts including Destination Mystery with Laura Brennan, Conversations LIVE! with Cyrus Webb, Read You Later with Lasheera Lee and Katara's Café with Katara Johnson . and launched a channel for readers the way that sports center is. Novi (novel vision television) on the YouTube platform.

Presenting Another Tool from Her Storyteller's Kit: Recap of Patricia Sergeant's Presentation

by Sandy Kachurek

Patricia Sergeant is a favorite guest of COFW. At our recent meeting, she gave us another fascinating and useful presentation from her Storyteller's Toolkit.

She continues to be busy within the world of writing. She hosts a program on the YouTube platform called NOVI-TV: Novel Vision: Channel for the Book Lover in You, dedicated to book lovers in all capacities.

"We need to realize how much power readers have," Patricia said. "Every program offered on this channel is done from the reader's perspective."

She invited us to go to NOVI-TV.com or on Youtube, NOVI-TV: Novel Vision and subscribe. The following is how Patricia defines what we'll see on this book lover's site:

"You'll get in-depth interviews with fav and new-to-you authors in all fiction and nonfiction genres. Hear readings of excerpts from their books. Watch book videos. Listen to behind-the-scenes interviews with book insiders. All for FREE. For more information, visit NOVI-TV.com."

This book lover's channel of programs include:

Into the Writer's Cave: Listen as fan-fav and new-to-you authors answer the questions you'd most like to ask. *Reading Rooms:* Enjoy author readings of excerpts from two of their published novels. *Industry Insider:* Hear from the champions of literature and literacy about what their organizations do to support readers and authors. Find out what they do for you and how you can support them. *Book Teaser Showcase:* Watch a compilation of book videos from fan-favorite authors.

As Patricia sees a broad spectrum of power in books from the writer to the promoter to the reader, so she sees the elements of storytelling for more genres than romance. "My storyteller's toolkit is for multiple genres, applicable to all forms of popular fiction."

Story Premise

Patricia's first tool in her kit is the Story Premise, which she defines as a "one- or two-sentence summary of a story; otherwise known as a long line in film writing and an elevator pitch in publishing."

The story's premise should be the first thing a writer creates when beginning to tell the story.

The key elements of the Story Premise are protagonist, antagonist and conflict. Their importance is the basis of developing the story itself but it also is a key marketing tool to getting the story to the reading audience.

Patricia explained, "Everything connects and comes back to the premise. When shopping for an editor, agent, or for the reader who's deciding whether to read the story right now, the premise is what advertises what's fresh, what's standing out in the story.

Writers will return to the story premise after the book comes out when in advertising situations and at book events. For example, when you're asked 'What's your book about?' you can recite the story's premise distinctly."

Examples from well-known books helped demonstrate Patricia's point of the Story Premise being a vital part of storytelling. She shared the premise from a selection of various genres; *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by JK Rowling, *The Alienist* by Caleb Carr, *La Belle et la Bête* by Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve (1740) and *Harmony Cabins* by Patricia Sergeant writing as Regina Hart.

Because the writer creates the premise before anything else, the protagonist and antagonist are not named but are described. Patricia gave an example of the beginning of the story premise from JK Rowling's work where she doesn't write "Harry Potter" but "An orphaned boy . . .".

"Not naming names but using adjectives and other descriptions gives greater insight and emotion, atmosphere and context to the Story Premise and to the promotion of that story," explained Patricia.

She added, "The Story Premise makes you ask yourself, what are your protagonist and antagonist at their core?"

High Concept

Included in the Story Premise is the story's High Concept, which is also called plot but it's so much more. Patricia said, "The plot idea is what makes your story even more unique, compelling, marketable and profitable."

To help illustrate what she meant by High Concept she pointed to a handout sheet that all of us received before she began her presentation. Entitled, “Using High Concept & Conflict to Boost Your Story Premise,” the handout included eight examples of high concept plot ideas. Though there are more, the given eight are a “good start.”

Patricia said not to go too deep into each one. “The High Concepts are not rational, but they are compelling.” A compelling story is one that will be loved by marketers, publishers and, ultimately, by readers.

In brief, the eight high concept plot ideas are ones that (1) are topical, (2) are controversial, (3) trigger primal fears, (4) depict shared experiences, (5) tap into social culture, (6) focus on fame, (7) are buzz worthy, or (8) present an unexpected twist.

The issue of whether or not a writer must select a plot idea from an outside source is one for the writer to decide. Patricia asked us, “If your story doesn’t have a high concept as listed here, which one comes closest?”

She added that writers shouldn’t feel forced into writing what will fit an audience. “Write what’s in you. Don’t be forced to write a concept if it’s not organic to you.”

She does emphasize the importance of a high concept plot idea to “increase the story’s tension and uniqueness, as well as improve the story’s marketability and profitability. Write what you want but also make it marketable and able to pay your bills.”

For example, she said, Dan Brown’s *Angels and Demons* was not a good seller. Brown went back and worked on a High Concept story and came out with *The Da Vinci Code*, a similar subject and plot as *Angels and Demons* but with an improved High Concept that included being controversial, triggering primal fears, and tapping into social culture. *The Da Vinci Code* made for a more compelling book for the readers because of its high concepts.

Patricia gave examples of a plot line without the high concept. One example of a non-high concept story idea was “a burned-out executive hopes to marry and spend more time with family.” Rewriting it using the high concepts of shared experience and social culture, the revised high concept plot idea became “an executive brings home a tentative girlfriend, possible fiancée, to find his plans jeopardized by his family who’s playing matchmaker.”

High concepts, said Patricia, “make the story bigger.”

Conflict

Patricia's handout also stated "Conflict" in its title to "Boost Your Story Premise," which she defined as more than a "simple misunderstanding."

Conflict contains the struggle of the protagonist and other forces against the antagonist and other forces in the story, she said. The Conflict makes it easier for the reader to track the protagonist's journey and his/her/their triumph.

The force of the Conflict and its impact on the protagonist's story defines the protagonist. It's "transformative." Because the Conflict defines the protagonist, the Conflict is not the same in the beginning as it is in the end. The Conflict has created tensions, moved the story forward and has transformed the characters.

"It is the force of the Conflict that connects your reader and the character and their story," said Patricia.

Patricia gave six primary conflicts:

Person versus Self: the goal is to change something about themself. For example, Frodo in *The Hobbit* by JRR Tolkien is battling inner demons.

Person vs Person: the protagonist and antagonist have opposing, sustainable goals. For example, Harry Potter vs Voldemort

Person vs. Society: the protagonist changes the status quo in either a small or large way.

Person vs. Nature: the protagonist's goal is to survive a dangerous environment. For example, *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel

Person vs. Technology/Science. For example, *I, Robot* by Isaac Asimov.

Person vs. Supernatural/Fate: the goal is to defeat supernatural forces, gods, demons, ghosts.

How does a writer develop Conflict? As there's no "right" way to tell the story, there's no right way to create the Conflict.

Because the Conflict defines the protagonist, starting with the protagonist is a good beginning point for a writer. Patricia suggests asking the protagonist, "What's your problem? What do you want?"

Asking such questions leads to the book that examines the protagonist's problems and desires pretty clearly.

Patricia referred to Debra Dixon's book *GMC: Goal, Motivation and Conflict: The Building Blocks of Good Fiction*.

GMC

Simply put, Patricia defined the elements of the GMC:

Goal: the action step. What needs to be accomplished.

Motivation: the emotion. What will make me [protagonist] happy, proud, etc.

Conflict: the locked door. Why isn't the protagonist qualified to attain the accomplishment?

Patricia illustrated the GMC by referring to the titles she used in the beginning of her presentation. For example, the GMC for JK Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* would be

Goal: To protect Hogwarts

Motivation: Love

Conflict: Evil force

High Concept/Conflict: person vs supernatural.

A tip to developing the GMC, said Patricia: "If your protagonist can walk away from the goal—you need a new goal or stronger motivation."

In answer to a member's question, she added, "For the conflict to be believable, it has to be sustainable, compelling, and challenging. If so, it has strength. But it is possible to have the right conflict but the wrong protagonist."

Three-Act Structure

Nearing the end of her presentation, Patricia gave a layout of an overall structure for her stories: the Three-Act Structure.

Using Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* for demonstration, the basic elements and lengths for a book's Three-Act Structure follows:

Act 1: 80 pages, 20,000 words

Belle goes in search of Maurice.

Person vs. Person Conflict

Turning point = Shift

Turning point is when Belle agrees to stay at the castle to free Maurice.

Act 2: 160 pages, 40,000 words

Belle within Beast's castle

Person vs. Self Conflict

Turning point = Shift

Turning point is when Belle leaves the castle to save Maurice from being committed.

Act 3: 80 pages, 20,000 words

Mob attacks the castle.

Person vs. Society Conflict

Turning point and end

Turning point is when Belle saves Beast because she's in love with him, ending the curse.

Patricia finished her presentation by recommending books to help a writer along the way to developing their own storyteller's toolkit.

Find out more about Patricia Sergeant/Regina Hart/Olivia Matthews and subscribe to her newsletter at <https://patriciasargeant.com/>

Spotlight! !

Michelle McCraw signed with agent Amy Brewer of Metamorphosis Literary!!!!

Congratulations Michelle

C OFW has a goal sheet!



Want to track a daily word count and compete with your fellow C OFW members for the highest point total? Add your name and goals to our Magic Spreadsheet here:
<https://bit.ly/2Wprwt0>

November Winner: Still to close to call! But looking like Michelle Orloff. Way to go for November everyone!
The winner gets Eddie!

