

KEYNOTES



The newsletter of the Romance Writers of America / New York City Chapter #6 *OCTOBER 2018*

NEXT MEETING: SATURDAY, October 6

LOCATION: TRS, 40 EXCHANGE PLACE, 3RD FLOOR, 12 – 3 PM

Topic: The Emotional Arc of Your Characters

Speaker: Tere Michaels



Tere's specialties are snark, angst, and happily ever afters, set in the big city. It might take some time to get there but no worries - she believes in love conquering all!

She has written fifteen books including her popular Faith, Love & Devotion series and the superhero saga The Vigilante. Nothing makes her happier than knowing she made a reader laugh or smile or cry - it's the purpose of sharing her work with people. She loves hearing from fans and fellow writers and is always available for speaking engagements, visits, and workshops. ♥

GOLDEN APPLE AWARDS RECEPTION BY VICE PRESIDENT ALEXIS DARIA

The **Golden Apple Awards** will be held on Wednesday, October 17th, 6-9pm at Bloom's Tavern (208 East 58th Street) in the upstairs party room. (This is the same place where we held the May Brunch.) We invite agents and editors to attend, so this event is a great opportunity to meet and mingle with industry professionals.

Cost is \$40 and includes open bar and appetizers.

The Paypal link is here: <http://www.rwanyc.com/golden-apple-awards.html>

RWA/NYC is proud to announce the 2018 Golden Apple Honorees:

Lifetime Achievement: **Rochelle Alers**
Agent of the Year: **Sarah Younger**
Publisher of the Year: **Dreamspinner Press**

Author of the Year: **Alexis Daria**
Editor of the Year: **Elle Keck**
Bookstore of the Year: **The Ripped Bodice ♥**





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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Anna B, Barbara Bent, Kay Blake, Kate Dunn,
Falguni Kothari, Candace Lucas, LaQuette,
JN Welsh

MEETING INFORMATION

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.

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

Conte

NOVEMBER THEME

BUILDING CHARACTER

Share with us how you build your characters and their fun habits

PLUS! We welcome articles on all topics, book reviews, conference notes, etc., etc.

DEADLINE: 15th of the month

2018 CHAPTER CALENDAR

Oct 6 Nov 3 Dec 1

RWA/NYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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RWA/NYC, PO Box 3722,
Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163
www.rwanyc.com
info@rwanyc.com
rwanycblogginginthebigapple.blogspot.com

KEYNOTES DEADLINE

Send articles to keynoteseditor@gmail.com by the 15th of the month. All articles must be typed and up to 500 words. Send pictures as attachments; not in article

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: TO WRITE OR NOT TO WRITE DIVERSELY,
THAT IS THE QUESTION
BY LAQUETTE**



Writing diversity into your manuscript is something every writer should consider. Why? Because the world we live in is not a homogenous landscape of sameness. Without the differences in culture, ethnicity, and perspectives that color the real world, writing a story where everyone is the same and comes from a similar background can make your story flat and well... boring.

I encourage every author to seek to include diversity in their books. But, before you do, there are some questions you should ask yourself before ever putting paper to pen.

- 1- Why do I want to include a diverse character in my story? If the answer is because you think you're going to get some sort of reward for being open and inclusive, then don't do it. Chances are, if this is your motivation, you're probably not going to handle the character, or more importantly, the character's background with enough sensitivity to tell the story. Lack of sensitivity and awareness often leads to perpetuating problematic representation and stereotypes.
- 2- Do you understand the difference between appreciation and fetishizing? Appreciating someone else's experience means to see them as a whole person and to celebrate the things that make them, them. That is not just what they look like or that one cool thing you think summarizes their entire experience. For instance, promoting the idea that a non-ethnic character is in love with an ethnic character because of their "exotic" skin, hair, eyes is problematic. People are more than just the sum of their parts. If you can't recognize that, then writing a diverse character might not be the thing for you.
- 3- Is the conflict of the story that this diverse character is (pick one) black, gay, disabled, Muslim, etc.? If the only conflict in the story is who and what this person is, that means you're not seeing beyond a label or a pre-ordained list of characteristics you believe expresses the meaning of that label. If you're doing this, trust me, you're going to write a problematic story that will serve no good.
- 4- Have I checked my own biases? If you're not ready to understand that everyone has biases, including you, then you are not ready to write diversely.
- 5- Is this my story to tell? Are you crafting a story that can only be told genuinely by someone who has lived it? Yes, you can research almost anything. However, sometimes facts aren't enough to tell the entire story. Sometimes the authentic perspective is the only one that will do it justice.



6- Can I write this character responsibly without relying on lazy stereotypes as the sole basis for characterization? If you are not willing to learn about all the things that factor into a person's development beyond what the media/society tells you, then you are not ready to write a diverse romance.

Please understand these questions are not an attack. They are questions we each should ask ourselves anytime we sit down to create a new story with new faces. But we should be especially honest with ourselves about our answers when we seek to add authentic diversity to our tales. Keep it sexy! ♥

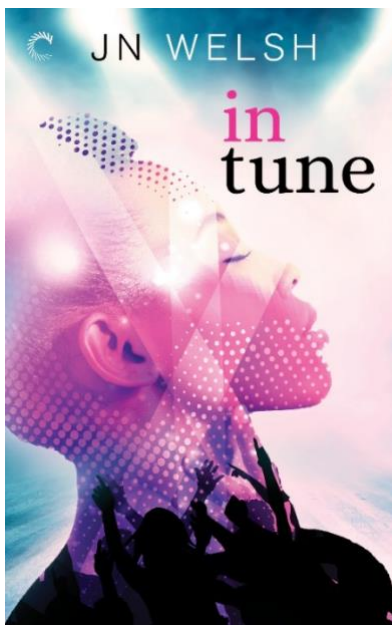
LaQuette-President of RWA/NYC, is the 2016 Golden Apple Award Author of the year winner. She writes bold & sexy tales for diverse characters who are confident in their right to appear on the page. Represented by Latoya C. Smith of the L. Perkins Agency. Visit her at NovelsbyLaQuette.com and LaQuette@NovelsbyLaQuette.com.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



Jeanine Colette
Phebe DuPont
Jessica Scott
Talia Suravo

MEMBERS ON THE SHELF



Congratulations to **JN Welsh** on her new book, **IN TUNE**, a workplace romance that hits the road in this enemies-to-lovers tale.♥



RWANYC PRESENTS...



Love & Literature
In The City
A Day Conference Featuring...



Piper Huguley



Farrah Rochon



Eloisa James



Erin Galloway



Jin Yu

Saturday, November 3rd, 2018
Fordham University
(Bronx Campus)
McGinley Center Room 237 9a-4:00p
Registration: \$99
www.rwanyc.com/loveandliterature

Tickets Available At: RWANyc.com/LoveandLiterature

A poster for 'Genre palooza' featuring a stylized purple and white design. The top left has the event title 'Genre palooza' in a large, white, sans-serif font. To the right is a stylized purple face with white eyes and a mouth. Below this is a dark purple banner with white text: 'A MINGLE & MIXER THAT BRINGS GENRES TOGETHER'. Underneath is another dark purple banner with white text: '1905 LOUNGE AT HGU 34 E 32ND STREET NYC 5:30-7:30 PM'. The bottom half of the poster is split into two panels: the left panel shows a white coffee cup with a black shadow and a white circle containing 'Oct 10'; the right panel shows a purple knife with a black shadow and two black teardrop shapes. At the bottom, white text lists co-hosts: 'Co-hosted by AUTHORS GUILD ROMANCE WRITERS OF AMERICA MYSTERY WRITERS OF AMERICA HORROR WRITERS ASSOCIATION SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY WRITERS OF AMERICA'. Below this is a pink line of text: 'Please RSVP by Oct. 5'.

RSVP form is here: <https://form.jotform.com/82547148876168>

Facebook event page is here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/270462366925770/>

CHAPTER MINUTES: SEPTEMBER 8
BY SECRETARY JENNIFER WELSH



Meeting called to order at 12:10pm by President LaQuette. 14 attendees.

Harper Miller approved meeting minutes, Laquette seconded (no objections or abstentions).

Treasurer's Report: Balance is \$7,446.91.

Secretary's Report: 89 members including an in meeting.

Kathryn Hayes Contest: We raised \$1700 and have between 72-75 entries and a good amount of 1st and second round judges. Harper is working on organizing entries.

Golden Apples: Alexis is confirming the date for the 17th and information about how to attend and the cost will be sent to all members via the Yahoo loop.

Blog and Social Media: The website is currently up to date with events, board and meeting times. LaQuette has also been posting about the mini con in addition to the publicity committee. The Board has noted that we also need an Instagram account

Love and Literature in the City: The location is secured and the details are being worked out. Parking is available at the location there are a limited number of spots for attendees. The early bird period is over and tickets are now \$99. If you'd like to volunteer to help with the mini con or if you have questions, please send a note to LaQuette at: president@rwanyc.com

Brooklyn Book Festival: Sunday September 16th. Michael has secured our spot communicated with the attending author and volunteers. Come out and experience the festival.

Board Elections: It's that time of year again when we have to vote for our board. The current board is currently taking nominations for open positions. So reach out to the executive board about nominating yourself or a current member for a role.

Round Robins begin. Meeting adjourned at 12:25pm.
Speaker: RWA President, Dee Davis. ♥



PHOTO ALBUM: BROOKLYN BOOK FESTIVAL



Sunday, September 16, turned out to be a beautiful sunny day, and RWA/NYC's booth at the Brooklyn Book Festival was hopping. Many thanks to Michael Molloy, who organized the event. Authors signing included: Kay Blake, Krystal Ford, Harper Miller, Michael Molloy, Joan Ramirez, Tee O'Fallon, Maria Vale and JN Welsh. Volunteers helping at the booth included: Michelle Alerte, Kay Blake, Magda Cavin, Maria Ferrer, Wendy Guerrier, Michael Molloy, Ursula Shand, JN Welsh. We hope to see you all again next year! ♥



Pictured: Kate McMurray, Kay Blake, Barbara James, Harper Miller, Michael Molloy, Kristal Ford, Maria Vale and Magda Cavin.





MONTHLY THEME: MIXING IT UP: WRITING MULTI-CULTURAL ROMANCES



DABBLING IN MULTICULTURAL ROMANCE
BY KAY BLAKE



As a WOC and an author who writes interracial and multicultural books, I'm all for more books that have those couples that showcase another culture. There are many reasons for that, but I think the most important one for me is that POC should see themselves in the pages of the book. They should be able to pick up a book and go hey there is someone like me in here!

My latest book *DON'T BLAME ME* features a Black heroine and a hero who is Polynesian and Irish. My here was inspired by one of my pretend husbands, Roman Reigns who is the current universal champion of WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment). I had to do extensive research into Hawaiian culture and the benefits were rewarding. One of the best parts was leaning some of the phrases and how much the culture appreciates family and love. I felt it went hand and hand with romance.

My series the Kim Brothers series is a series about three Korean American brothers who get their happily-ever-after with women of color. While I'm still plotting Book 3, in Book 1 my heroine was Black and in Book 2 my heroine was Puerto Rican. With each one of the books, I had to do extensive research to get the story the way I wanted to tell it. I also made sure I did the story justice with regard to culture.

Yesterday, at the Brooklyn Book Festival, with the help of J.N. Welsh and Wendy G, I was able to get a couple to my table that fit the couple in the first book of the series. The title of that one is *CATCH ME IF I FALL*. I explained that I was a romance writer who writes interracial romance, so the woman picked up the book and read the first page. She looked at her significant other who was a

Korean American man and said, “We might have to get this. This sounds good.” The happiness that not only was I able to get my book into the hands on the reader, but her saying that it was nice to see a book that showed couples that were in relationships like hers was extra special.



My thoughts to a reader who is thinking of reading a book featuring characters that are from a different place, pick it up and read it. You can get a story that is fantastic and get a dose of another culture. A win-win if you ask me. ♥

Kay is an award winning author who writes sassy, sexy and sweet contemporary and interracial romance. She is from arguably the greatest city in the world. (New York). She is a sarcastic sweetheart who prefers snuggling at home with a good book. Kay is a mom of 3 cubs and a wife. Kay indulges in strawberry cheesecake, horror movies, Harry Potter, The Walking Dead, wrestling and of course a happily ever after. She is also the creator of Bookish Brown Girls, a platform dedicated to promoting books written by women of color.

THE JOYS AND TRAVAILS OF WRITING IN MULTIPLE GENRES BY FALGUNI KOTHARI



I became a writer quite by accident. Before it could even sink in that I had written a full (and pretty readable) manuscript that I was holding in my hands, much less acquire enough industry knowledge to inform my decisions about the career trajectory of a writer, I was a published author. My first two books are romances and are traditionally published in India. My third book, the first in a fantasy series, is also traditionally published in India, though it is self-published everywhere else. And my new release, *MY LAST LOVE STORY*, is a romantic women’s fiction novel which was very briefly self-published but was then picked up by Graydon House (Harlequin) to published across the world. To say my publishing journey has been a tad topsy-turvy is putting it mildly.

Now, you may wonder why I’d genre hop with almost every book, when, as a rule, the industry advocates and encourages authors to stick to one genre where they can build their audience and careers. And only then—perhaps, if they’re brilliant—tolerate them branching out into other genres. The simple truth is that it never occurred to me that I was genre hopping. All my stories are about love, so all of them must be love stories or romances, right? Wrong.

Yup, I didn’t know any better. I hadn’t learned enough about the industry and the marketing and publicity aspects of it, and I had no clue, no business plan. Even when I learned about categories and

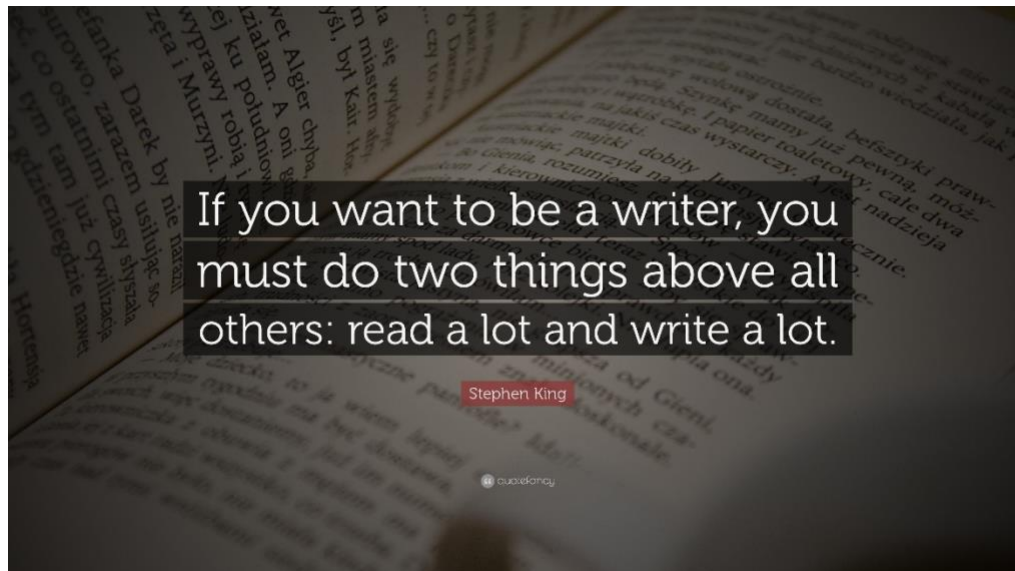
genres, I was under the impression that because I was an eclectic reader, as a writer I could be the same. I read anything that appeals to me. I love a thriller as much as a romance as much as a contemporary novel or historical fiction. I equally enjoy an epic family saga or an epic fantasy tale, and sometimes—rarely—a memoir. I also love historical and cultural non-fiction. When I began writing, I believed I could write what I wanted, when I wanted. I still do. I write the story first and worry about—or let someone else worry about—the genre later. It’s how my stories come to me. I get an idea and I have to write them down. I imagine a character in her setting and I have to write her down. And while the end results have caused some confusion with would-be agents who weren’t sure how to sell books that didn’t fit neatly into a strict genre, each book has, in the end, managed to find its right path into the world—some with an agent, some without.

Perhaps my writing adventure is still a fairly new and my brain wants to try everything before it can settle down in one genre. Or perhaps I’ve been right all along about writing love stories, but because of their themes or their settings or their character’s arc, they are categorized differently.

With *MY LAST LOVE STORY* and *THE OBJECT OF YOUR AFFECTIONS* (Feb 2019), I’ve changed direction again into women’s fiction. But no matter the genre, my stories will always have a romantic thread running through them. ♥

**This article first appeared in weheartwriting.com

Falguni Kothari is the author of unconventional love stories and kick-ass fantasy tales. Her novels, most recently MY LAST LOVE STORY, are all flavored by her South Asian heritage and expat experiences, and delve into themes of marriage, love, friendship, family and parenthood. Her books have been reviewed and praised in a number of publications, including the New York Times Book Review which said, “Kothari poses a fresh conceptual question about marriage and love.” She is also an award-winning Indian Classical, Latin and Ballroom dancer, and currently spikes her endorphin levels with Zumba. A Mumbaiite in New York, these days she can be found online at FalguniKothari.com and on various social media. She is @AuthorFalguni on Instagram and Twitter, and @FalguniKothariAuthor on Facebook. Get latest updates from her at bit.ly/FKMailingList



CONFERENCE REVIEW: CHECKING OUT BOUCHERCON
BY BARBARA BENT



I'd heard a lot about Bouchercon, the World Mystery Conference, so when a writer friend asked me to join her there, I agreed. Of course, I registered too late to get into the Vinoy, the conference hotel in St. Petersburg, Florida, so I chose Hyatt Place which seemed to be the closest overflow hotel.

Why would I go to a mystery conference? Because all stories are a mystery really. You want to know what happens.

On September 24, I got up at 4:00 AM to get a car to Newark and my flight to St. Petersburg. All went well. My room was ready early. This thing seemed like it would be a breeze. After a nap, I connected by phone with my friends from the Southwest Florida RWA who were staying at the conference hotel and headed over there. Close by, translated into almost a mile. In my book, not that close. However, downtown St. Petersburg, a peninsula between the Gulf of Mexico and Tampa Bay, is a beautiful city with lots of sidewalk restaurants, and a lovely museum on a park lined with stately Banyan trees which provided welcome shade in the 90+ sunshine.

At registration, I ran into Marlene Stringer, who was previously a member of RWANYC. She is now an agent. The Vinoy turned out to be a charming old hotel that has rooms and areas connected by long winding hallways. The mystery was finding the meeting rooms or any of the venues. The hotel did have a lot of their staff stationed in the hallways to offer directions to people rushing to panels.

Because this is a fan-based conference, the panels were more about authors and mysteries in general. This was not a place to learn the craft, but if you're a fan of mysteries you could find such luminaries as Lee Child, Karin Slaughter, Lisa Unger, Ian Rankin and others wondering around among the 1600 attendees. Lisa Scottoline gave an amusing and interesting luncheon speech.

The whole atmosphere, while full of activities, was loosely structured. And because of the number of affordable restaurants nearby, we could always get a find a place to eat I got some good information on self-publishing and marketing, but that was mainly from conversations in the hallway. I ran into Elizabeth Terri Mahon in the bookstore. I believe she was a former president of RWANYC.

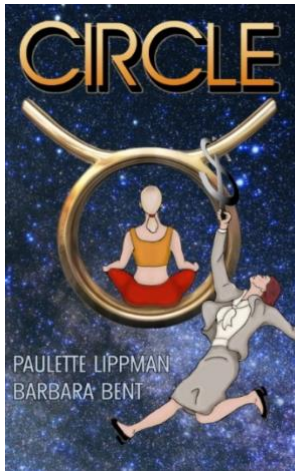
My most memorable experience occurred, though, on the last day of the conference. As I was standing on the sidewalk about to call for an Uber to go to the airport another woman was calling for an Uber to take her to the airport. I asked if I could ride along if I paid half. Sure, she said, Hop in. So, I hopped into the back seat of an Uber driven by a non-English speaking driver and began my conversation.

Me: Hi, I'm Barbara

She said: Carla

Me: Hi, Carla. Is this your first Bouchercon?

Carla: Yes



Me: Interesting, wasn't it?

Carla: Yes

Me: Are you published?

Carla: Yes

Me: Who do you write for?

Carla: Mira

Me: Some of the panels didn't seem that interesting.

Carla: Well, you don't learn anything from panels

Me: At Sleuthfest, they have a learning day on Thursday. I learn a lot. So,

Carla, what's your last name?

Carla: Neggers

Me: Gulp

Carla Neggers is a New York Times and USA Today best-selling author with thousands of books in print.

Me: Oh, my God. I'm so embarrassed,

Carla smiled

Me: Listen, I must give you my card for my self-published book because it will make a great story.

She accepted my card with grace and gave me hers.

For the rest of the ride we discussed writing like two professionals.

It was a singular moment for me. Probably not for her. ♥

Barbara Bent is a charter member of RWA/NYC. She has been published in hardcover and in numerous publications including Star magazine and True Confessions. Her new book CIRCLE, with co-author Paulette Liippman is available on Amazon.

CHAPTER CRITIQUE GROUP BY KATE DUNN & CANDANCE LUCAS



The RWA-NYC Chapter critique group meets monthly. This is a place for members to share works in progress, receive constructive and encouraging feedback, and read the work of their fellow writers to offer them the same. All meetings take place Monday nights from 6-8pm (approximately) on the second floor of Smilers on the northwest corner of 54th and Madison. The dates for our upcoming meetings are:

October 15

December 17

February 25

April 29

November 19

January 28

March 25

Please send copies of your submission of up to 20 pages to Kate and Candace approximately two weeks prior to the meeting date and we will distribute to the other people who plan to attend that night. If you have nothing to submit, but would like to read and be part of the critique process, you are welcome to join us as well. If you have any questions about the group, please email either one of us off the loop and we'd be happy to share more. Happy writing! ♥

Kate Dunn, kdunn707nyc@gmail.com & Candace Lucas, cklukas1949@gmail.com

PLAN WITH ANNA: TIPS TO COMBAT WRITERS BLOCK**BY ANNA B**



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One of the most frustrating parts of the writing process is writers block.

For me, it can build on itself like when I'm trying to fall asleep at night and can't—as soon as I get frustrated, it becomes a losing battle. The more frustrated I become, the more alert I become. And before I know it, I'm wide awake. The frustration doesn't serve me in either scenario, writers block or trying to get to sleep. It just sets me back. So how the hell do you get rid of that frustration if it's not serving you?

You don't. Or at least I don't.

The more I try to get rid of frustration, the more it builds, and before I know it, I feel worse than I do after trying to put together Ikea furniture. For me, the key to combating writers block is to start with baby steps.

I'll go back to my outline, and if that doesn't work—or for you pantsters out there—I'll aim to write a sentence a day. One measly sentence. I try to maintain that for a few days and then up it to two sentences; then a paragraph; a page; 2,000k words.

Although each project is different—for some, I'll write by scene which can vary to be more or less than 2k words. And for others, I give myself a word count. Regardless, my most successful way to combat writers block has been to approach it as patiently as possible. ♥

Anna B is a proud member of the RWA-NYC chapter. She's currently working on a contemporary romance.



FREE PUBLICITY!



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF US! 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. ♥

**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.♥