

KEYNOTES



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

NEXT MEETING: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

LOCATION: TRS, 40 EXCHANGE PLACE, 3RD FLOOR, 12-4PM

TOPIC: THE EDITOR – AGENT RELATIONSHIP

**SPEAKERS: Kerri Buckley, Senior Editor for Carina Press &
Linda Camacho, Agent at Gallt & Zacher Literary Agency**

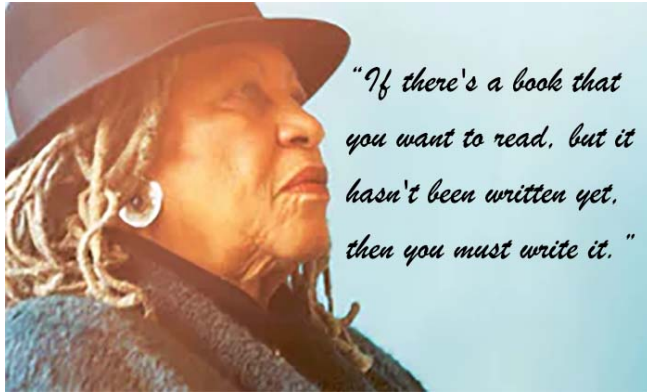
Kerri and Linda will give us a “behind-the-scenes” look at editor and agent relationships, and how they work together for the benefit of the author. Also, discussed will be submissions, querying, etc.



SEPTEMBER CHAPTER CALENDAR

- Sept 1 – RWA/NYC Contest Deadline
- Sept 7 – Chapter Meeting
- Sept 7 – Chapter Elections Open
- Sept 15 – Chapter Elections Close
- Sept 16 – Chapter Critique Group (see page 6)
- Sept 17 – Golden Apple Awards Reception (see page 7)
- Sept 22 – Brooklyn Book Festival (see page 7)
- Sept 31 – Chapter Elections - Nominations Deadline (see page 6)





Toni Morrison

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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

LaQuette, Kay Blake, Maria Cox, Kate Dunn, Katie Dunneback, Adriana Herrera, Barbara James, Michael Molloy, Andrea Obaez, Ursula Renée, Autumn Sand, 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.

OCTOBER THEME

**WRITING BEYOND THE
NATURAL REALM:
Adding SciFi, Fantasy, Paranormal & Magical
Elements to Your Romance.**

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

DEADLINE: 15th of the month

RWA/NYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: LaQuette
 Vice President/Programs: Adriana Herrera
 Vice President/Communications: Harper Miller
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 Publicity: Maria Cox, Jean Joachim, Michael Molloy
 Website: Ursula Renée
 PAN Liaison: Stacey Agdern
 PRO Liaison: Anna Bierhaus

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 Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163
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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. Thanks.

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:
BY LAQUETTE**



It's been more than a month since the brilliant spectacle of RWA19, and I am still in awe of everything I witnessed. I'm rarely rendered speechless. However, I must admit in all this time it's still hard for me to coherently explain all that I saw. The best I can offer you as an explanation is this: RWA19 was magic.

First, RWANYC showed up and showed out. Our presence was unmistakable at that conference. We volunteered, we taught workshops; we hosted a well-attended industry party where we enlarged our network connections, and we held court in the eighth-floor lobby. Everywhere you turned, RWANYC was there showing romance publishing we are the jewel of this organization.

As your president, I couldn't be prouder. We have raised the bar for chapter participation at the national conference, and that's only because our membership is phenomenal. Always standing at the ready to support our chapter and our industry however you can, you are the benchmark for how chapters should work.

If RWANYC's participation in RWA2019 was an unbelievable gift, then the RITA awards were the bright red bow sitting atop it. Speaking at the RITAs as your president will forever be one of the most terrifying yet satisfying moments of my career. Yes, it was scary as hell. Not just because I had no idea how the organization and the industry would react to my speech, but also because I was representing this chapter, and in all that I do, I always hope to serve you well.

You might not think so, but I can tell you that during this time, when RWA seeks to tear down some problematic perspectives of yesterday, we have become a beacon to light the way to the future, a model by which all other chapters can be measured. The night of the RITAs, a marvelous light shone on our chapter, revealing how wonderful and progressive we are. The audience noticed the only way I could speak with such passion as a president was if my chapter was already the change I wanted to see in the national organization.

We are the change needed for RWA to thrive. That was never clearer than when I stood at that podium. Standing there, I felt a shift in the room as I spoke, an opening of hearts and minds that maybe for the first time realized how beautiful change could be when they looked at RWANYC.

No, we didn't ask for this responsibility of modeling diversity, equity, and inclusion. But nonetheless, it has become our duty by the very nature of who we are: a progressive mix of professionals who understands and supports the idea that everyone deserves their happily ever after, everyone deserves positive representation on the page, and everyone deserves the opportunity to succeed in this genre. RWANYC has exceeded my expectations by answering that call with exquisite grace and quiet strength, and I will remain eternally grateful for finding a home in this amazing professional family.

As always, thank you for being so fiercely loyal. Thank you for allowing me to be your president.

Keep it sexy! 💋

LaQuette

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. Visit her at: LaQuette.com and LaQuette@LaQuette.com.♥

MEMBER NEWS



NISHA

&

SUSAN



Nisha Sharma on winning the RITA for Young Adult Romance for MY SO-CALLED BOLLYWOOD LIFE.

Susan Lee for winning the Golden Heart for Young Adult Romance for DRAGGED!



We are so proud!

MEMBER ON THE SHELF



Anna DePalo has a September book release, POWER PLAY, from Harlequin Desire. It's book 3 in her Serengetti Brothers series, and she loves it sexy cover.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS !



Beth Kern
C.J. Pastore
Megan Steer
Kelly Sessoms

CHAPTER MINUTES: AUGUST 3
BY SECRETARY KAY BLAKE

LaQuette, President called the meeting to order at 12:26 p.m.

Harper Miller (VP, Communications) approved July's minutes.

Treasurer's Report (Alexis Daria): There is \$5,525.29 in PayPal. There is also about \$1,000 in the bank account.

Secretary Report (Kay Blake): After going through the members who lapsed and including new members after RWA Nationals, we are at currently 94 members as of right now.

Program Report (Adrian Herrera, VP): **Golden Apples- Tuesday, September 17, at Blooms Tavern 208 E 58th St, New York, 10022, from 6 pm to 9pm.** Two-hour open bar and appetizers. Invites will be sent next week.

Contest Report (Harper Miller, VP): Kathryn Hayes When Sparks Fly Contest –Harper plans to do final push for the contest in the next two weeks. Members encouraged to use graphics and pre written messages to promote the contest via social media. Contest ends on September 1st.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Michael Molloy (Publicity) - Brooklyn Book festival 10 am - 12 noon and 4 pm - 6 pm time slots. The cost is just \$40.00 where you can sell you books, even back list material, and above all promote yourself. It takes place on Sunday, September 22, 2019 from 10 am to 6 pm.

Andrea Obacz (Social Media) – Any publishing news, events, and other book/writing related info you want shared please send to Andrea or tag the RWA NYC twitter page.

PAN/PRO Liaisons - Stacey Agdern: Any questions ask Stacy.

Keynotes Newsletter - Contact Falguni and Maria Ferrer with articles. Articles due by the 15th of the month.

CELEBRATE
Hispanic Heritage Month



September 15- October 15

Programs & Speakers for the rest of 2019:

September 7- Kerri Buckley and Linda Camacho- The Editor/Agent Relationship

October 5 - Rhonda Merwarth, Freelance Editor- Writing The Rom-Com

November 2 - Nisha Sharma, 2019 YA RITA Winner, Author- How to Crossover Genres

December 7 - Holiday Brunch

Round Robin begins - Meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Speaker: Latoya C. Smith. Topic: Finding the Right Literary Partner.♥

CHAPTER ELECTIONS!

We want YOU to run for Chapter Office.

Give back to the chapter by running for office.

ALL POSITIONS OPEN! All Members in good standing are eligible to run for office, as long as they meet the necessary qualifications. If you are interested in running for President, Vice President (2 spots), Secretary or Treasurer, please email President LaQuette directly at President@rwanyc.com. Please note the current holders of the Vice President of Programming and Treasurer positions will be stepping down at the end of their terms in December. These positions are open and need to be filled. Nominations will be accepted until September 31. Voting will occur in October.♥



**CRITIQUE GROUP INFORMATION
BY KATE DUNN**

The next RWA-NYC Chapter critique group will take place on Monday, August 12, from 6-8pm (come at 5:30 for eating/ chatting; critiques start promptly at 6pm). We will be meeting at Cafe Isadora (www.cafeisadoras.com) 16 East 52nd between Fifth and Madison, on the second floor. There are plenty of good food options there.

This group is open to all chapter members. We welcome participants willing to read submissions and offer feedback, even if you don't have anything to submit that month. Thinking critically about other people's work is a great way to learn how to improve your own.

If you would like to participate, let us know and we will send you an invitation to the August Google Group. Submissions of approximately 20 pages are due by August 5. If you have any questions, please email either one of us and we will be happy to chat with you. Dates for the rest of the year appear below. Happy writing! ♥

For more info, write to Kate (kdunn707nyc@gmail.com) and Candace (cklucas1949@gmail.com).

Future dates: September 16 October 21 November 18 December 16

GOLDEN APPLE AWARDS RECEPTION
BY VICE PRESIDENT ADRIANA HERRERA



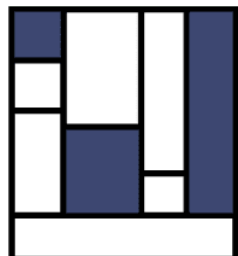
The Golden Apple Awards Reception will take place on **Tuesday, September 17**, from 6:00-9:00pm at Bloom's Tavern (208 E. 58 St). The event is \$40pp, and includes bar and appetizers. Pay online on our website: www.rwanyc.com.

Remember to practice your elevator-pitch and bring your business cards. And, do tag us on social media: #GAA19 #GoldenApples19 #RWANYC.

The GAA Honorees are:

Lifetime Achievement: **Brenda Jackson**
Author of the Year: **Alyssa Cole**
Agent of the Year: **Rachel Brooks**, Bookends Agency
Editor of the Year: **Cat Clyne**, Sourcebooks
Publisher of the Year: **Sourcebooks**
Bookstore of the Year: **WORD Bookstore**, NYC♥

BROOKLYN BOOK FESTIVAL
BY CHAIRMAN MICHAEL MOLLOY



BROOKLYN
BOOK FESTIVAL

JOIN US! RWA/NYC has a booth – **BOOTH 341** -- at the annual Brooklyn Book Festival on **Sunday, September 22nd**, from 10 am until 6 pm, rain or shine. The BBF will be held on the grounds of Borough Hall and the Kings County State Supreme Courthouse in Downtown Brooklyn (Montague and Court Streets).

Eight Members will be autographing and selling their books during the day. Plus, we'll have numerous volunteers to support them and help guide Festival goers to the booth.

We encourage everyone to be part of the chapter's role at the BBF. Even if you choose to be a spectator, cheer our authors and volunteers on! And, let's not forget the plethora of speakers on different topics and other exhibitors. There is something for everyone at the Brooklyn Book Festival. See you there!♥

WRITER SELF-CARE**BY ANDREA OBAEZ**



As a former news writer, I've often found myself doubting whether I have the chops to write a full-length novel. I expected my first draft to be perfect, and too many times I started writing only to overwhelm myself with anxiety.

This has all changed once I joined the Romance Writers of America, and particularly, the NYC chapter. Through the RWA NYC, I've had the opportunity and privilege to network with the most fantastically diverse, talented, intelligent and encouraging group of writers. Every time we meet, I learn something new. And every time we meet, I am encouraged by my peers to write the stories only I can tell.

But that's not all. The folks at RWA NYC have not only provided me with support and encouragement, but with actionable steps, literature on industry standards, and access to industry professionals who are happy to provide guidance.

Joining the RWA NYC has been the smartest decision I've made in a long time. I have gone from questioning my abilities and hesitating, to being part of an encouraging writing community full of peers that remind me, every day, that writing is a process. Expecting your first draft to be perfect is a sure way to never getting started.

Currently, I am writing my first stand-alone book in romance noir, and have gathered so many tools to have confidence in, and patience with myself as a writer. They are:

Create a community of like minded individuals

If health and fitness require a lifestyle change, so does maintaining a writing lifestyle. For me, it goes back to joining the RWA NYC. This simple step has opened up an entire community of people, events, and opportunities that I would not have been aware of alone, and I always leave feeling invigorated and optimistic about my career as a writer. Most importantly, the RWA NYC is a community of like-minded individuals who relate with my anxieties 100%, and remind me that I am not alone. Find a writing community of your own. You won't regret it.

Write a book I'd like to read

I love romance as much as I love intrigue, high drama, and complex characters. Once I joined the RWA NYC, I thought long and hard about what kind of writer I want to be. I searched my shelves, and found that I most enjoy detective mysteries and thrillers, and decided that romance noir is the perfect genre for me. Look to what you enjoy reading, and you will easily see what you will enjoy writing.



Keep in mind that writing is revision

The first draft will be my baby. A tiny little thing that needs me to help it survive. If I nurture it, feed it, and guide it, it will grow. It's so easy to fall in love with the idea that you'll have a complete manuscript the first time, but this is an unrealistic standard and an easy way to get frustrated even before you begin. I've had to look at the acknowledgements page of each of my favorite books and remind myself that any writer worth their salt has an entire community that had helped make their book possible. I am lucky to have a community that is eager to read my work and give constructive feedback, so that I can one day join my heroes on the shelf.

**Keep track of progress**

Using my handy-dandy planner, I have a log of every word I have added to my first draft. Just seeing the progress on paper is a positive encouragement to get back to the keyboard. As you continue on this writing journey, remember to be proud of your progress. It's a marathon, not a sprint, and that the more you do it, the better writer you will be.♥

Andrea Obaez is a reader, writer, booklover. This New York Latina is working on a romance novel. She's written for Bustle, The New York Diaries and the Noir Diaries. Follow her on Twitter @andreaobaez.

“Self-care is
how you take
your power
back.”

—
L A L A H D E L I A

thegoalchaser.com

MONTHLY THEME

Members weigh in on the Do's and Don'ts of



**LIBRARIANS LOVE YOU
BY KATIE DUNNEBACK**



Many people love libraries, but did you know librarians love you just as much? Our profession is all about connecting people with the information they need. But as a writer, besides buying your books for our collections, how can libraries help you? Oh, I've got ideas!

When you're first starting out as a writer, you may be in need of various kinds of resources. This could include books on writing basics. When I first started writing, I had no clue how to determine where to put chapter breaks. With your library card, you can get access to books like Strunk & White's *ELEMENTS OF STYLE*, Benjamin Dreyer's *DREYER'S ENGLISH*, and Gwen Hayes' *ROMANCING THE BEAT*. If your library doesn't have the desired book available, they can often borrow it for you from another library through a service called interlibrary loan. Depending on your library and their agreements with other libraries, you may need to pay a small fee for this service.

In addition to books, there are tons of fabulous resources that libraries offer. Just the other day on Twitter, a writer asked for "recommendations for research on the African-American community in late 1930s NYC?" As I was doing background research for this article, I was immediately able to



connect her with the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture which is a part of the New York Public Library. Many public libraries, no matter their size, have local history collections and larger libraries will often have other special collections.

Academic libraries will often have special collections for certain topic areas. In addition to special collections, libraries offer databases and digital resources such as historical newspaper archives, language learning programs, government documents, and academic articles.

Beyond books and digital resources, please don't forget the best--and sometimes the most invisible--resource, the librarians themselves. Librarians are not necessarily one size fits all, even in small libraries. Many have specialties. In my case, my specialties are reader's advisory (connecting readers to books they want to read) and collection development. Other librarians specialize in areas of reference which is connecting people with the information they need. These specialties can include business and consumer information, medical, STEM, and genealogy. Librarians can also help you figure out where to get started.

The last area of resources I want to cover is market research. Through both print and digital collections, libraries offer a deep trove of what's being published today. If you're investigating a new-to-you-subgenre or another genre entirely, you can do a deep dive to figure out what types of stories publishers are publishing, what the tropes and reader expectations of the genre/subgenre are, and, through the acknowledgements page, who the author's editor and agent are.

If you ever have questions, feel free to tag me on Twitter at @younglibrarian or email me at younglibrarian@gmail.com.♥

Katie Dunneback has worked in a variety of libraries in her 15+-year career and currently works for a federal library in Washington, DC. When not working on librarian things, she's the president of her local DC RWA chapter and published author of fiction under a pen name

GETTING YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT: SHE SAID WHAT?

BY: URSULA RENÉE



One of the best ways to convey a character's personality is through his own words. His language, dialect, and slang can give readers a clue about his heritage, education, and social standing. It also makes him stand out, enabling the readers to identify when he speaks without the use of dialogue tags.

An author, however, needs to be careful with speech. She does not want to use so much slang, regional dialect or foreign words that a reader would need to refer to a dictionary when reading the novel. She also needs to make certain that words and dialects fit the characters so readers do not become offended (you would not assume everyone from England speaks Cockney therefore all

African-American characters should not speak Ebonics).

Before an author decides a character's speech, she needs to know the character's biography as well as the setting and time period of the novel. A person's culture, age, household, education, and job can



affect how she speaks. It would be out of place for a gangbanger to say, “Would you do me the honor of partaking in a bit of nourishment with me?” when speaking with his homeboys. At the same time, a college educated man in 1945 would most likely not say, “It ain’ gonna doya no good ta tawk wid ‘em” when addressing his boss.

Once you have decided how a character would speak, try to be consistent throughout the novel. You should not switch the speech pattern unless you have a good reason. For example, a Harvard educated African-American man raised in an upper middle class family would not start using street-slang if another African-American walks into the room unless he was undercover.

Also, pay close attention to the time period and setting so you do not have your characters using words not common for that era or location. The use of modern words in an historical can pull a reader out the story. Once jolted out, it may be hard for her to return to a work that has a cowboy on an 1883 cattle drive declaring, “That cat is so square even his name is corny.”

To research various slangs and dialectics try traveling to the area where the story is set and listen to locals. If the trip cannot be made, various websites, including the International Dialects of English Archive (<http://www.dialectsarchive.com/>) and The Speech Accent Archive (<http://accent.gmu.edu/>) can help authors get a sense of how people from various areas sound.

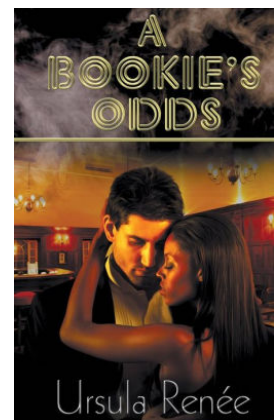
If the novel is an historical, read popular works that were written during that time period to get a sense of how people talked. Try to read a variety of works from various authors to get a board understanding of the language. Also, a search on the Online Etymological Dictionary (<http://www.etymonline.com/>) can help determine if a word is appropriate for a particular time period.

When using slang, an author may want to consult with someone familiar to the lingo. This can include people who speak the language (teenagers or someone who lives in an area where the language is spoken). People who work around those who use the slang (i.e. teachers, police, social workers, etc.) can also be consulted.

Words can have different meanings depending on the region a person is from, who is speaking, and who is being spoken to. Therefore, if an author uses foreign words in a novel she should ask someone who is fluent to verify that the words convey the meaning that was intended.

Dialects, slang and various words can help with character development. However, the improper use can cause readers to roll their eyes and abandon novels that insult their intelligence. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct some research when creating dialogue.♥

Ursula Renée writes historical romances set in the early 1920s. When she is not writing, she enjoys drawing, photography and stone carving. Visit her at www.ursularenee.com.



RWA 2019

ROMANCE WRITERS OF AMERICA ■ JULY 24-27

PHOTO ALBUM

Thanks to Ursula Renè for the photos.





RWA NATIONAL CONFERENCE REVISITED



**MY FIRST TIME
BY AUTUMN SAND**

My name is Autumn Sand, and I attended RWA 2019 Conference as a first-timer. Energy for the overall conference was incredible, it gave you the feeling that you could sell all of the books in the world. I did not pitch, my main goal of attending the conference were the seminars and to get an overall impression of RWA and the backdoor racism. I did find a mentor and what is becoming an incredible friendship.

Here are my main takeaways, some of this may possibly be the jaded New Yorker in me, but here it goes.

- 1) The Seminars. Though I loved how RWA jammed packed our days with several seminar options- believe me, I crammed in as many of the seminar offerings as possible. My problem was the quality of the seminars. Only three out of the fifteen workshops I attended, I felt offered me new insights. Some seminars information overlapped but were packaged with a different name. My suggestions if anyone were to ask, give me quality, not quantity.
- 2) Not everyone is a teacher or public speaker. Though I appreciate the amount of effort that goes into doing a seminar, I felt that not everyone is meant to do it.
- 3) The “Continuing the Conversation around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” talk. I have mixed feelings about this. My problem was, there was a seminar given by Skye Warren from 2pm-5pm with a packed room. The Continuing the Conversation talk was from 4pm-6pm. Part of what I’m about to say genuinely could be that I’m just a tired Black woman at this point. One of the main things that myself and several of the people in the row that I sat with talked about was, this room should have been standing room only. But yet, it was not. There were plenty of empty seats in the place. If I’m to think that RWA was taking inclusion seriously, then I’d expect them to not schedule this talk during the time of one of the most popular seminars the overall conference has to offer. I felt that a few things should have happened 1) An email should’ve been sent out ahead of time informing conference attendees of the guidelines of the “Talk” and for them to have their questions ready. 2) It should not have been scheduled in conflict with other seminars, especially not the most popular one!

I applaud the board members who did attend the meeting and sat through the tough questions, but where were the rest? Or did I miss them? I only saw I believe three or four board members. I



apologize if I got that number wrong. I know the point of the “Talk” was for them to listen to us, but also expected to hear from the Board of what changes are coming next. Even if it were a small change, but still I needed to hear something — not just a repeat of where to find the bylaws.

4) I’m not going to lie after the “Continuing the Conversation around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion,” I had zero interest in attending the RITA’s and all but made up my mind I most likely would not be renewing my membership. But then I had a chance encounter with a fellow attendee who was the first of many significant accomplishments within the African-American community. She talked me into attending the RITA’s with her, and for that, I’m incredibly thankful that I was able to witness the strength and courage of my fellow WOC while sitting next to a woman who has helped pave the way for many.

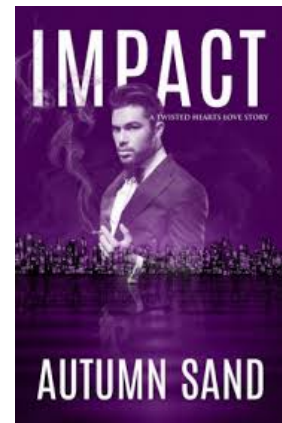
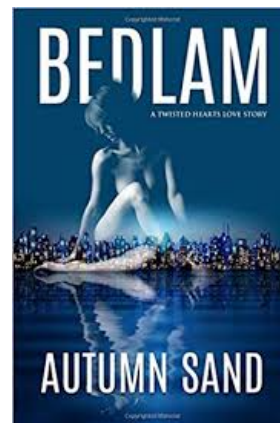
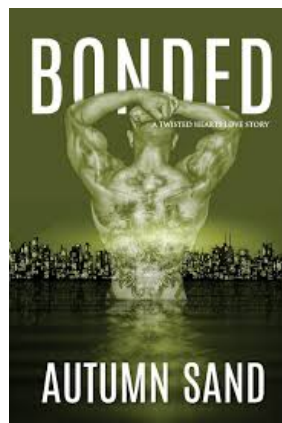
5) My absolute favorite seminars/ workshops were 1) Building Your Street Teams: The Secret to Selling More Books. 2) Giveaways, Newsletters, and Graphics, Oh My! 3) Funnels for Authors.

I know the above may sound cynical, but believe it or not, I had a great time. I do not regret my decision for attending, I made a beautiful connection with my new mentor and found some new opportunities that otherwise would not have presented itself to me had I not gone. Would I attend again? Not likely, I believe I achieved the goals that I set out for. I had the opportunity to speak to several members and gauge their overall feeling of the changes and problematic issues within the organization, that was enlightening. It has also helped me realize that I will be renewing my membership after all so I can lend a voice to the fight for change.

*Side note, I noticed on the app that there was a function to rate each seminar you attended. As much as authors love to receive reviews I would’ve thought this should’ve been constantly mentioned to us after each seminar to please give it a rating. How else would RWA know if we liked it or not and quite honestly I only noticed it Friday evening as my mentor and I were looking at our schedules so we could connect on Saturday. Neither one of us noticed it until then.

Sorry for the lengthy message, I hope it is beneficial in some way. ♥

Autumn Sand is a Dark Contemporary Romance Writer, and author of the Twisted Hearts Series. Follow this native New Yorker on Bookbub: <https://www.bookbub.com/profile/autumn-sand>. ♥





**#RWA19 REFLECTIONS:
MY CHARACTERS CONFRONT ME AT THE RWA CONFERENCE
BY BARBARA JAMES**

Attending the RWA conference in New York City was amazing. I had never attended one before, but since we were the local hosts, I had no excuse not to attend. I met a whole lot of people and learned so much. The CIMRWA mini-conference was just what I needed. Even then, I didn't get to attend all the panels, workshops and mini-conferences that looked interesting. It was overwhelming, so I'm hoping the recordings will be useful. Friday afternoon, I was taking a break sitting in the eighth floor lobby of the Marriott Marquis and reflecting upon the conference, when I heard a voice.

"Ms. James?"

I looked up. A young man was standing nearby my chair. He looked vaguely familiar but didn't have a name tag.

He put down his Starbucks mug and extended his hand. "Hi, it's Austin."

I studied him and noticed that he looked as I imagined, but I was creeped out to see him. *What was he doing there?*

As though he read my mind, he answered. "Well, you created me, but when you began to talk about me, you brought me to life."

I was dumbfounded. "I brought you to life?"

"Yes, you did! All those chats with the ladies who had suggestions on how to make me better, that's how it happened."

"You were at the workshop when we discussed your first chapter?"

"I was." He took a sip of his coffee. "They were right you know. Your ideas about my story being shorter than the other ones? Not a good idea."

"Really?"

"I have a lot of things to say, people to meet, things to do. So my story needs to be longer."

I looked around. "Is Natasha here?"

"No, she said that since this is my story, she didn't have to show up. Maybe she wants to be surprised." He grinned. "She will come around eventually."



Since he talked about the other books, I asked whether he knew the main characters.

"Of course I know them. They are here, just like me, and they want to talk to you."

Suddenly, his phone pinged. He took it out of his pocket and checked for a text.

"They're on their way." He held up his hand. "But not Helena and Leon. They said it's too soon." He brought some chairs closer to where we were sitting.

Ayanna and Todd were the first to appear. They looked well put together, since I worked with them after they had their session with the developmental editor. Bobby and Suzette looked less certain and secure, since I read the editor's report but didn't have a chance to meet with them.

I felt overwhelmed as I reached for my notebook. I was in for some heavy duty note taking.

"Okay guys, I'm listening."♥

Barbara James is a writer of contemporary romance novels full of the sweet and inspirational. An earlier version of this reflection was posted to her blog: www.barbarajames.net.

RWA 2019 - PERSPECTIVES

BY JN WELSH



On July 22 – 26, Romance Writers of America descended on New York. This was my 4th national conference and with all the pre-conference happenings, I didn't know what to expect.

Once I attended our RWA/NYC mixer, I knew it was "on," just by the attendance alone. Everyone seemed to have excitement for the next few days. Once I got my badge and started to sit in the workshops, hear the speakers, and see so many of our chapter members around, I felt exhilarated. At one point it really did feel like we hosted the conference.

Like everyone else, I was busy! I attended all the diversity meetings, the annual meeting, connected with friends of old, made new ones, and had way too many drinks at the various gatherings and the bar. I loved going to the signings and seeing everyone in their glory as well as attending my own signings and seeing familiar faces at my table. What a joy! Shout out to all the photographers!

Then when I sat in an emotional RITA ceremony and saw the many RWA/NYC contributors who had not only written the content, but were speakers, as well, I was really proud on so many levels. History was made and there were tears.



I really must repeat that my most delightful moments were when I saw attendees from our chapter at workshops, excited to pitch, or thrilled about the connections they were making. Everyone looked so happy.

That's what it's all about isn't it? Truly enjoying this journey we've chosen as Romance authors and to find a community that understands your dreams and goals, whatever they are. With that in mind I think this was a very good conference indeed and I look forward to attending future ones!♥

JN Welsh is a native New Yorker. She writes entertaining, often humorous, and provocative tales about strong, career-driven, multicultural heroines of color who are looking for love. Her punchy, flowing dialogue, and mostly big city stories are heartwarming and stick to your ribs. When she's not writing she can be found dancing, wine-ing, rooting for her favorite baseball team, and/or indulging in countless guilty pleasures. Visit her at www.jnwelsh.com.

WELCOME TO MY WRITING DEN!

BY MARIA COX

RWA NATIONAL: MY TOP 10 CONFERENCE MOMENTS

1. Reigniting my love of writing!
2. Witnessing two of our chapter members win Ritas
3. All the great workshops
4. LaQuette's speech at the awards ceremony
5. Running into my former critique partner, a Golden Heart finalist
6. Seeing so many RWA-NYC chapter members present
7. The after party
8. All the free books
9. Making new connections
10. Volunteering



The conference was a fantastic experience, one that can only be appreciated in person.

Happy writing!♥

Maria Cox is an award-winning romance writer. 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 and/or follow her on Twitter.

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Deadline: the 15th of every month. ♥

**WANTED: MEMBERS' SOCIAL LINKS
BY CHAPTER KAY BLAKE**

For new members, and members who have been with RWA NYC, I am sending a call for social media links. If you have any website links, Twitter links, Instagram links, or Facebook links that wasn't given or you just want to update them, please send the links to me at info@rwanyc.com. Thank you. ♥

**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.♥