

September 2017.

Volume XXIX. Issue 8.

Welcome to Central Ohio Fiction Writers

COFW followed tradition for the August meeting. Members who attended the *2017 Romance Writers of America Conference®* shared their experiences and feelings on sessions they attended, changes in the Golden Heart and RITA award ceremonies and other issues big and small.

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COFW 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.

Volume XXIX. Issue 8/1

The Small and the Big Issues

2017 Romance Writers of America 37th Annual Conference

Recap by Julia Blaine

COFW President Jenessa McRoy, Secretary Jeanne Estridge, Tanja Fazarri, and others who attended the 2017 Romance Writers of America 37th Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida, this past July and those members who had attended the conference in the past presented their responses during the August COFW meeting.

Highlights of the 2017 conference included:

A number of writers bringing husbands and children because of the proximity of Disney World;
The change in the 2017 RITA® and Golden Heart® Awards Ceremony;
Consideration of presenting those with disabilities and old people (over 40!!) in novels; and
Harlequin dropping five lines and adding four new lines.

Jenessa reported that awards were presented during the Chapter Leadership Breakfast and Town Hall gathering on Saturday morning. She believes we should study what they are doing. COFW membership and meeting attendance numbers are lower than in previous years.

Changes are coming to the RWA website. One problem has been with asking questions online.

Although attendance was free, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Friday late afternoon was not well attended. Nothing was voted on because there wasn't a quorum.

The change in the book signing, "Readers for Life" Literacy Autographing, to Saturday afternoon made more money because it drew readers from the public as well as writers.

A Summit of booksellers, publishers and authors revealed that they do not know how to market diversity, diversity meaning race, age and sexual orientation. An audience exists for this material but no publishers.

The Golden Heart Awards were presented during a luncheon on Thursday, and the RITA Awards Ceremony was held later Thursday evening. Avon Books sponsored a dance Thursday night following



My first time at a conference, I got to meet Beverly Jenkins, Lifetime Achievement recipient, during "Readers for Life" Literacy Autographing.

the RITA presentations. Men were actually available to dance with.

Jeanne mentioned the let-down after these awards were given. She believes it is better to give the awards at the end of the conference to stretch out the anticipation factor.

Next year the RITA competition will accept only electronic entries. This will save RWA and authors money and labor because they won't have to box up and ship physical books.

Lots of free books were available. It was wise to ship them home rather than try to take them on a plane. There was a discussion as to the benefits of driving or flying to a conference. Parking was often difficult.

Prices were high if you ate at the Walt Disney World Dolphin Resort where the conference was held. Attendees often suffered from sticker shock.



Water was usually available at the back of meeting rooms, but there was no water except two complimentary bottles provided to each hotel room by the hotel each day.

This year's program gave more time between sessions to allow people to arrive on time and not rush and trample each other. A good thing.

Someone mentioned that buying a flash drive of the conference sessions was economical, but buying recordings of the whole conference was expensive and may not be necessary.

Harlequin has closed five lines: Kimani, Harlequin Nocturne, Love Inspired Historical, Harlequin Super Romance and Harlequin Westerns. They are adding four lines to include women's fiction, non-romance and more literary material.

COFW members speculated the changes were due to Harlequin being bought out by Harper Collins. As a result, Harlequin is definitely looking for new authors, mainly those writing a hot steamy book.

Tanja reported that in general the classes and workshops were very good although some subjects overlapped.

Jeanne was particularly impressed with a workshop presented by gay romance author Damon Suede about Power Couples. Damon suggested finding an infinitive (to + verb) to describe the hero and heroine. Once you've found the infinitive, you can use synonyms of it throughout your story.

He used *Pride and Prejudice* as an example. Mr. Darcy's verb was "to preserve" – he tries to

preserve his lands, his dignity. Lizzie's verb was "to provoke" – she's constantly needling Mr. Darcy and also her mother and father.

Another example was Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone with the Wind*. Damon said her verb was "to claim." She claims Tara, other women's fiancés, and claims to be things she isn't (Think green velvet drapes.).

Your brand, according to Damon, should tell everything about you. How you dress, how you interact with people at conferences, the kinds of posts and comments you make online, are all part of your brand. If you are an introvert, you should make some effort into extroversion because introversion won't sell books.

Jeanne also reported that there were, many, many good craft programs including one by best-selling author and story consultant Michael Hague called "Seducing Your Readers in Chapter 1." Michael talked about the protagonist's arc from identity (how she presents herself to the world) to Essence (who she truly is) and gave tips on engaging the reader early.

Tanja attended a workshop on "How to Spend Your Time." Her top take away ideas included: Keep reading, don't just write. Don't watch TV. Does your writing or family come first? Nora Roberts, the New York Times Best Seller, puts writing first.

COFW members discussed how to write faster. Dragonspeak program ("Dragon Naturally Speaking") allows authors to "tell" their story to the computer rather than type it in. Some believe this is faster. Some don't.

Becky Barker commented that the more you write, the faster it goes, and writing more feeds your creativity.



An orientation session for first time attendees to a conference.

There was discussion as to how writers change their style in order to make money. Writers who formerly wrote romance might now write suspense. Some publishers produce a new author's work as an e-book before it becomes a paperback. They want to see how it sells. Authors need to write hardback books in order to become best sellers.

Those who attended the 2017 conference encouraged other writers to attend. It was worth it.

Tanja said she feels more enthused about writing. It was a great opportunity to meet agents and editors. Jeanne added that many classes were available on various aspects of self-publishing. She reminded us to bring business cards and even address stickers to the next conference.

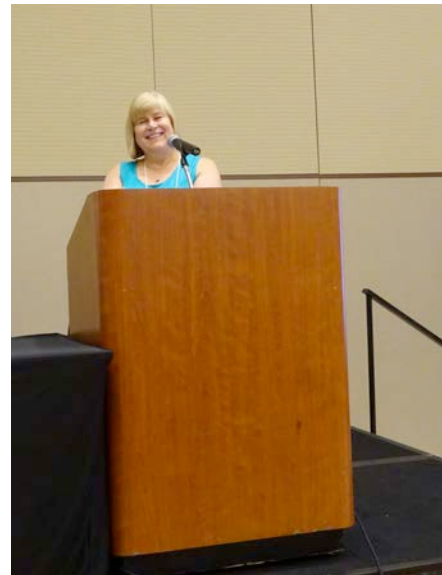
Shari Heinrich didn't attend the RWA conference, but she recommended the Midwest Writer's Workshop in Muncie, Indiana, July 20-22, 2017, which was well attended and quite helpful to her.

She took tutorials on using social media and on graphics sites. She learned that Snap Chat and Instagram are good targets for YA. Both she and Tanja believe Pinterest is good for branding. Branding and marketing are two different things but sometimes “marketing” means PR.

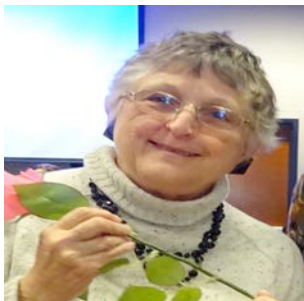
The RWA 38th Annual Conference (July 18-21, 2018) will be at the Sheraton in downtown Denver, Colorado.

The dates of next year's conference have been changed because of another huge convention that will also be in Denver.

RWA is receiving perks for changing their dates to accommodate this large convention, and this is to the advantage of RWA.



In her last term as RWA Treasurer, Donna MacMeans prepares for "Donna's Top Ten Tax Tips" session.



Recap Writer, Julia Blaine comes from a long line of storytellers. She learned who was a rogue and who was a hero among ancestors traced back through word of mouth and through meticulous research to the American Revolution and before. No wonder Julia writes mostly historical romances--sometimes with a touch of fantasy.

Minutes for August 19, 2017, Norwich Township Building

The meeting began with a welcome and call to order at 12:30 p.m.

There wasn't a quorum, so nothing was voted on.

Works in Progress was passed around for attendance.

Approval of July minutes was postponed until September due to lack of quorum.

Treasurer Stacy McKitrick provided an update and answered questions about the Treasurer's Report: \$8937.97 in checking. \$1995.13 in PayPal. \$1564.46 in savings.



Walls featured coloring book images of some of the RITA and Golden Hearts finalists. Attendees were encouraged to pick up a marker and enjoy.

Programs Chair Sheri Adkins wasn't present. Current meeting schedule included: September with Aleta Dodson w/a Lita Lawson on editing and formatting and Kat Sheridan on writing a back cover blurb; October with a workshop led by Larry Brooks; November to be announced; December with a holiday party.

Julia Blaine will write the presentation recap.

Membership Chair Linda Rice gave an update on the October workshop. She hasn't heard back from Larry Brooks on promo materials. She made an entry on his website, letting people who are looking for his classes know about our workshop. She also sent him an email asking him to share this info.

Stacy asked about a Facebook ad about the October workshop. Members debated the pros and cons and decided against it.

Twenty-two people have signed up with a need for 50 more. Andrea McConnell said she will send info to NEORWA, and Jenessa will share the info on the Chapter Leadership loop. Linda will approach local college English departments.

Julia Blaine presented incentives to Stacy who got her rights back from Kensington. Andrea encouraged everyone to signed up for Stacy's newsletter. Becky Barker received her epub files and is waiting on final rights from Harlequin. Shari Heinrich did a pitch at the Midwest Writer's

Workshop and received feedback on her query letter and synopsis.

Social Media Chair Andrea McConnell planned to start ratcheting up posts on the Larry Brooks workshop soon. She will promote blogs if you send her notification about them. Andrea asked Julia to invite members of the COFW Plotting loop to use the loop for brainstorming and feedback if they can't make the meetings.

Newsletter Editor Sandy Kachurek wasn't present.

With no further questions, the meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.



A scrumptious dessert fitting a romance conference.

Works in Progress and Attendance for August 19

1. Jeanne Estridge: editing *The Demon Always Wins*.
2. Stacy McKittrick: *Ghostly Predator*.
3. Julia Blaine: editing "Angel Cat."
4. Becky Barker: just got the rights back to an old Harlequin title and plans to republish it after revisions. It needs new cover art and formatting.
5. Andrea McConnell: final edit of *The British Captain*.
6. Shari Heinrich: 42K into *Queen of Wands*--turning it into a YA paranormal light romance.
7. Jenessa McRoy: making progress on a paranormal series.
8. Linda Rice: travel and health kept her from writing this month.



COFW Secretary, Jeanne Oates Estridge writes paranormal romance she describes as “dark, snarky and happy ever after.” Her first novel *The Demon Always Wins* won the RWA® Golden Heart® in 2015 and will be released in September 2018.

Tenth Book Release on September 1, 2017

By

Amalie Berlin

The Prince's Cinderella Bride

Operation Marriage:

Prince Quinton Corlow's life was turned upside down the day his divorce was filed and his military papers were executed. Seven years later, the embittered soldier returns, only to walk straight back into his ex-wife's life!

But when Quinn discovers he's still married to the one woman who could claim his heart, he realizes he must tackle the past for the future he wants ... the future Anais wants, too.

But can he convince his Cinderella bride to fight for their love?

Amalie Berlin lives with her family and a passel of critters in Southern Ohio. She writes quirky, independent characters for Harlequin Medical Romance. Her favorite stories buck expectations with unusual settings and situations, and the belief that humor can powerfully illuminate truth--especially when juxtaposed against intense emotions, and that love is stronger and more satisfying when your partner can make you laugh through the times when you don't have the luxury for tears.

Amalie is a member of COFW because she believes, "We all need a place where our particular brand of creative strangeness is normal. Because normal people just don't get it."





More Photos and Feedback on 2017 RWA Conference

"My advice is definitely to make use of the boxing/shipping service. Yes, it costs money, but it beats having to lug it through the airport.

And when it was delivered to my front door, all in one nice and tidy box, it was like getting a big follow-up present to myself!"

~Tanja Fazarri

"There are so many good presentations, it's impossible to attend them all.

Knowing recordings were available for purchase on a flash drive allowed me to take the time to meet up with other writers and editors from across the country." ~Tanja Fazarri

"It's important to look at the schedule and find some slots for down time.

It's easy to get caught up in doing so much,



Tanja Fazarri enjoys meeting new and old friends at conferences.

your skull can explode from information overload.

Going back to the room for a bit, taking a walk or finding a comfy alcove to sit and relax can do much to rejuvenate yourself.

Ironically, I've met more writers while relaxing by the pool than I did in the workshops."
~Tanja Fazarri

"NYT Best Seller Christie Craig's session 'Empowering Emotion' talked about using objects as metaphors.



Past COFW member Lillian Zoller moved to the west coast but was able to meet up with COFW President Jenessa McRoy at the conference.

For example, give inanimate objects emotional significance for a character.

Pebbles may stand for a grandmother's pearls or a mother's cake platter."
~Jeanne Estridge

"Another object as metaphor from Christie's session was about using part of a setting to build tension and express a scene's mood called touchstones.

Touchstones are the objects the character physically touches, such as a pen the character clicks rapidly when he or she is

agitated." ~Jeanne Estridge

"A third object from Christie's session was visual clues.

They are things that are a part of a character's everyday world that spark the character to realize something she or he may be trying to ignore." ~Jeanne Estridge



Longtime attendee Robin Gianna took the time to ask me, a newcomer, how I was doing.

On September 16, COFW Presents

Self-Publishing

with

Lita Lawson and Kat Sheridan

Editing and Formatting

Lita Lawson, self-published, contemporary author and COFW member, will discuss how to hire an editor and format your work, along with other handy tips regarding publishing your own work.
www.litalawson.net.



A **COFW member** off and on for over 15 years, Lita says, "I love COFW as we have so many great speakers at our monthly meetings, annual conference or workshop. COFW has an amazing group of authors willing to share their experience in writing romance. COFW rocks!"

<https://www.facebook.com/authorlitalawson>

Writing the Back Cover Blurb

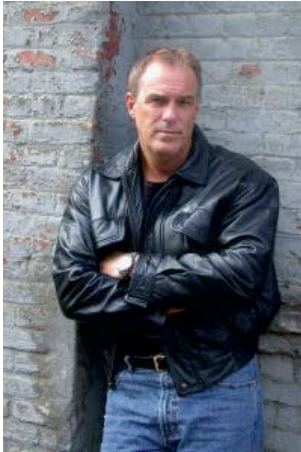
Kat Sheridan, self-published historical author, will discuss how to write a back cover blurb for your book.

Kat is addicted to historical, gothic novels and any romance that includes storms, castles, bat-shit crazy villains and a high body count. Heroes and heroines must be larger than life. She's excessively fond of shiny things and bourbon and is non-functioning until she's had her coffee.



Her latest release is a Victorian Gothic Romance *Echoes in Stone*.

www.facebook.com/Kat-Sheridan



***Saturday, October 21, 2017**

All-day Workshop. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

with

Larry Brooks

*Author of **Story Fix** and **Story Engineering***

Location: The Courtyard Marriott 2350 Westbest Drive, Columbus.

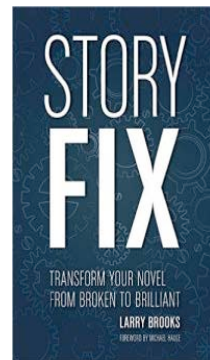
Fee: COFW Members: \$55. Non-members: \$75 (includes continental breakfast, lunch, raffle).

To Register and Pay: COFW Website: <http://www.cofwevents.org/workshop>.

Workshop Topics:

- ☆ The Hidden Secrets of Story Structure.
- ☆ The Beautiful Collision of Concept and Premise.
- ☆ Dramatic Arc as the Key to Everything (Including Character).
- ☆ When Every Month is NanoWriMo.

Larry Brooks is a career writer from the corporate sector who had nourished a fiction-writing dream the entire time. He's published six novels and two best-selling books on writing, *Story Engineering* and *Story Physics* and the 2015 release *Story Fix*, all through *Writer's Digest*.



For Questions: Linda Rice: lindarice05@gmail.com.

***Note:** COFW will not meet on its usual first "teen" Saturday in October.

On the Craft and Business of Writing

♥ Fiction Plotting with COFW Members

- ~First Wednesdays, 10 a.m.
- ~Panera Bread, 2374 Taylor Square Drive, Reynoldsburg, 43068.
- ~Sharing and discussing plots. Giving constructive advice on improvements.
- ~Between meetings, attendees stay in touch and ask questions via cofwplot@yahoogroups.com

Plot Problems? Questions? Re-energize Your Writing!

♥ Live Q & A on Facebook with Author Assistant, Melissa Jolly

- ~Every Wednesday, 2:30 p.m. Eastern
- ~Request to be her Friend on Facebook. Click on it when it pops up in your feed. Or go to her page and click on the "play" icon hovering over her picture.
- ~She takes questions for 30 minutes or until people stop asking.
- ~To ask your question, simply type.
- ~If you can't make it during that time, email her at [melissa\(at\)authorrx\(dot\)com](mailto:melissa(at)authorrx(dot)com) -- melissa@authorrx.com. She'll try to answer your question during one of her weekly chats.

\$ Financial Aid Funding \$

1. COFW maintains a fund to be used by qualified applicants for the payment COFW Chapter Workshops, Conferences, other events or COFW membership dues.
2. Funding is obtained from member donations and is kept separate from RWA chapter funds.
3. To qualify for an award from the fund, an applicant must be a member of COFW for one full calendar year prior to applying. The applicant will submit the required form stating their need for assistance to the Chapter President. The letter shall contain a statement of the applicant's financial need as well as a description of the applicant's serious pursuit of a writing career.
4. An individual needing financial assistance may be awarded up to \$75.00 from the fund once every three calendar years.
5. Funds are to be distributed by the Board on a first-come, first-served basis; "first" being defined as the first applicant to submit a letter to the Board following the guidelines.
6. Funds shall be disbursed only to the extent there are available funds and qualified applicants. There shall be no limit to the number of applicants who receive funds in any year.
7. Requests will be reviewed by the Board President and Treasurer and are confidential.

2017 COFW Leadership

Executive Board

President: [Jenessa McRoy](mailto:jenessah1@gmail.com) (jenessah1@gmail.com)

Secretary: [Jeanne Estridge](mailto:jeanne.estridge.author@gmail.com) (jeanne.estridge.author@gmail.com)

Treasurer: [Stacy McKitrick](mailto:semckitrick@aol.com) (semckitrick@aol.com)



Committees

Programs Chair: [Sheri Adkins](mailto:sherirenaeadkins@gmail.com) (sherirenaeadkins@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor: [Sandy Kachurek](mailto:sandrajkachurek@gmail.com) (sandrajkachurek@gmail.com)

Membership Chair: [Linda Rice](mailto:lindarice05@gmail.com) (lindarice05@gmail.com)

Social Media Chair: [Andrea McConnell](mailto:fyrefly93@gmail.com) (fyrefly93@gmail.com)

Incentives: [Julia Blaine](mailto:julmassie@aol.com) (julmassie@aol.com)

Ignite the Flame Contest Coordinators

[Nancy White](mailto:nancywhite0529@gmail.com) (nancywhite0529@gmail.com)

and

[Jane Conner](mailto:djconner@earthlink.net) (djconner@earthlink.net)



Central Ohio Fiction Writers

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Dayton, OH 45424

<https://twitter.com/COFWriters>

<https://www.facebook.com/COFWriters>

Meeting Days:

The first "teen" Saturday of the month.

The October meeting will be on the 21st of October.

