

# KEYNOTES



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*The newsletter of the Romance Writers of America / New York City Chapter #6 JANUARY 2019*

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**NEXT MEETING: SATURDAY, JANUARY 5**

**LOCATION: TRS, 40 EXCHANGE PLACE, 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR, 12-4PM**

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Welcome to our new Board of Directors. We thank them for the year ahead. See their bios on page 4.

**President – LaQuette**

**VP of Communication – Harper Miller**

**VP of Programs – Adriana Herrera**

**Treasurer – Alexis Daria**

**Secretary – Kay Blake**

**Board Liaisons – JN Welsh and Maria Cox**

**PRO and PAN Liaisons – TBD**

## **TOPIC: STANDING OUT IN THE SLUSH PILE**



The ins and outs of running a PR business with Kristin Dwyer. Kristin will be chatting with us about what she does, her client list, the difference between an in house and outside publicist, when an author might want to hire a publicist, along with how she keeps things fresh for authors with each release.

With over a decade of publicity experience, Kristin got her start at the Penguin Group's Gotham Books and Dutton imprints in 2005. In 2007 she joined Gallery Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, and handled a wide range of titles from celebrity memoirs to women's fiction to romance. Her many high profile projects included titles by Christina Lauren, Michael Ian Black, Joe Manganiello, Samantha Bee, Lindsey Stirling, Mary Alice Monroe and more. She founded LEO PR in January 2017 and her clients include *New York Times* bestselling authors Victoria "V.E." Schwab, Christina Lauren, Jennifer L. Armentrout, Sarah MacLean and Anna Todd.




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**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

LaQuette, Maria Cox, Kate Dunn,  
Maria Ferrer, Barbara James, Candace Lucas,  
JN Welsh

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**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](mailto:info@rwanyc.com).

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**FEBRUARY THEME**

**ROMANCING YOUR CHARACTER**  
Please have Your Character complete the questionnaire on page 6.

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

DEADLINE: 15<sup>th</sup> of the month

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**RWA/NYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

President: LaQuette  
Vice President/Programs: Adriana Herrera  
Vice President/Communications: Harper Miller  
Secretary: Kay Blake  
Treasurer: Alexis Daria  
Past President: Kate McMurray

**LIAISONS & COMMITTEES**

Keynotes Editor: Falguni Kothari  
Board Liaisons: JN Welsh and Maria Cox  
Blog/Social Media: Maria Ferrer  
Critique Group: Ursula Renée  
Publicity: Maria Cox, Jean Joachim,  
Michael Molloy  
Website: Ursula Renée  
PAN Liaison: TBD  
PRO Liaison: TBD

**RWA/NYC**, PO Box 3722,  
Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163  
[www.rwanyc.com](http://www.rwanyc.com)  
[info@rwanyc.com](mailto:info@rwanyc.com)  
[rwanycblogginginthebigapple.blogspot.com](http://rwanycblogginginthebigapple.blogspot.com)

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**KEYNOTES DEADLINE**

Send articles to [keynoteseditor@gmail.com](mailto: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

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: READY, SET, GO!****BY LAQUETTE**

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Two thousand and nineteen is here and now is the perfect time for us to sit down, strap in, and get ourselves ready for success. If you're looking for better outcomes in this new year like I am, here are a few tips to help you plan for future success.

First, to move forward, we need to have an accurate account of how we're ending the current year. Did you achieve your stated goals? If not, why? What could you have changed to produce more favorable outcomes? Once you have the answers to those questions, you're ready to progress to the next stage of prepping for the new year.

Second, set your goals. A goal isn't just a stated desire. It's an aim whose outcome is measurable, observable, and has a set time limit. For example, instead of saying, "I want to query agents this year," you'd say, "My goal is to submit a manuscript to thirty agents within the first six months of the year, hoping to secure representation." The first is broad, the second has an aim that can be measured in the quantity of agents to query within the stated six-month time limit.

Third, having a goal is great, but having one won't actually help you achieve it. For that you need an actionable plan. What is an actionable plan? It's basically a series of tasks, that if completed, should lead you closer to accomplishing your goals. The plan may not be perfect, and you should leave room for re-evaluation of the steps along the way. But having an actionable plan provides a starting point. It's a to-do list that acts as a reference to make sure you're staying on task. It can also tell you if your goal is achievable, or if you need to tweak it before getting started.

For instance, if you continue with the above-stated submission goal, you must understand the steps in querying an agent. You need a manuscript, or a well-written proposal that conveys your story idea, its marketability, and at least the first fifty pages of the manuscript. If you don't have at least that much created, then submitting to as many agents within the allotted first half of the year might be difficult. In this instance, you'd have to re-evaluate your goal.

Last, and in my opinion, one of the most important steps to setting yourself up for success, is that you must make yourself accountable. Tell someone in your circle what your goals are. Sometimes saying a thing publicly is motivation enough to make you work toward completing it. If that doesn't work, find an accountability partner in your writer groups, someone who will check in with you periodically and remind you to drop the excuses and get to work. You could also set up accountability checks into your goal timeline where you track your progress and reassess either your goal, or the plan you have to accomplish your goal in stipulated intervals.



Preparation is part of success. When you sit down and analyze what you're doing, and why you're doing it, creating a plan to help you achieve your goals will give you a clear, measurable way of making progress. And that's really what this goal-setting thing is all about, making the progress we want in the careers we love. Happy New Year! ♥

*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 LCS Literary Agency.*

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**NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS -- BIOS**

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**New 2019 RWA/NYC Board: Alexis, Kay, Adrianna, Harper and LaQuette**

**President:** This is LaQuette's second term as President. She is also 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.

**Vice President of Communications:** Harper Miller is a thirty-something native New Yorker. She's traveled the world and lived in a variety of places but always finds her way back to the Big Apple. A lackluster love life leaves time to explore new interests; for Harper, it is writing. *THE SWEETEST TABOO: AN UNCONVENTIONAL ROMANCE* is her debut novel. Harper may have sworn off online dating, but she loves writing about couples who connect via this medium. Stay up to date with Harper by visiting her website: [www.authorharpermiller.com](http://www.authorharpermiller.com).

**Vice President of Programs:** Adriana Herrera was born and raised in the Caribbean, but for the last 15 years has let her job (and her spouse) take her all over the world. She loves writing stories about people who look and sound like her people, getting unapologetic happy endings. When's she not dreaming up love stories, planning logistically complex vacations with her family or hunting for discount Broadway tickets, she's a social worker in New York City, working with survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

**Secretary:** Kay Blake is an award-winning author of contemporary & interracial romance, and young adult. She's also the creator of Bookish Brown Girls, a platform used to uplift works written by WOC & encourage WOC writers.

**Treasurer:** Alexis Daria is a romance writer, artist, and native New Yorker. Her debut, TAKE THE LEAD, was a 2017 Golden Heart® finalist and a 2018 RITA winner. She has a BFA in Computer Arts, but her most fulfilling job was as a group facilitator for a women's empowerment community, where she coached other women in following their creative dreams. On Sunday evenings, Alexis co-hosts #RWchat, a weekly Twitter chat for romance writers. She was Vice President of Programs for RWA/NYC chapter, and will now serve as Chapter Treasurer. She loves social media, and you can find her live-tweeting her favorite TV shows at @alexisdaria, or talking about writing and books on her blog at alexisdaria.com. ♥



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**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

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**Remember to renew your Chapter Membership.  
The sooner the better.♥**

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**MEMBER NEWS**

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**CONGRATULATIONS to Kate Dunn, who was named 2018 Member of the Year!**

**Jean Joachim** finished a new, very emotional story entitled **RENOVATING THE BILLIONAIRE**.

**Falguni Kothari** has a worldwide re-release of her book, **IT'S YOUR MOVE, WORDFREAK!** It's about an online scrabble game that becomes all too real when the players go on a real blind date.

**Kate McMurray** sold a 3-book deal about athletes to Dreamspinner Press due out the Spring 2020 in time for the Summer Olympics.

**Joanna Shupe, Megan Frampton, Falguni Kothari, K.M. Jackson, Alexis Daria, and Maria Vale** talked about Sex Positivity in Romance in December at The Strand. See photo.♥





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**CHAPTER CRITIQUE GROUP  
BY KATE DUNN & CANDANCE LUCAS**

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The next critique group will take place on Monday, January 28, second floor of Smiler's on 54th and Madison. Fellowship and food time: 5:30-6. Critiques to start promptly at 6pm.

In order to allow participants sufficient reading time, please send submissions to me and Candace by **Monday January 14** so that we can distribute to other participants. Submissions of up to 20 pages (approx.) should be double spaced, paginated, include your name on first page, and sent in a file that includes your name and the month (for example CritiqueGroupKateJanuary2019). As more people are participating, this will help us keep track of submissions more easily.

As always, we welcome participants willing to read submissions and offer feedback, even if you don't have anything to submit. Thinking critically about other people's work is a great way to learn how to improve your own. Just let me know, so I can be sure to send you the manuscripts.

If you have any questions about the critique group, please feel free reach out to me and Candace off the loop. Happy writing! ♥

Kate Dunn, [kdunn707nyc@gmail.com](mailto:kdunn707nyc@gmail.com) & Candace Lucas, [cklukas1949@gmail.com](mailto:cklukas1949@gmail.com)

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**FOR FEBRUARY THEME-- ROMANCING YOUR CHARACTER**

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Answer the following questions from Your Character's Point of View. Please send Your Answers to Keynotes Editor at [keynoteseditor@gmail.com](mailto:keynoteseditor@gmail.com) by January 15.

**TOP 10 THINGS ABOUT YOUR CHARACTER**

1. First impressions count so what are you wearing? What do you look like?
2. What do you do for a living? Do you like it?
3. Facebook, Twitter or Instagram and why?
4. Tell us your story.
5. Do you like to read? What are you reading?
6. Describe your love interest.
7. Just between us, what do you like best about him or her?
8. Do you prefer the bedroom door open or closed?
9. What TV shows best describe your relationship with your partner—Scandal or Game of Thrones?
10. If your story is made into a movie, who'd be cast as the leads?
11. Tell us about your author.

PHOTO ALBUM: CHAPTER HOLIDAY CELEBRATION



MEMBER OF THE YEAR – KATE DUNN

CHAPTER HOLIDAY CELEBRATION CONTINUES

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CHAPTER HOLIDAY CELEBRATION CONTINUES



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**MONTHLY THEME: SETTING GOALS FOR THE NEW YEAR**

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**BURIED TREASURE  
BY JN WELSH**

One of the things I look forward to every year with our RWANYC chapter is the time capsule. It's like retrieving a buried treasure. I think that somehow what we choose to accomplish each year gets hardwired somewhere in our subconscious and we make strides toward those goals throughout the year. I can't wait to see what I put down for 2018 and if I achieved what I set out to do. Did I meet all my goals? Some of them? None of them? If not why? What happened? Did I forget? Was the intention behind the goal not as powerful as the others? Oh the suspense! We'll see at the January 2019 meeting.

Which brings me to 2019 goals but first, a brief reflection. Once upon a time in late 2017, I was blessed to find both a publisher and my agent. Those events led to the release of my first traditionally published book in 2018, *IN TUNE*, along with a few indie releases as well. An added bonus was the promise of more books for 2019 with my publisher who has decided to invest in me as writer! Yay! Claps with a little dance.

I have an aggressive schedule on the calendar for 2019. At last count three (3) projects were on the list. It will take planning for someone who is technically a "pantser." But writing isn't my only goal. I continue to want to hone the writer's life I desire. The one I've dreamed of. To not only hit both my creative goals but my financial goals as well. To connect with readers and writers more, and to be even more exposed (my theme word for 2018).

I'm excited to do 2019's time capsule. I have a short but powerful list of goals I want to write down this time around. Goals I will be actively working toward—because we all know that just writing them down won't do anyone any good. I invite you all do the same. Before 2019 arrives, take a little time to think about your goals for the year, not matter how big or small, to help you make the next year your best one yet. ♥

*JN Welsh is the past Chapter Secretary for RWA/NYC. She just signed a two-book contract with Carina Press for new interracial/multicultural contemporary romances.*



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## SETTING SMART GOALS BY MARIA FERRER

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It's a New Year and it's time to set New Goals, and this graphic says it all -- Set Smart Goals.

Specific  
Measurable  
Attainable  
Relevant  
Time-Bound

Here are some tips to help you Set Your Smart Goals and better yet, Achieve Them.

- **Write down your Top Goals for 2019.** It can be one goal, three, five. I don't suggest more than five, but that is a personal choice. However, do consider that a list of 50 Goals will be daunting after a while.
- **Take each Goal and break it down into steps.** This breakdown will really help.
- **Set up a calendar with time markers, review dates and deadlines.** Make sure to check your progress monthly and quarterly. You want to make sure to stay on target.
- **If you get stuck or scared or overwhelmed, take a step back.** Let that goal simmer and come back to it.
- **Celebrate every time a Goal is met.** Chocolate and/or wine work best.

Good luck to all. Happy Writing and Happy New Year! ♥

*Maria Ferrer prefers To Do Lists as she loves to scratch out every achievement off her list.*

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**WELCOME TO MY WRITING DEN!****BY MARIA COX**

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**LIFE AFTER NANOWRIMO**

Recently, I had a conversation with several writers who were participating in NaNoWriMo and the common thread was “I have so much going on I don’t know if I’ll be able to finish” which happens to be the most common reason why so many writers shy away from participating in the event, yours truly included.

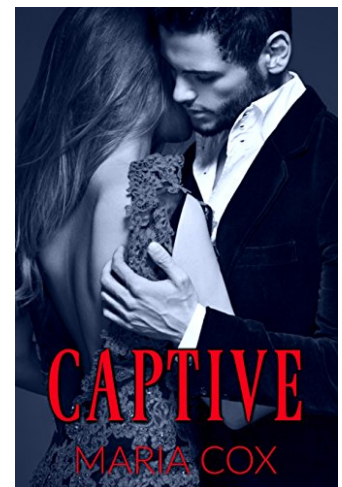
With personal responsibilities and a new project at my day job the prospect of writing 50K was anxiety-inducing. However, my Accountability Partner put NaNo in perspective: winning meant I’d write the novel I would submit to Avon. See, in October – at the NJ Romance Conference – I pitched my book and was asked for a full manuscript. So, November proved to be the perfect time for me to finish my book.

As I embarked on my NaNo journey, I wrote for a solid fifteen days in early November, but then my writing slowed to a crawl. Pursuant to the Thanksgiving holiday when I didn’t write for two full days, I struggled to meet my daily quota. However, I reached 50K words on 11/30 with one hour to spare!

The interesting fact about life after NaNo is that after the intensity of November’s writing, December has been the complete opposite, I haven’t written much, I haven’t even opened my manuscript. I am not beating myself over this, though; I have decided to dedicate December to reading and doing something I rarely do: watch movies. I’m told watching movies is a good way to replenish the creative well.

Happy New Year, much prosperity to all! ♥

*Maria Cox is the 2nd Place winner of the 2017 MANA (MarketingNewAuthors.com) Blog Short Story Series Contest. Maria is also a PRO member of Romance Writers of America and the Past Treasurer of RWA/NYC. Maria served two terms as President of the Phoenix Writers Club. Maria has been writing stories since she was a young girl. She picked up her first romance novel when she was just eleven years old and has loved the genre ever since. Maria writes sensual romance, stories that showcase strong, sassy, and sexy characters. When not writing fiction, Maria works as a technical writer. She lives in Queens, New York. Please visit her site [www.mariacox.net](http://www.mariacox.net) and/or follow her on [Twitter](#).*



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**TRAVELING LIGHT: A WRITER'S LIFE****BY BARBARA JAMES**

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I remember years ago having a fun chat with one of my pals about imagining traveling the world, but we could each carry only five things on us, just enough to fit into our pockets and with no luggage.

We came up with these five items: keys to whatever house we were each living in--or at least a storage compartment where we kept our stuff. In addition, we would need a passport, a credit card, a cash card, and a driver's license. We figured that we could use our passports, credit cards and drivers' licenses to go wherever we wanted to go and buy whatever we needed when we arrived. Whatever we didn't want to carry, according to our no-luggage rule, could be sent back home by mail.

One month, two months, three months, who knows how long we would be gone.

I returned to this thought experiment in more recent days, and technology makes all the difference. If I were to imagine this today, I'd need not only those five things, but my technology! I would need a cell phone, some type of small notebook computer and chargers for each. One important new item would be a special travel jacket. Yes, folks I am so nerdy that I have thought about this.

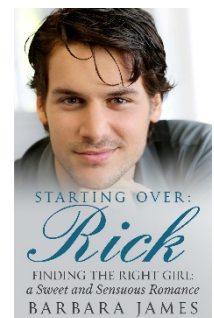
Perhaps one that National Geographic photojournalists use, with enough pockets to carry all their stuff on them.

But on a more practical level, I recalled this recently when I was away at a church conference last month. We were all checking out on the last day, there was a service taking place, and I was a participant. It was taking place outdoors, but I couldn't carry my coat, since I was going to be wearing my vestments. I checked my luggage with the hotel staff, but what about the most important things I didn't want to misplace? I was thankful for denims with deep pockets for my phone, wallet, keys, pen and note paper. I wore a wool hat, a hooded sweatshirt on top of my clerical shirt, a scarf on top of that, and finally, an LL Bean fleece jacket zipped up over everything. I only needed to be sure my clerical collar was peeking through.

All those years ago, I didn't imagine what I would be doing as we traveled the world. Was I merely going to be a tourist? I think so. But if I had to talk to my younger self, I might have told her about becoming a travel writer. Or even a romance writer doing research on the ground. Historical novels, perhaps?

Alas, I have always been too practical to imagine the fanciful existence of traveling the world with only the clothes on my back. I'm firmly grounded in writing contemporaries, where my research is limited to the internet, and that is fine with me. ♥

*Barbara James is the pen name of an Episcopal clergywoman who writes sweet and inspirational romance novels: [www.barbarajames.net](http://www.barbarajames.net).*



**FREE PUBLICITY!**

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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](mailto:keynoteseditor@gmail.com). Articles will also be published on

the Chapter Blog for DOUBLE the promotion!

**Deadline: the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month. ♥**

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**ABOUT PAN  
(PUBLISHED AUTHOR NETWORK)**

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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.♥

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**About PRO**

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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.♥