

KEYNOTES



The newsletter of the Romance Writers of America / New York City Chapter #6 **MARCH 2017**

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING: SATURDAY, MARCH 4
TRS, 40 EXCHANGE PLACE
3RD FLOOR, 12-4PM

TOPIC: SEX AND ROMANCE



Find #freedominpleasure at PassionbyKait.com

Kait, MPH is an acclaimed sex educator for women who crave more intimate, exciting, & fulfilling sex. Through her ridiculously fun + practical blog posts and workshops, she's here to help you say OMG YES to your desires and hell no to all the societal BS holding you back - while feeling totally comfortable. A few things that make her say OMG YES? Dark chocolate, living room dance parties, & smutty romance novels.



LAST CALL!

Renew your Chapter Membership by March 4th.

Members can renew online at www.rwanyc.com or complete the Renewal Form at the end of this newsletter and mail it in with their dues. After this date, there is a \$10 late fee. Thanks.♥





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THANK YOU!
To Our Contributing Writers

Alexis Daria, Maria Ferrer, Lise Horton,
Jean Joachim, Michael Molloy, Ursula Renée,
A.C. Rose, Mageela Troche

2017 CHAPTER CALENDAR

Jan 7 Feb 4 Mar 4 Apr 1 May 13 Jun 3
Jul 8 Aug 5 Sep 9 Oct 7 Nov 4 Dec 2

KEYNOTES DEADLINE

Send articles to keynoteseditor@gmail.com
by the 15th of the month. All articles
must be typed and up to 500 words.

APRIL THEME

MARKETING

Send us your marketing tips for novels
and yourself!

PLUS! Keynotes welcomes all topics.

RWA/NYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Kate McMurray
Vice President/Events: Stacey Agdern
Vice President/Contest: LaQuette
Secretary: Lise Horton
Treasurer: Maria Cox
Past President: Ursula Renée

LIAISONS & COMMITTEES

Keynotes Editor: Ursula Renée
PRO Liaisons: Alexis Daria
PAN Liaison: Mageela Troche
Blog/Social Media: Maria Ferrer
Craft Loop: Isabo Kelly
Critique Group: Ursula Renée
Publicity: Maria Cox, Lise Horton,
Jean Joachim, Michael Molloy
Website: Ursula Renée

ATTENTION: The Board welcomes all
comments/suggestions/etc. Please send emails
to info@rwanyc.com.

MEETING INFO: RWA/NYC meets the first
Saturday of each month. Meetings are held at
TRS, 40 Exchange Place, NYC. 12 noon.
Membership is at the discretion of the Board.
Annual dues are \$40. Make all checks payable
to RWA/NYC. There will be a \$20 fee on
returned checks.

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:
NOT YOUR MOTHER'S PUBLISHING CAREER...OR IS IT?
BY KATE MCMURRAY**

Publishing industry insiders have been arguing for a few years that it's a whole new world out there. The increasing popularity of ebooks and the proliferation of devices on which to read they blew open the door for authors who wanted to publish differently. Self-publishing was no longer the domain of authors who couldn't get a publishing contract otherwise, but rather a viable alternative for savvy authors who wanted more creative control.

Book technology has rapidly changed the industry, that's indisputable. We're seeing it in unexpected ways. Authors are taking more control of their careers, for one thing, bypassing publishing gatekeepers like editors and agents. RWA chapters across the country are seeing fewer contest entries in our unpublished author contests because authors are self-publishing rather than seeking feedback from industry judges. Fewer authors are signing up for editor/agent appointments at conferences.

I personally like the "your mother's publishing industry" analogy because my mother worked in traditional publishing until she semi-retired about ten years ago. In other words, she left the industry before ebooks really flourished. (If you ask, she'll tell you about how books were made in olden times. We went to Philadelphia a couple of years ago and stopped into Franklin's print shop, where my mother knew more about movable type than the park ranger did. Not that anyone has put a book together using movable type in a hundred years, but she was working in publishing before computers were widely available, is my point.)

Even when I started working in publishing 15 years ago, there was still a specific path to publication. I worked at a medium-sized house that, yes, had a slush pile—a literal pile of unsolicited manuscripts the house received, all read by one editor when she had time—but it was rare that a big author was discovered in the slush; the big sellers, in fiction anyway, had agents.

I've recently spoken with a few people who run conferences who are beginning to think editor/agent appointments might be going the way of the dodo because so few authors sign up for them now. The running theory is that everyone is self-publishing. The role of gatekeepers in publishing is dwindling.

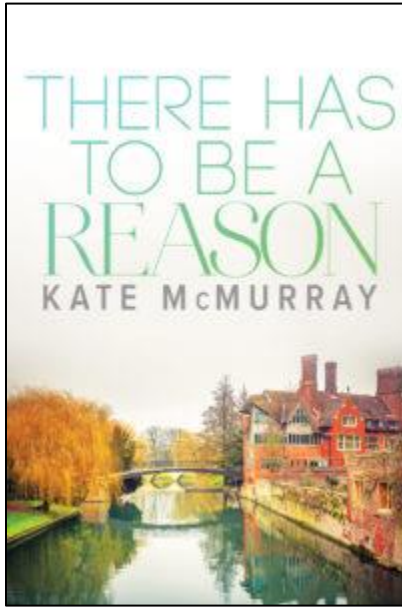
But I have a prediction, and it may be controversial: gatekeepers are going to make a comeback.

New author services have made self-publishing easy and (relatively) inexpensive. Which means anyone can do it. And, true story, my mother self-published a book.

But it means the market is flooded with hundreds of new books a day. And we know not all of them are good.

I should clarify, there are a couple of authors on my auto-buy list who self-publish, so I'm not casting aspersions on self-publishing per se. I think it's definitely possible to do it well and make good money





while you're at it. But think about the effort required to do it well; successful indie publishers run their career like a business—which it is—and have a team of people working for them (editors, cover designers, etc.) and put in hours and hours of work to publish those books I enjoy.

There are also authors who dash off a book in a matter of days and upload, or who cut corners, or who just want an easy buck who are putting books out, too.

And then you have books like the one I picked up last week. I got it as a freebie somewhere, but I'd heard of the author, so I figured I'd give it a shot. But the book is *Typo City*. I can overlook an error here or there, but there are a distracting number of mistakes here, at least one per page and often more. The frequency of errors keeps pulling me out of the story. Which is a shame, because the story itself is interesting—I like the main characters, the book is the kind of trope-driven fun that I

like in my romance—but it's hard to engage with the story because the author tosses commas around like confetti.

The frustrating thing about this is that any decent editor would have cleaned a lot of that up. I'm guessing the author just had a friend read the text and didn't hire an editor, which makes me as a reader think the author wasn't willing—because she couldn't be bothered or because she didn't want to spend the money—to hire a professional to polish up this book.

Which, okay, is something that got on my nerves this week. But I think it's reflective of a larger issue in indie publishing, which is that a lot of authors cut corners. How many self-published books have you picked up that had issues like this?

It's hard to separate the wheat from the chaff, in other words, especially now that there are hundreds of new romances available every day. How do you know which books are even worth picking up?

This is why I think gatekeepers are going to make a comeback. Readers want someone to sort through everything out there and say: these books are good!

Reviewers serve that function to a point. And review blogs are a wonderful thing! But they get so many review requests that they can't possibly review everything, and sometimes the good word of a publicist is enough to persuade a reviewer to pick up a book when she has ten other options.

So I think we're going to see a shift back toward traditional publishing.

Which is not to say that self-publishing can't be lucrative. I just think it's going to require a lot of effort to rise above the din of a hundred other authors clamoring for readers' attention. Your cover will have to be more eye-catching, the story more innovative, the book stronger and better than the competition. You'll have to work harder to market it. Because more books come out every day, but ebook sales generally have plateaued. It's challenging to succeed in such a market. Not impossible! But definitely challenging.

To end on a positive note, though, I will say that traditional publishing has become more receptive to new kinds of books. One reason to self-publish is that New York is not buying what you're selling—maybe you write in a less popular sub-genre or write books featuring LGBT people or people of color—but I watched the recent Manuscript Wish List event on Twitter, and a lot of editors and agents from big houses and agencies are clamoring for books written by and about people of color, for example, or they want some innovative twists on tropes that they haven't seen before. So if you're holding back because you think no traditional publisher would want your book, it can't hurt to give it a try now.

And one way to help your career is to pay attention to the industry and its trends. Not story trends per se—if vampires are hot right now, by the time you finish your vampire novel, everyone else will be on to the next thing—but what's happening in traditional and self-publishing, what sale are like, what deals are being made. A smart, informed author is a better author.♥

Kate McMurray is President of the Romance Writers of America/ New York City, Inc. She is also an award-winning author of gay romance and an unabashed romance fan. When she's not writing, she works as a nonfiction editor, dabbles in various crafts, and is maybe a tiny bit obsessed with baseball. She has served as President of Rainbow Romance Writers, the LGBT romance chapter of Romance Writers of America. She lives in Brooklyn, NY. Visit her at www.katemcmurray.com.

RESOURCE CORNER

Every month we'll bring you book recommendations from our members. If you would like to share your recommendations, email the editor at keynoteseditor@gmail.com by the 15th of the month.

THRILL ME: ESSAYS ON FICTION

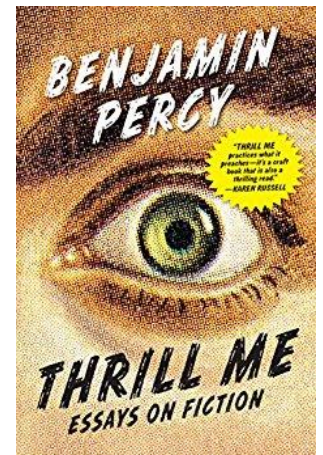
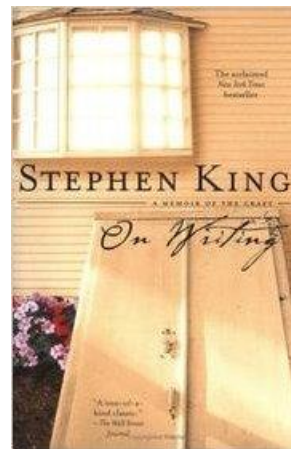
by Benjamin Percy

ON WRITING: A MEMOIR OF THE CRAFT

by Stephen King

BIRD BY BIRD: SOME INSTRUCTIONS ON WRITING AND LIFE

by Anne Lamott



**CHAPTER MINUTES: FEBRUARY 4
BY SECRETARY LISE HORTON**



Vice President LaQuette called the General meeting to order at 12:06 PM.

LaQuette called for approval of the November 2016 Chapter meeting minutes. Lise Horton made a motion to accept. Ursula Shand seconded the motion.

Treasurer Maria Cox was absent, so LaQuette and Secretary gave the Treasurer's report indicating the chapter had \$5,603 in the account as of February 3, 2017.

Secretary Lise Horton reported that we have a membership listed of 90 members, possibly 91 as a new member's payment had not yet been confirmed. Lise reminded members that the Chapter renewal period was now open.

Vice President, Programs, Stacey Agdern was not in attendance and there was no report on the Golden Apple Awards program. LaQuette stated that it was anticipated that a call for nominations would be going out early March.

Vice President, Communications LaQuette reported on the initial plans to revamp the contest to include both published novels as well as unpublished manuscripts, and called for volunteers both to judge, as well as submit entries to the bi-furcated contest.

Social Media Report: Maria Ferrer asked for members to support the Chapter's promotion efforts by retweeting and sharing posts. Maria further reminded members that newsletter articles are also recycled onto the Chapter blog, and that articles are shared on the RWA Editors' Loop, and are often picked up by other chapters, making articles a great promo opportunity for Chapter members. She said that the Chapter was getting a lot of hits on Twitter posts, and had 639 hits on recent Facebook posts.

Keynotes Newsletter Editor Ursula Shand asked for submissions to the newsletter, and provided her contact information. She said that the upcoming theme for the March newsletter would be various conferences, from reader, to writer conferences, as well as how to act, reports on particular conferences a member likes, etc. The April theme will be marketing. Ursula said she is also open to articles of all kinds outside the theme, as well.

PRO/PAN Communities Within RWA National: LaQuette and Lise explained the application process for PRO, and what the requirements were for membership within both communities.

Publicity Committee Report: Maria Cox was absent. Michael Molloy reported that the early bird sign-up for the Brooklyn Book Festival was open and that he was awaiting Board approval on the expenditure to reserve a table at the Festival for the Chapter, which must be in by February 20th to get the discount.

Website Report: Webmistress Ursula Shand asked all members to check that their names appear correctly on the Chapter website, and to ensure that their links are working properly, and if not, to alert her. She also told the members that prior issues of Keynotes are on the Members Only page of the website, and that the password was “members only”.

Maria Ferrer reported that she and Maria Cox would be going to the PO Box to get appropriate signatories changed on the Chapter PO box account.

The Chapter Meeting Adjourned at 12:27.♥

ABOUT PAN (PUBLISHED AUTHOR NETWORK)

The purpose of the Published Authors Network (PAN) is to establish within the RWA framework a network of communication and support to effectively promote and protect the interests of published romance authors; to open channels of communication between those romance authors and other publishing industry professionals; and to encourage professionalism on all levels and in all relationships within the publishing industry.



To be eligible for General PAN Membership: RWA General or Honorary members in good standing should have earned at least \$1,000 on a single novel or novella that meets the definition of Romance Fiction.

To be eligible for Provisional PAN Membership: RWA General or Honorary members in good standing should have: (1) contracted for the publication of a novel or novella for an advance of at least \$1,000, but said work is not yet commercially available ("Option One"); or (2) published a novel or novella, but not yet earned \$1,000 ("Option Two"). Works offered through Predatory Publishing companies shall not qualify.

ABOUT PRO

The purpose of the PRO Community of Practice is to establish within RWA a network of communication and support to effectively promote and protect the interests of romance writers in the areas between manuscript completion and PAN eligibility.

To help members reach the next level, PRO focuses on the business side of writing rather than craft. This program is available to any active General or Honorary member who: (1) is not PAN-eligible and (2) has one complete original work of romance fiction of at least 20,000 words, or multiple complete original works of romance fiction which combine for a total of at least 20,000 words.



FEBRUARY MEETING REVIEW: PUBLICISTS ON BOOK PROMOTION
BY JEAN JOACHIM

At the February meeting, we were privileged to have Lauren Jernigan, Social Media Specialist for Kensington Publishing, Steven Pfau, Associate Publicist at Farrar, Straus and Giroux, and Kayleigh Webb, Publicity Assistant for ACE ROC and DAW speak to us about publicity.

Here are the highlights of their session:

Advice on what you need to have to attract a publisher.

- Publishers are looking for new authors to have: Facebook Fan Page, Twitter account and a Goodreads Author Page, and a blog.
- Use your content on social media to build a social media presence, starting amassing an audience.

How far ahead of publications should you start and what should you do? They advised newbie authors to write articles, and do interviews about your work.

- The author “timeline” should begin one year ahead of publication. Lay the groundwork online early. Find your online voice.
- Two hashtags to include when you use Twitter to promote snippets of your work. #onlinewednesday and #firstlinefriday.
- Hashtags are huge on Instagram.

What about a blog? What should you do?

- Don’t ignore your blog. Connect it to your Twitter and Facebook accounts.
- Find a schedule for blogging that works for you.
- Long or short doesn’t matter. You can even mix it up.
- Feed your blog into your Goodreads page.

What about a cover reveal?

- Be sure to include a pre-order link.

Know your market, your genre.

- Follow what other authors in your genre are doing.
- Find out what the readers of your genre are interested in.
- If you’re doing different genres, use the same name, but separate your genres on your website by having different pages for each.
- Make sure your communications on social media are 80% about you and only 20% about your book. Don’t be promoting “buy my book” over and over again.
- Talk to people, have conversations, connect with people online.
- Creating a little mystery about yourself can be a good thing.
- Sharing with other authors is a great way to use Social Media. Create a support system.
- Budget a minimum of one hour a day for each platform for Social Media.
- Schedule posts ahead. Research when your people are online and post then.

- Tweet no more than 8x per day. Make sure each is a new tweet. No more than 2-3 hashtags per tweet. Make sure the hashtags fit with your tweet.
- Twitter now has polls. Conduct a poll, for example: what kind of hero do you like?

Sales/giveaways

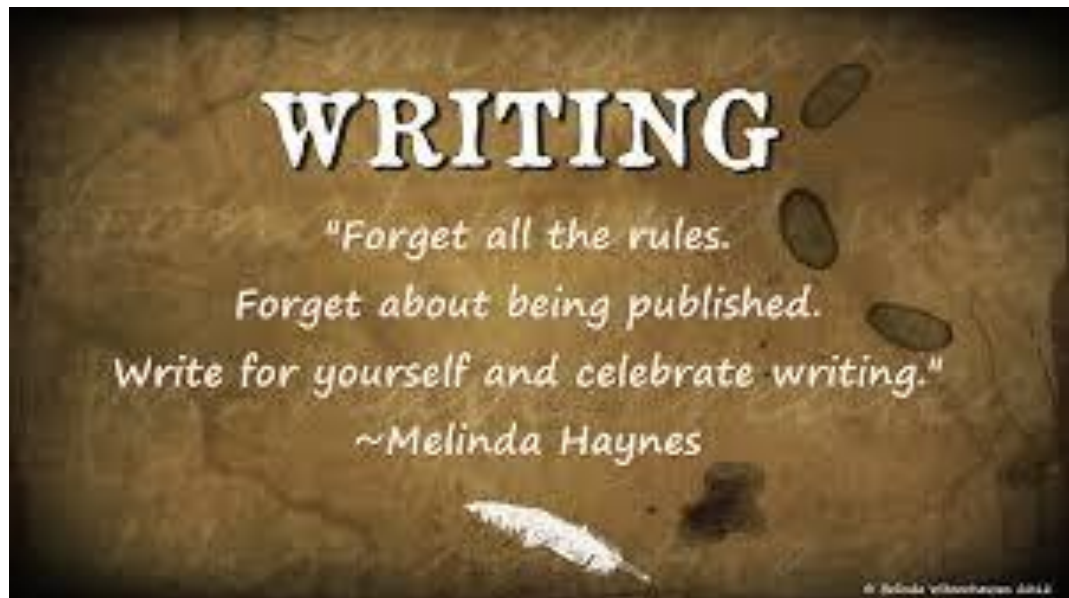
- Sales and giveaways work. Try flash sales/giveaways.
- Romance readers respond to graphics. Shirtless man always create a buzz. Even on Twitter.
- Goodreads giveaways are great tools.
- Galley giveaways and blog tour giveaways are also good.

Release day

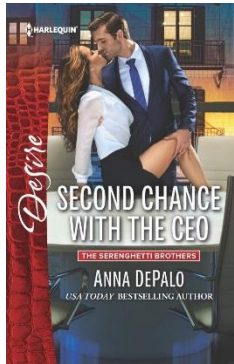
- Schedule a blitz campaign with giveaways.
- Book blogs, use interviews and excerpts to promote your book.
- Boosted posts and ads on Facebook.

Conclusion: best way to sell books is to get to know your readers. Social Media is the perfect place to accomplish that.♥

Jean Joachim is an award-winning, international best-selling romance author, with books hitting the Amazon Top 100 list in the U.S. and abroad since 2012. She writes contemporary romance, which includes sports romance and romantic suspense. Visit Jean at www.jeanjoachimbooks.com.



MEMBER NEWS



Congratulations the **Alyssa Cole**, who's Reluctant Royal Trilogy has been picked up by Avon.

Congratulations to **Anna DePalo**! Her novel, **SECOND CHANCE WITH THE CEO**, is a finalist in the Short Contemporary category of the NEC Readers' Choice Awards.

Authors Night Out! Ursula, Michelle, Jean, Maria and Jennifer held an impromptu gathering for Chapter Members at Chevy's; see group picture below left. Next one, will be Friday, March 10, at Chevy's on 42nd Street & 8th Avenue, 6:00pm, 2nd floor.

Lady Jane's Salon turned 8 years old and RWA/NYC Members were on hand to celebrate with founders Hope Tarr, Leanna Renee Hieber and Ron Hogan. Members included Stacey Agdern, Alexis Daria, Maria Ferrer, Ursula Renée and Jennifer Welsh. Photo right: Lady Jane's Salon presents annual check to WIN charity.♥



FREE PUBLICITY!

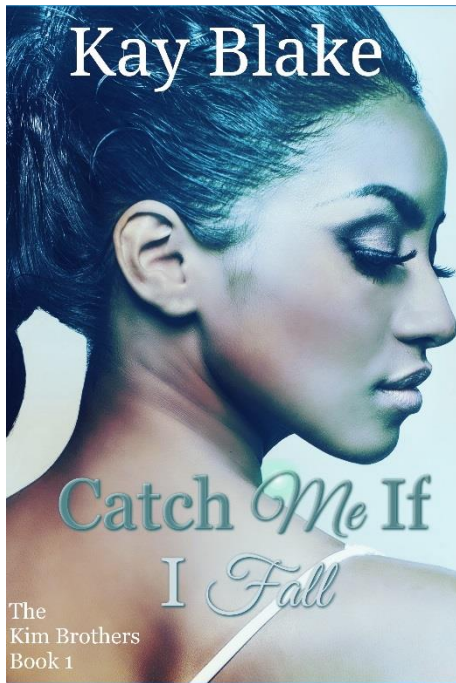


Have a new book out? Entered and won a contest? Have an interesting topic, research, tips you want to share? An event, book, conference you'd like to review?

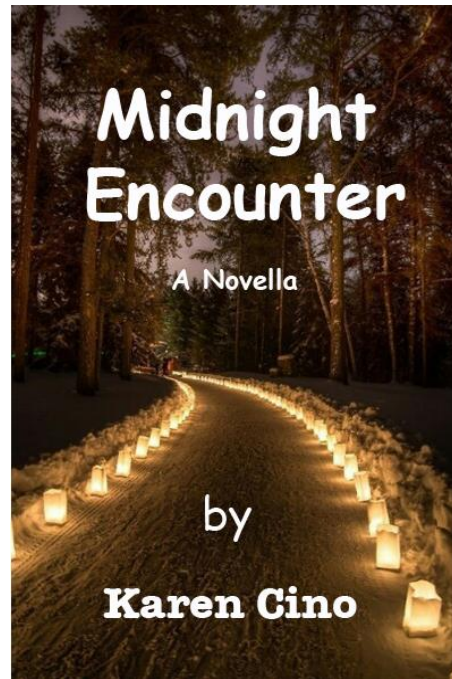
Keynotes is a FREE Promotion Opportunity. We welcome all subjects. Send in your articles, news, book covers, reviews, etc., to keynoteseditor@gmail.com. Articles will also be published on the Chapter Blog for DOUBLE the promotion!

Deadline: the 15th of every month. Take advantage of us!♥

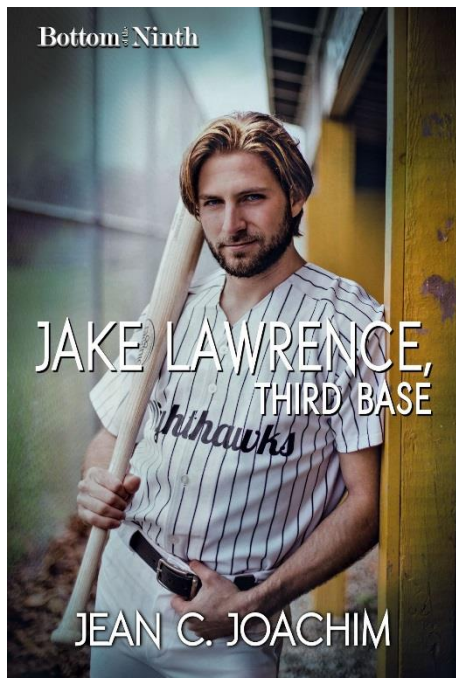
MEMBERS ON THE SHELF



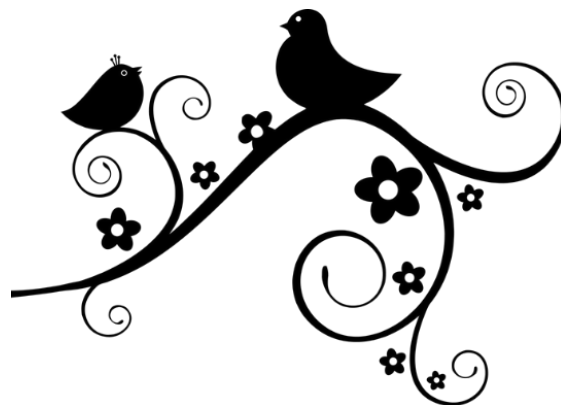
CATCH ME IF I FALL
by Kay Blake



MIDNIGHT ENCOUNTER
by Karen Cino

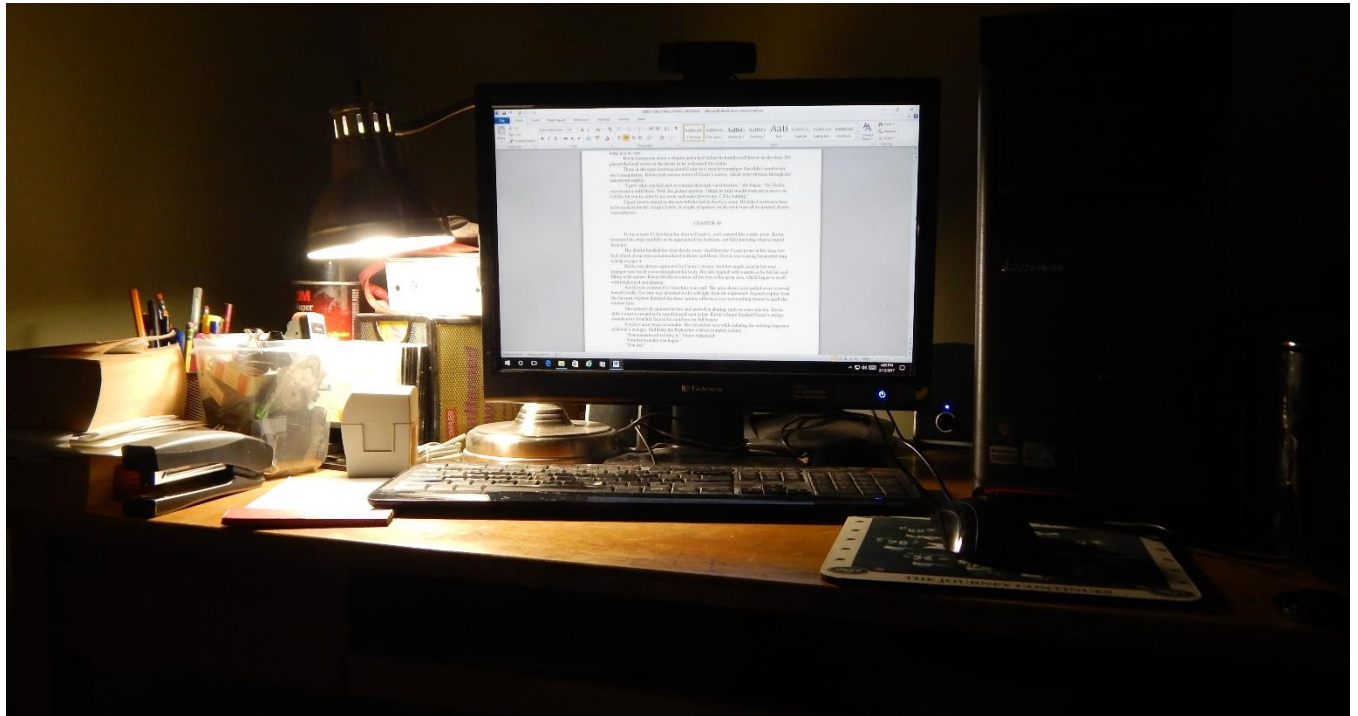


JAKE LAWRENCE, THIRD BASE
by Jean C. Joachim



A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN
BY MICHAEL MOLLOY

This is a new monthly column. We invite members to share their writing spaces with us.



When I'm not working, playing my keyboard for the New York Aviators, or spending quality time with Connie, I am writing. My own writer's cave is fairly modest: a 10'x7' room which suits my needs.

Unless it's writing before the crows are up, I usually close the door and play background noise/music to drown out the outside distractions. When I write romance, I'll play waves crashing the shore. When I write suspense, it's the soundtrack to "Vertigo" that gets me pumped. And it always works for me.♥

Michael Molloy was named 2016 RWA/NYC Member of the Year. He has written two novels – THE DIAMOND MAN and SADISTIC PATTERN—both published by Gypsy Shadow Publishing. He is currently working a new contemporary romance novel entitled SWEET GREETINGS FROM CARTHAGE, based on a true story. Visit him on Facebook Author Page (www.facebook.com/molloyauthor) and follow him on Twitter (www.twitter.com/AuthorMJM).



FROM THE PAN LIAISON: MAGEELA TROCHE

FACEBOOK VIDEOS

In past couple of years, Facebook put all their attention on videos. That attention garnered 8 billion views in 2015. When the videos were first introduced, Facebook heavily prompted them in the Newsfeed. So if you had a page and wanted to get in your post in the Newsfeed, a video was the way to go. But that has changed.

Of course, it was free for all so the way to get eyes on your videos and page were easy to manipulate. That has changed.

First, graphic-only videos (such as countdown clocks and poll images) will limit the visibility of these videos in the newsfeed. Some of this deals with them fighting against exploitation of their algorithms as well as dealing with fake news. Original content must be developed.

Videos, whatever their length, were rated on an equal level. Now Facebook determines how many people see your video in the Newsfeed based on percent completion. Both short and long videos are graded on a curve. So if someone watches seventy percent of a longer video that is more valuable than if they watched seventy percent of a shorter one.

That seems easy enough but Facebook hasn't specified how short is shorter or how long is longer. However, the maximum length of an upload is 120 minutes and the maximum length of a broadcast is 4 hours as of 2015.

Facebook has stated that it will put more emphasis on longer videos than shorter ones. However, if you are not receiving the percent completion then the length does not benefit you and your page. So, keep your eye on the completion rate of each video and weigh what is popular and not. This can help you and your page engage more with your readers and improve your page newsfeed views. ♥

Mageela Troche is the RWA/NYC PAN Liaison and the author of six historical romance novels. Her work has appeared in various magazines. She writes in the cramped corner of her Big Apple apartment.



FROM THE PRO LIAISON: ALEXIS DARIA

WELCOME TO RWCHAT**What is RWchat?**

RWchat is a weekly Twitter chat for romance writers. It was started in February 2015 by authors Kimberly Bell (*A Convenient Engagement*, PRH Intermix, 2016) and C.L. Polk (*Witchmark*, Tor, 2018). Since it's not possible for all writers to attend local chapter meetings or conferences, RWchat was created to provide a regular digital space for romance writers to meet and talk, sharing knowledge and gaining confidence. I joined the team later, along with Robin Lovett (*Stranger: A Dark Stalker Romance*, SMP Swerve, 2017).

**What do you talk about?**

RWchat covers a variety of topics under the headings of craft, business, and writer life. Some weeks we delve deep into emotional topics, tackling our fears and struggles to find balance. Other weeks, we have fun gif parties or plot bunny adoptions. The common thread every week is that we are joined by many wonderful, knowledgeable writers--from bestsellers to newbies--who energize and support each other in moving forward in their writing careers. Just this year, we've already discussed goals for 2017, book titles, writing without fear, character arcs, navigating career shifts, and organizing ideas into stories.

How does the chat work?

RWchat lasts for one hour. Every Sunday at 7pmET/4pmPT, participants gather on the #RWchat hashtag on Twitter. The @rwchat account tweets a series of questions over the course of the hour (usually eight questions), numbered Q1, Q2, etc. Participants reply to these questions using A1, A2, etc, including #RWchat in their tweets so they all show up in the hashtag feed. This way, everyone can view all the tweets related to the chat. The questions also inspire offshoot conversations among the participants, which everyone can read and contribute to by using the #RWchat hashtag.

Want a reminder?

Sign up at rwchat.com to receive a reminder email on Sunday evening before the chat begins. ♥



Alexis Daria is a contemporary and paranormal romance writer. On Sunday evenings, she co-hosts #RWchat, a weekly Twitter chat for romance writers. Alexis also serves as PRO Liaison for the New York City chapter of RWA, and Municipal Liaison for the NYC region of National Novel Writing Month. You can find her on Twitter at @alexisdaria, and follow her blog creativestaycation.com.

THE PUBLISHING GAME© – WRITER BEWARE: PART II!
BY LISE HORTON

If you're contracted with a house and they don't act in good faith, you may have contractual remedies that you can use to extricate yourself with as little aggravation as possible. So, take a gander at a few bits of legal stuff (which are taken from actual contracts):

Extension of Term. The term of this Agreement shall automatically be extended thereafter for additional two-year periods unless and until either party gives written notice to the other at least thirty days prior to the conclusion of a term.

Important: "unless and until either party gives written notice to the other" If the experience has been disappointing, you can get your rights back to the book and pursue other opportunities, like self-publishing.

Related Work. If Author writes another Work that is related to the Work covered in this Agreement, whether it be a sequel, a prequel, the next in the series, or uses related characters or references the plot of the Work, and Publisher has met or continues to meet its obligations under this Agreement...Publisher retains a right of first refusal for the next such work after the contracted Work.

Note: "and Publisher has met or continues to meets its obligations under this Agreement". This is fair because it specifies only a related work. And it holds the publisher to account IF they haven't fulfilled their contractual duties. However, it doesn't specify a time frame for review. It should. Always feel free to ASK. You don't want your MS tied up for a year.



BOOK PUBLISHING CONTRACT

THIS BOOK PUBLISHING AGREEMENT dated as of the _____ day of _____, 20____, between _____ (**enter publishing company**) at _____ (address), represented by _____ (herein called the "**Publisher**") and _____, at _____ (address), represented by _____, (herein called the "**Proprietor**").

In consideration of the premises and of the mutual covenants and agreements herein contained, the parties hereto agree as follows regarding the novel entitled " _____ " (the "**Book**") by _____ (the "**Author**").

1.00 GRANT OF THE RIGHTS

1.01 The Proprietor hereby grants to the Publisher the sole and exclusive licence to translate, print, publish and sell the Book at the sole expense of the Publisher in trade volume from imprint format only in the _____ language(s) but limited to the jurisdiction(s) of _____.



Payments and Statements. Publisher shall pay Author royalties in accordance with a schedule to be determined at Publisher's discretion but in no event shall payment be made later than two (2) months from the end of the month royalties are collected...

*Important: "but in no event shall payment be made later than..." and "the month royalties **are collected**" Still, the collection provision can be thorny. Amazon, for example, is notoriously late on furnishing sales figures, but this does give an author recourse.*

Audit Clause. The Author shall have the right, no more than once per calendar year, to appoint a representative, who is a Certified Public Accountant or the Author's authorized agent...to examine Publisher's records relating to the Work from the prior twelve-month period.... **and** Author shall provide thirty (30) day's prior written notice of the intent to exercise...

*Focus on a **once a year right** to request an audit, but also note the **time frame restrictions for the allowable period, as well as the notification time frame!***

Termination:

Breach of Contract. If either party breaches this Agreement, the non-breaching party shall provide written notice to the breaching party of the alleged breach. Upon receipt of such notice, the breaching party shall have sixty (60) days to cure. At the expiration of such sixty (60) day period, upon failure to cure, this Agreement shall terminate....

Despite this provision regarding a breach, there are also extenuating "Excusable Delay" provisions which includes force majeure, as well as "Damages for Breach" that further narrow the impact of a breach. While getting monies owed may be the highest hurdle, a reversion of rights means you at least have the product to capitalize on.

Early Termination by Publisher. ...If Publisher removes the Work from sale from its website for a period of thirty (30) continuous days, this contract shall terminate and all rights granted herein shall revert to Author immediately and without further notice.

Watch closely! "thirty (30) continuous days" If things appear rocky with your house, keep a timeline of issues such as this.

Effects of Bankruptcy, Suspension of Operations or Sale of Publisher. If Publisher files for protection under the Bankruptcy Laws, all rights hereunder shall immediately revert to Author, unless said bankruptcy filing involves reorganization.... *(there are further caveats that dilute this possible reversion)*

AND If Publisher suspends operations for more than sixty (60) continuous days....all rights hereunder shall immediately revert to Author *(again, caveats, but the suspension of operation window may give you leverage if it occurs)*

And



If Publisher sells its assets to another publisher who does or plans to market and promote books of the type and genre of the Work, the successor publisher will be bound, at a minimum, to the same terms delineated in this Agreement.

Good: “books of the type and genre of the Work” and “successor publisher will be bound”. If the take-over company doesn’t fulfill this requirement, request your rights back.

The above provisions are from a contract I consider to be fair for both sides, and provide an author several ways to extricate themselves if significant problems arise with a house.

Here are some other clauses and contract language that is a bit less author-friendly:

Author shall have the right, upon reasonable notice and during usual business hours but not more than once each year, to have the books and records of Publisher examined **at the place where the same are regularly maintained**.

Problem: ‘reasonable’ isn’t spelled out. And where is your publisher’s corporate office? It will impact the cost you have to pay. Digital houses, for example, are all over the place.

This contract has a decent bankruptcy clause, but universally, upon filing for bankruptcy, the corporate assets are in the hands of the court, who could deem rights to your books **part of those assets**, meaning a potentially lengthy delay before they might be reverted to you.

This contract doesn’t include a schedule of payment of royalties, thus eliminating that as a potential point of breach. As non-payment can be deemed a material breach, a specific schedule of payments spelled out is crucial for an author!

This contract also doesn’t have any provisions outlining when an author might request a reversion of rights, beyond the publisher deeming the book “out of print”.

This contract more heavily favors the house, though it is a reputable firm.

Another publishing house’s contract has a clear explanation of the quarterly schedule of royalty payments. It, too, has an author-favorable “Insolvency” provision, saying, “at the option of Author this Agreement will terminate effective ten (10) days following Publisher’s receipt of Author’s written notice of termination”, following notification to the author that the house is insolvent, etc.

Once again, this house is specific in its first refusal clause which is restricted to connected works, AND they also limit their first look to 90 days. Excellent for the author.

Additionally, this house’s contract provides that the author can terminate the agreement if publisher breaches, or by notification at the end of an initial term, or any renewal term. Giving the author an out if the book for example, has crappy sales due to the house’s lack of support, or it’s a poor editorial experience.



Understanding your contract offers you the best ammunition to fight major issues with your publisher. You need to request changes, clarification, or narrowing of certain terms that can help you if things go wrong. It's to your benefit to consult a publishing attorney, if possible, before signing any contract. Arm yourself in advance by getting their guidance too about how you can get out of the contract if things go bad.

Bottom line. You are a business professional. Bad stuff happens to good authors. Fight the good fight as hard as makes sense to you. Then chalk it up to experience – you'll be smarter the next time around – and move forward.♥

Lise Horton is published in erotica and erotic romance, including her Golden Flogger-nominated 2015 BDSM erotic romance, Hold Tight, and she presented her workshop on sensory description, A Feast for the Senses, at the 2016 BDSM Writers Conference. She returns in 2017 as Chapter Secretary and at her day job is in her 26th year as legal assistant at an entertainment law firm dealing with publishing. Lise writes smoldering, intense romance replete with laughter, and kink. Visit her at www.LiseHorton.com

There is NO greater agony than
bearing an UNTOLD story
INSIDE you.

- *Maya Angelou*

www.booksbybailey.com

MONTHLY THEME: CONFERENCE REWARDS

What do we really get out of going to conferences? Which are best? Here's what our members had to say.



FIVE REASONS TO ATTEND A WRITING CONFERENCE
BY ALEXIS DARIA

Registration for the RWA 2017 conference is open, and conference season is kicking into gear. But is it worth it to spend all that money on what sounds like a vacation for writers, when your main task is writing books? I think so. Here are five reasons to attend a writing conference.

Learning

Writing conferences are a great way to learn more about the publishing industry, branding and marketing, and writing craft. Workshops and panels provide you with the opportunity to learn from the experts and ask questions. Many are interactive. Before you go to a conference, decide which "track" you want to follow. Do you want to learn more about writing technique? Author branding? Publishing trends? Check out the conference's website or program in advance to select the programming you want to attend. Ask other attendees which panels and workshops they recommend, too. At bigger conferences, like RWA Nationals, some of the workshops are recorded, but not all. If you plan to buy the recording, make sure to note the workshops that are not being recorded, so you can attend those in person. If you are there to learn, bring a notebook, tablet, or laptop, and prepare to take notes. It feels like being back in school for a day, except you're learning exactly what you want to learn about--and you can leave the class if it doesn't suit your needs.

Networking

Full disclosure: I don't love the term networking. It evokes images of awkwardly handing out business cards and then not knowing what to do with them. In this case, I mean talking to people and expanding your network. Meeting other writers, readers, and publishing industry professionals. Having conversations like a real person and chatting for the fun of it, instead of trying to get something out of the other person. Asking questions instead of making requests. Agents and editors are people, too. Treat them as such, and don't be scared. Writing conferences are a great way to meet industry professionals face-to-face, and get a sense of whom you might like to work with down the road. You don't have to be a social butterfly, and it's okay to have a networking buddy with you. Instead of going into networking opportunities like a shark scenting blood in the water, set a goal to talk to a few people you've never met before. Maybe one, maybe three, maybe five. Whatever feels comfortable to you. Once you've done that, mission accomplished. You never know when or how you might meet your next critique partner, beta



reader, editor, or cover designer. And sure, bring along some business cards, although I have found it more effective to whip out my phone on the spot and follow the person on Twitter instead.

Inspiration

Our main task is to write books. In order to do that, we have to keep the creative well full, so it continues to toss ideas at us. Writing conferences are a great way to expose yourself to other genres and publishing formats. If you're curious about new avenues, chances are, there's someone you can question. And, since writers are readers first and lovers of good stories, conversations about books, movies, and TV shows can spark new story ideas. Make sure to jot down those ideas when they pop up--whether on paper or a digital device--to explore them further after the conference is over.

Readers

As writers, most of our work happens alone, sitting face to face with paper or screen. But every so often, it's a good idea to get out from behind the computer and connect with your readers. Some writing conferences also include reader components, whether a book fair or a party. Rather than approaching these events as a way to sell something to people, approach them as a way to get to know your existing fans and meet potential readers. How many times have you met a writer in person and thought, "Hey, this person is pretty cool, and I'd like to check out their book"? Just as social media is still social, marketing is just letting someone who wants what you have know that you have it. It's not about asking, "Will you buy my book?" It's about engaging in a real, genuine interaction, and making your book available if someone chooses to check it out.

Community

One of the best reasons to attend a writing conference is to be around other writers. Surrounding yourself with other people who understand what you're doing and why you're doing it, and who are just as excited about stories as you are, is a great way to refill the creative well. (But if crowds wear you out, it is totally okay to take a break in the lounge or in your hotel room.) Writing conferences can be intense and exhausting, due to full days packed with programming, but they can also leave you encouraged, empowered, and inspired to keep writing. Take the opportunity to make new writing buddies. When you're in the trenches, struggling to finish that book or publish the next one, they're the ones who will cheer you on, because they know exactly what you're going through.

Attending writing conferences shows that you are an active member of the community, and can keep you engaged when the going gets tough. If you've never been to a writing conference, start with a small, local event, and work your way up. Even if you've been to many conferences, consider which ones are right for you. They can be expensive, so do your research to make sure that event is in your best interest, and determine what you want to get out of it before you register. Ask other people which conferences they've attended and enjoyed, and why. And if you can, go with a buddy. If you do your research and determine your measure of success before you go, the conference will be worth the trip.♥

Alexis Daria is a contemporary and paranormal romance writer. On Sunday evenings, she co-hosts #RWchat, a weekly Twitter chat for romance writers. Alexis also serves as PRO Liaison for the New York City chapter of RWA, and Municipal Liaison for the NYC region of National Novel Writing Month. You can find her on Twitter at @alexisdaria, and follow her blog creativestaycation.com.



SMALL READER CONS: LIKE A FAMILY REUNION
KATE MCMURRAY

This February, I attended the Coastal Magic Convention in Daytona, Florida, for the second year in a row. I like Coastal Magic because it's small and friendly and a nice way to kick off my convention season.

Small, reader-focused conventions can be a fantastic way for authors to connect with readers in a friendly, intimate setting. They're less intimidating than the big cons like the RT Booklovers Convention, for one thing. But they also tend to attract a devoted group of fans who rally around a particular genre, or who come to the same event every year. Small cons are like walking into a room where everyone is passionate about the same thing you are. It's like finding your tribe or your family.

Coastal Magic got its start as a reader convention for fans of paranormal romance. For 2016, the organizer expanded the con to incorporate more genres, so I went for the first time last year. The audience still consists largely of paranormal romance fans, but a lot of the people who attend are just big readers generally. That's what I really like about this con; the people who attend love books and read everything. (And I mean *everything*. Is it a romance? Are there shifters? Are the protagonists boys? Girls? Both? Black, white, blue? It doesn't matter!) It helps that the organizer is wonderful. She's a passionate reader herself, for one thing, but she also works really hard to put together an event friendly to authors and readers alike.

Coastal Magic attracts between 250 and 300 people, and it limits the number of featured authors to around 50. That's both so that the authors who attend get equal time on panels and other events, and to ensure a good author to reader ratio. That's good for readers looking to discover new authors, because there is a limited number of people competing for their attention. And it also means that, as an author, you're marketing to readers, not other authors.

Sidebar: Authors, don't market to other authors. Yes, authors are readers, too, but generally speaking, we also have less time for reading and focus a lot on our own books. The audience you want to read are the ravenous readers who will read 100+ books per year and share recommendations with others.

This year was my second Coastal Magic, and it was really fun, because I got to see a lot of people I haven't seen in a year. I managed to snag a featured author spot on the good word of an author friend, so I sat on four panels and got to meet a ton of people. I sold quite a few books, too, via the table my publisher had in the vendor area. But the best part for me is just sitting around and chatting with author and reader friends. There's room to do that at a small con, because you're only seeing a couple hundred people, not a couple thousands. And it's like a family reunion that way. Readers, romance fans, these are my people.

I've been to a couple of other small cons. GayRomLit, which moves around every year, is a good event for new gay romance authors—it's pricey for authors, but could be good bang for your buck because it attracts a devoted group of readers every year. The upcoming Liberty States Create Something Magical Convention is mostly a writer con, but it has a reader component as well. What I like about these events is that there are lots of opportunities to meet readers in a quieter setting.

To be clear, this is not to say that big cons aren't fun. I love RT and 2017 will be my fifth time attending. But small cons are important for authors consider. They can be a good way to get your feet wet, or a stepping stone on your way to doing bigger events. They can also be a good way for established authors to get a lot of face time with fans.

I put out the call to fellow RWANyc members to talk about other cons they've attended that they recommend, and those I heard from had similar things to say. Small cons are like family reunions: you learn something, you meet people, you find your tribe.

Members of RWANyc recommended the BDSM Writer's Con, which happens every summer in NYC, and Romance Slam Jam, which moves around and is an event that celebrates African American authors. If you've got a small reader con you love, please share it with the group by posting about it to our Yahoo loop! ♥

Kate McMurray is President of the Romance Writers of America/ New York City, Inc. She is also an award-winning author of gay romance and an unabashed romance fan. She lives in Brooklyn, NY. Visit her at www.katemcmurray.com.



DIRTY SIX: TIPS FOR ATTENDING A ROMANCE CONFERENCE BY MARIA FERRER

I was just in Austin, Texas, for a business conference and one of their infamous streets is 6th Street aka Dirty Six. I thought I'd use that title for my quick and "dirty" tips for attending a Romance Writers Conference:

- 1) The one with the most business cards wins! Take plenty of business cards. Make sure they have your name, email, website and social media addresses.
- 2) Dress the part. Dress appropriately for the image you want to present. It helps people remember you so have fun. For example, writing westerns, cowboy boots and hats are good.
- 3) Meet new friends! Don't hang out with your regular writer friends. Meet them for breakfast and plot your day; but sit with new writers at lunch and even dinner. The more people you meet, the better.
- 4) Volunteer at the Editor-Agent Appointment desk. Believe it or not, some people forget their appointments, and if an editor/agent is free you can chat with them while they wait.
- 5) Practice your pitch--- a short one. Everyone at the conference will be talking about writing. Have your short – 3-4 lines pitch – ready to share.
- 6) Go to as many writing conferences as you can afford. They are great places to hone your writing skills, to make new writer friends, make business contacts, and connect with readers. For example, RWA National conference is good for writing and meeting editors and agents; Romantic Times conference is great for meeting readers.

Good luck. Happy Conferences.♥

Maria Ferrer writes contemporary romance and erotica under the name of Del Carmen. Visit her at www.mydelcarmen.com.



CHECK YOUR SHYNESS AT THE DOOR BY URSULA RENEE

You walk into the room full of strangers and, instead of searching for a friendly face who would welcome the opportunity to talk; you glance over your shoulder and contemplate hightailing it back home where you can hide under the safety of your bed.

It's not like you don't have anything in common with the other fifty to a hundred people there. They like romance as much as you do. Some are fellow authors, who either have experiences they are willing to share or novice who are eager to learn. Others are agents and editors, who are searching titles to add to their lists and want to hear your pitch. But, even with that knowledge, you stand frozen, unable to remember your name, much less the plot of the book you had worked so hard to complete.

For those of us who are shy, writing can be the perfect career to pursue. You spend hours, locked away by yourself, pounding on the keyboard, lost in another world. Unfortunately, once those two magical words, 'The End', are typed, it is time to get out and meet the world.

There are few authors, who are able to build a career, without interacting with others. Not only do you have to introduce yourself to agents and/or editors, but once the novel is sold, you need to go out there are meet the readers. This may entail attending conferences, book signings, blogging and becoming involved with social media.

Some authors prefer to remain at home and submit queries via email and/or snail mail, which allows for the least amount of social interaction as possible. Others may not mind talking to someone face-to-face, but find it easier to speak with an agent or editor during formal five minute pitch session, where small talk is kept to a minimum.

Even though both methods can lead to requests for full manuscript, why limit yourself? Social functions, like luncheons and cocktail receptions, are opportunity to meet agents and editors in a more relaxed setting surrounded by a support system of other authors who have been in your shoes.

So, how do you approach the big, scary agents and editors in an informal setting, where you're expected to participate in a conversation?

Before you attend an event, make sure you know who will be present and do your research. If you are not prepared ahead of time, your worst fear of having someone stare at you as if you have two heads and speak Martian will come true when you approach a digital publisher and ask how many copies of your title should you expect for your first print run.

Once you arrive at the event, one of the best ways to approach someone is to find something you admire about her – whether it is a dress or piece of jewelry – then compliment her about it. This ice breaker can help put both of you at ease and start a conversation.

If you are sitting at a table, listen to the conversations. You may find that you have something to offer to the discussion (i.e. if someone mentions that she is planning a trip to Rhode Island for the first time and



you have been there you might suggest placed that she can visit or if someone else mentions that she is looking for a variation on a dish and you like to cook, you can offer to exchange recipes). Remember, just like you would steer clear of politics and religion, you must also be mindful of being critical and offering unsolicited advice on any topic. No one wants to listen while an ‘expert’ gives her opinion on the best age to potty train, wear a toddler or send a child to school. Also, leave all your woes at home. Everyone has problems, therefore no one is interested in taking on yours.

Because of your previous research, you can discuss an author or title that an agent or editor works with. However, only do so if you like the work. Do not approach an agent or editor and give her an hour long critique on what was wrong with a title, then tell her that you have something that is much better. Remember, if you don’t have anything nice to say, it’s best not to say anything at all.

You can also take the approach of simply introducing yourself, stating what genre and subgenre you write, then give them a one or two sentence pitch. If the agent or editor is interested they will ask to hear more or request that you send a partial or full manuscript.

No matter how you decide to approach an agent or editor, do wait until she is free before launching into pitch. Do not corner someone in the bathroom, push ahead of a line or interrupt a conversation so you can speak. There is a fine line between assertive and rude, which you would not want to cross and have someone reject you because you display a lack of manners.♥

Ursula Renée writes stories with diverse characters, who struggle to achieve their Happily-For-Now. She prefers the time periods between the roaring twenties and the psychedelic sixties, when women were challenging the norms of society. Her novels include SWEET JAZZ and A BOOKIE’S ODDS. Her novella, BITTER BLUES, will be released in 2017. When she is not writing, Ursula enjoys photography, drawing and stone carving. She is the mother to one son, two cats, a variety of fish and hermit crabs. For more information, visit Ursula at www.ursularenee.com

WRITING IS A CALLING,
NOT A CHOICE.

– ISABEL ALLENDE

**HOT ROMANCE: THE WRITING LIFE OF TAMARA LUSH
BY A.C. ROSE**

I was so excited to meet Tamara Lush because we share two passions – reporting and romance novels! We have become great friends since I first interviewed her about her debut novel, *HOT SHADE*. It was traditionally published but she got the rights back and just re-released independently it with a super-hot cover.

Tamara is an award-winning journalist with the *Associated Press* and she also writes steamy romance books. A longtime reader with dreams and plans of penning her own romantic stories, she was enticed into the field in 2014 after covering a spate of news stories with disturbingly unhappy endings. Fiction was a way to unleash her creativity and create the happily-ever-after that was not as common on her day job.



By 2015 she was a published author. Most recently she published *TELL ME A STORY*, a five book series which is now available as a set. I chatted with Tamara again about her fascinating dual career.

Your day job is reporter for a major news organization. What is your beat?

I cover the west coast of Florida. It's mostly a general assignment beat, writing stories about agriculture and tourism. Also the occasional execution. And hurricanes and alligators and all sorts of weird stuff. I also help out with national stories.

Many hard news reporters end up penning fiction from their beat – crime, politics, etc. What inspired you to choose romance novels?

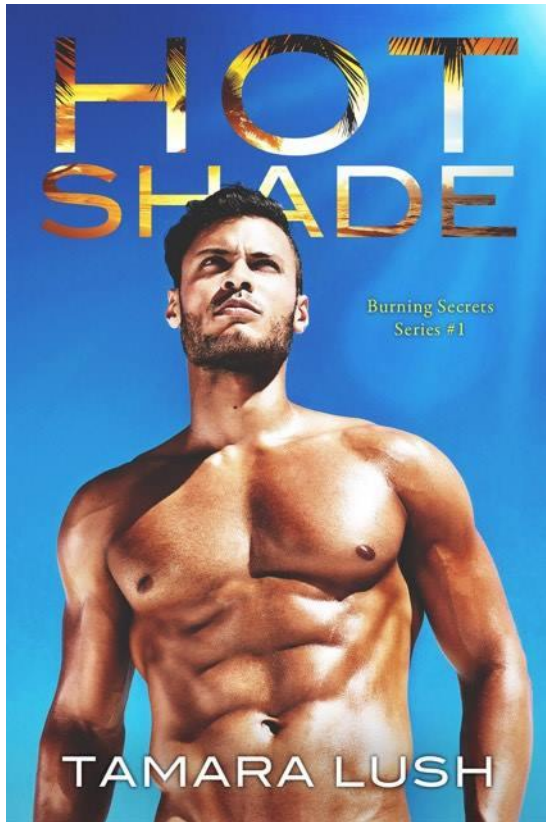
I've always loved sexy romance stories ever since high school. I was the girl who had the stash of taboo books and loaned them to friends. I considered writing a romance in my early twenties, but was too focused on journalism to really be effective. In 2012, I wrote the first chapter of a book, and then stuck it in a file cabinet.

In 2014, I covered a lot of awful stories. Within a few months' time, I wrote about the trial of a woman who killed her teenagers, a man who killed his entire family and burned his house down, and a grandfather who killed his daughter — and his six grandchildren.

Something in me changed. Almost overnight, I craved writing a story that ended well. Ended happily. I pulled that first chapter out of the drawer and began to write and re-write it. I took a Media Bistro class with author Susan Squires and I wrote 1,000 words a night, after covering news. I finished a book. It ended up being *HOT SHADE*, my first novel. It was so freeing and cathartic that I kept writing. Fiction was addictive, I discovered.

***HOT SHADE*, features Journalist Skylar Shaw and a handsome yet mysterious Italian journalist. It just re-released under your own publishing umbrella. Tell us about it.**

I was inspired to write *HOT SHADE* after reading *GOMORRAH*. It's a non-fiction book about the Camorra, the organized crime syndicate in Naples, Italy. The author of the book is Roberto Saviano, an Italian journalist and he had to go on the run after writing his book. He's still living under police



protection, and he's an incredibly brave truth-teller. After I read his book, I wondered what Saviano's life was like. Did he have girlfriends? How did he live? Was he lonely? In time, I began to think of a love story between a sexy Italian journalist in his situation and a young, somewhat naïve American reporter.

Since you called upon your days as a young reporter and you hubby is Italian, how much is art imitating life?

Ha! A few parts of the book, such as when the heroine is filing stories for her newspaper in her messy car, are a bit autobiographical. I wanted to also show the heroine's ambition and desire to leave her tiny paper and eventually move to a bigger news organization. Skylar's professional goals and the fact that she's ambitious without much experience, was drawn from my own life as a 22-year-old journalist.

The rest is pure fiction! My husband has been in the US for many years and is probably more American than Italian at this point. I always joke with him that I'm going to write a sequel to HOT SHADE, set 15 years in the future, where the American reporter and the sexy Italian buy a house, a couple

of cars and a leaf blower, then fill the house with stubborn dogs. But that's real-life love, the mortgage and the leaf blower and the dogs, right? It's not all hearts and flowers and headiness. True sexiness is what my husband gives me: unconditional love and support.

You have such an amazing romance writer name. Some people may be surprised it's not a pen name. Do you think perhaps it was a sign you were destined to be a romance writer?

Ha! I think it was. So many people ask me if my name is a pen name. But no, my parents were just hippies in California in the 1970s and wanted to name me something a little different.

As a reader, what do you love most about romance novels?

I love reading about the chase. The flirtation. The banter. The anticipation of that first kiss, that first touch, that first moment when the characters know they're about to have sex...I can't get enough of that.♥

Visit Tamara Lush at her website. <http://www.tamaralush.com/>

A.C. Rose is a love, romance, and entertainment columnist and author of steamy romance books, including STAY AFTER CLASS and AROUSAL. Visit her at <http://acroseauthor.net/>. Read the full interview here: <https://acroseauthor.com/>



RWA/NYC Membership & Renewal Application

DATE: _____ CHECK ONE: ___NEW MEMBER ___RENEWAL

NAME: _____ NATIONAL RWA MEMBER # (required) _____

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*NOTE: All RWA/NYC Members must be members of RWA National. For national membership form, visit www.rwanational.org.

CHAPTER INVOLVEMENT: Please volunteer to help out in at least ONE (1) chapter event. (check all that apply):
___contest ___awards reception ___newsletter ___website ___retreat ___ALL!

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT US? ___RWA ___Facebook/Twitter ___Website ___Other: _____

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Chapter dues are due March 4, 2017. Make checks payable to RWA/NYC.

There will be a \$10 late fee for all renewals after March 1st; and, \$20 fee on all returned checks. Return completed form with your dues to RWA/NYC, POB 3722 Grand Central Station NY NY10163, or you can pay via PayPal at www.rwanyc.com.

___ GENERAL MEMBER -- \$ 40/year (Dues: Jun-Jul= \$30; Aug-Sep= \$25; Oct-Dec= \$20.)
___ CHARTER MEMBER --\$ 35/year (ONLY for members continuously since 1989)
___ ASSOCIATE MEMBER -- \$ 35/year (Dues: Jun-Jul= \$25; Aug-Sep= \$20; Oct-Dec= \$15.)
(ONLY for related members who do not meet the qualifications for General Membership)

OPTIONAL: Check here if you are making an additional contribution to the chapter in the amount of \$_____.
You can also pay via PAYPAL at www.rwanyc.com.

WRITING CREDITS

CHECK ONE: ___PUBLISHED ___UNPUBLISHED

CHECK ONE if you are an RWA National Member of: ___PAN ___PRO

If UNPUBLISHED, tell us at what stage you are: ___New or ___Pre-Published (have submitted something)

If PUBLISHED, in what format? i.e., book-length romantic fiction, short fiction, electronic, confessions, etc.

PUBLISHER(S): _____ PSEUDONYM(S)? _____

WEBSITE(S): _____ BLOG: _____

FACE-BOOK _____ TWITTER _____