

KEYNOTES

The newsletter of the Romance Writers of America New York City Chapter #6

SEPTEMBER 2015

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

TRS, 40 Exchange Place, 12 noon

TOPIC: SELF-PUBLISHING 101

Panelists: Elizabeth Cole, Tanya Goodwin, Jean Joachim & Xyla Turner



Elizabeth Cole is a romance author with a penchant for history, which is why she lives in an old house in an old city. She can be found hanging around libraries and archives, or curled in a corner reading, cat on lap. She believes in love at first sight. Then again, she also believes that mac 'n' cheese is a healthy breakfast, so don't trust her judgment on everything. Find about more at elizabethcole.co.

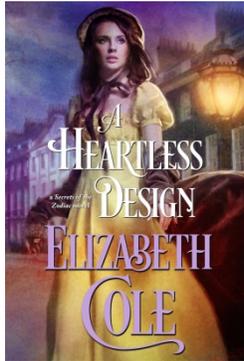
Tanya Goodwin writes romantic suspense with a twist of medicine, medical romance, and mystery. Her experiences as a physician are reflected in her characters and in her stories. Tanya is a graduate of the University Of Miami School Of Medicine and completed her specialty training as an obstetrician and gynecologist in Tampa, Florida. She now resides in New York. Her present life as a traveling doctor allows her to switch from stethoscope to keyboard. Tanya is a member of Romance Writers of America, Mystery Writers of America, and Sisters in Crime. You can visit her at her websites www.tanyagoodwin.com and www.holidayheartbeat.com.

Jean Joachim is a best-selling romance fiction author, with books hitting the Amazon Top 100 list since 2012. She writes mostly contemporary romance, which includes sports romance and romantic suspense. *THE RENOVATED HEART* won Best Novel of the Year from Love Romances Café. *LOVERS & LIARS* was a RomCon finalist in 2013. And *THE MARRIAGE LIST* tied for third place as Best Contemporary Romance from the Gulf Coast RWA. *To Love or Not to Love* tied for second place in the 2014 New England Chapter of Romance Writers of America Reader's Choice contest. She was chosen Author of the Year in 2012 by the New York City chapter of RWA. Jean has 30+ books, novellas and short stories published. Find them here: <http://www.jeanjoachimbooks.com>.

Xyla Turner was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She is an avid reader of romance novels and a sucker for sassy females and dominant males. She is a lifelong learner, Vice-Principal at a

Brooklyn High School and a pretty good Aunt. She writes different genres, but her favorite is romance. She has penned *THE CHASE*, *LOVE UNDER ATTACK*, *BOOKSTORE CHRONICLES*, and *BOMBSHELL*. Xyla has her Bachelor's degree in Education and Masters in Education Administration.♥

AUTHOR OF THE MONTH: ELIZABETH COLE



Elizabeth Cole writes historical romance with smart ladies, real heroes, and characters you don't find anywhere else. She especially loves punchy dialogue and witty repartee. If you ever wondered what a *Buffy* fan might do with a Regency romance, Elizabeth has you covered. Find about more at elizabethcole.co.♥



WORKSHOP: BUSINESS CARDS/ BOOKMARKS/ POSTCARDS WITH KITSY CLARE

What information should authors include and how to get the most out of them.



Kitsy Clare writes contemporary and supernatural romance. Books include her *ART OF LOVE SERIES*, *MODEL POSITION* and *PRIVATE INTERNSHIP*. She loves writing about the sexy intrigue of NYC, and particularly that of the art world. Kitsy knows it well, having shown her paintings here before turning to writing. She also writes YA as Catherine Stine. Novels include her Amazon bestselling and award-winning futuristic thrillers *RUBY'S FIRE*, *FIRESEED ONE* and *DORIANNA*, which won Best Horror Book in the Kindle Hub awards. She teaches creative writing at the School of Visual Arts and in other venues such as The Philadelphia Writers' Conference. Visit her at catherinestine.com for details on her books and upcoming appearances.♥

EVENTS CALENDAR



September 12 – Chapter Meeting
September 17 -- Golden Apple Awards
September 20 -- Brooklyn Book Festival
September 26 – Writing Marathon
September 30 – Nominations for 2016 Board of Directors Due

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2015 CHAPTER CALENDAR

Oct 3 Nov 7 Dec 5

KEYNOTES DEADLINE

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

We welcome all subjects!

**RWA/NYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

President: Ursula Renée
 Vice President/Events: Kate McMurray
 Vice President/Contest: Vanessa Peters
 Secretary: Shirley Kelly
 Treasurer: Tamara Lynch
 Past President: Maria Ferrer

LIAISONS & COMMITTEES

Board Liaison: Lisbeth Eng
 PRO Liaisons: Maria Cox
 PAN Liaison: Falguni Kothari
 Blog/Social Media: Maria Ferrer
 Craft Loop: Isabo Kelly
 Critique Group: Mimi Logsdon
 Keynotes Editor: Briana MacPerry
 Publicity: Jeanine McAdam, Jean Joachim
 Michael Molloy, Maria Cox
 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.

RWA/NYC

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: STAYING STRONG
BY URSULA RENÉE

After endless submissions and rejections, an editor indicates her desire to offer you a contract. You scream...you dance...you celebrate. You're finally going to be a published author; your career can only go forward for that point on.

Unfortunately, while the first contract may open doors for you, it does not guarantee that they will remain open. For every book you would like a publisher to produce, you have to go through the same submission process of sending in the manuscript then waiting weeks to hear back from your editor. And, when they respond, the answer is not always what you wanted to here.

Not every work is guaranteed acceptance. Even if you signed a multi-book contract, the publishing company has a clause that gives them the option to reject any manuscripts that do not fill their needs.

In order to better your chances of getting accepted, remember the rules you followed when submitting your first manuscript. Always submit the required material. If your editor wants a synopsis with the manuscript, do not think this does not pertain to you and only forward the manuscript.

Make sure the manuscript is polished, free of typos and formatted according to the style of the publisher. Remember, just because you have an editor you should not let your work become shoddy.

Once you have signed a contract with a publisher, do not become a diva. Do not insist your writing is the best since Shakespeare. Pay attention to the advice from the editor on ways to improve your skills. And, do not demand that your editor focuses her attention solely on your needs. You are not her only author. She have other careers to help build besides yours.

So, what do you do if you follow all the rules and mind your manners, yet still get a rejection? Most importantly, do not question your ability. You are a good writer. The manuscript was not the right fit for the publisher at that moment.

Do not take to social media and bash the editor and/or the publisher. Word gets around, even if you posts messages or private boards and no one wants to work with someone who is unprofessional.

Do acknowledge that the rejection does hurt. Be nice to yourself for a day or week or however long it takes for the pain to go away. If the editor offers feedback, take her notes into consideration. And, do not give up on the manuscript. Continue to submit it to publishers until you find a home for it.♥

Thanks to the support and encouragement of the members of RWA/NYC, Ursula's debut novel, SWEET JAZZ, was published in September 2014. As President of RWA/NYC, Ursula wants to offer the same encouragement and guidance to other RWA members. Visit her at www.ursularenee.com.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Tamara Calixte
Rosalinda Camacho
Adlinna Liang



**CHAPTER MINUTES: AUGUST MEETING
BY SECRETARY SHIRLEY KELLY**

Board Members Present:

Vice President Kate McMurray
Treasurer Tamara Lynch
Secretary Shirley Kelly
Past President Maria Ferrer

Board Members Not Present:

President Ursula Renée Shand
Vice President Vanessa Peters

Committee Members Present:

Blog/Social Media - Maria Ferrer
Newsletter - Briana MacWilliam
Publicity - Michael Molloy

Members Present: 15**Agenda**

Vice President Kate McMurray greeted everyone at 12:15 p.m. Past President Maria Ferrer made a motion to accept the July General Meeting Minutes, Briana MacWilliam seconded the motion.

Kate shared with everyone the changes RWA announced at the National Conference:

- The Rita's have been clarified.
- There will be a increase in dues.
- Members will receive milestone recognition pins, which will be determined by the number of books they have published.
- The website will be revamped.
- They're adding committees, including a Diversity Committee chaired by Courtney Milan.
- There will be a PAN and PRO task force. On Sept. 1st, new changes will be made to PAN.
- They explained Provisional PAN membership.

Treasurer Tamara Lynch said we have approximately \$7,700 in the bank.

Secretary Shirley Kelly said we have 94 members.

Kate said the Golden Apple Awards will be held on September 17th from 6-8 p.m. at Woodrow's in Tribeca. There will be an open bar and food. Invitations will go out this week.

Kate encouraged members to enter the Kathryn Hayes "When Sparks Fly" contest. The deadline is August 31st.



Maria announced our new summer/vacation blog tour and said she's open to ideas for future tours.

Briana said "Get it Sold" is this month's Keynotes topic. Next month's topic will be "Self-Publishing". She's interested in starting a book club and highlighting different members each month in Keynotes. Kate said the Board will discuss her idea at the next meeting.

Kate explained the benefits of being a PAN member.

Maria explained the Craft Loop.

Michael Molloy said spaces are available for the Brooklyn Book Festival. He said the festival is NYC's premier event and provides great exposure. He asked for volunteers to help out at the festival.

Kate announced the Annual Retreat and said the event will be canceled if no one reserves a room by the end of the weekend.

The meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.♥

MEMBER NEWS

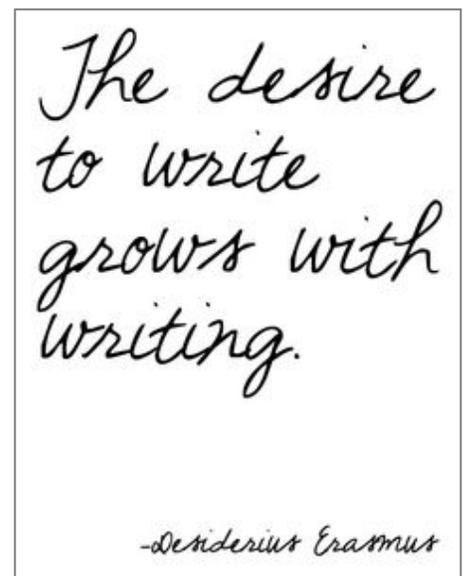
Anna DePalo is pleased to announce that she has sold the first book in her new Serengetti family series to Harlequin Desire for release in 2016.

After months of waiting, **Michael Molloy** is pleased to announce that his suspense novel, SADISTIC PATTERN, will be published by Gypsy Shadow Publishing on November 1st!

Congratulations to **Jess Russell**. Her book, THE DRESSMAKER'S DUKE, fained in the Aspen Gold and The Heart of Excellence contest both for Best Historical. It was also a double finalist in the NRCA.

WRITING MARATHON: SEPTEMBER 26

Our monthly Writing Marathon will be held on Saturday, September 26, from 12-3pm at the CitiCorp Building, Atrium Lobby, at 53rd Street & Lexington Avenue. Note that there are no electrical outlets so plan accordingly. Bring your own snacks and beverage; though there is a Barnes & Noble in the building and other eateries in the neighborhood. Until then, Happy Writing!



CHAPTER ELECTIONS



**WE WANT
YOU!**

Romance Writers of America New York City, Inc. needs five members to sit on the 2016 Board. There are five Board positions that need to be filled (President, V.P. of Programs, V.P. of Communications, Secretary and Treasurer). The V.P. of Programs handles the Golden Apple Awards and the V.P. of Communications runs the chapter contest.

To run for a position on the Board, a candidate has to have been a member of the chapter for two consecutive years immediately before running. In addition, to run for President, a member must have been a member of the chapter for three years immediately before running and have served on the Board for one year.

We also need three members (1 Board member and 2 Non-board members) to sit on the Nomination Committee. This committee will collect the names of members interested in running for a seat on the board. If you are interested in sitting on the Nomination Committee, please contact Ursula Renée at ursula.shand@gmail.com.

NOMINATIONS

All general members in good standing and who have been members for two years are eligible to run for the Board. Nominations are due to the Chapter Secretary (Shirley Kelly) by September 30. Email her at info@rwanyc.com. Good luck.♥

OFFICE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

President

As the RWA/NYC Chapter President, you are the voice and the face of the chapter. You are on all the chapter committees and are the liaison with National. The President runs the chapter and ensures that expenses are being met and dues are being paid to National. The President also makes sure the membership is informed of decisions made by National and policies voted on by the Chapter Boards. As President, you run the monthly Board and Chapter Meetings and schedule the presentations and/or workshops for the Chapter Meetings. With the Board's approval, you schedule special Chapter events, including festivals and retreats. You also monitor the Chapter Loops, approve the Chapter newsletter, and contribute monthly articles to the Chapter newsletter and blog.

Though it is a lot of responsibility, you will have two vice presidents, a treasurer, and a secretary to work with you. The past president will be available to answer questions. In addition, you will have numerous committee heads to help you organize events. As the President, you will learn a lot about what it takes to run a chapter. You will also learn more about the publishing industry and meet wonderful new contacts. Finally, you will learn more about yourself and what you are capable of achieving.

Vice President – Communications

As Vice President of RWA/NYC, you will organized the 2014 Kathryn Hayes “We Need a Hero” Contest; our annual contest for unpublished and self-published romance authors. The contest involves reaching out to other RWA chapters, as well as the national RWA organization to garner publicity. It is a challenge as there are many different chapter contests and we have to try and make our chapter stand out among the fold. Finding judges, as well as keeping track of entries and the payments received, requires good organizational skills. Besides the contest, you will support our President.



Vice President – Programs

The role of both VPs is to support the president and help make decisions regarding chapter matters. The role of the VP of programs specifically is primarily to organize the Golden Apple Awards. Tasks related to the GAAs include (with the support of the board) finding a venue, organizing the nomination and voting process, notifying the winners, sending out invitations, and helping the event go off seamlessly. This year I’ve also helped arrange guest speakers and weighed in on chapter meeting programming, and worked on a few other projects, but that’s entirely at the discretion of the person in the office. Running for the board is a fantastic way to get involved with the chapter and to put your own stamp on how we operate.

Secretary

The secretary keeps an accurate set of minutes of the discussions and topics brought up at both the Board meeting and the Chapter meeting. She is responsible for constructing a professionally written synopsis of each, and for posting them to the Board loop. She maintains accurate paper records of items such as meeting attendance sheets, and provides prospective and current members with National and Chapter membership forms at meetings, as well as PRO and PAN forms. The secretary maintains the roster of the Chapter membership and constantly updates it with the additions of new members, changes regarding the existing members, and subtraction of outgoing members. She answer inquiries made to the Chapter website and welcomes new members with a letter, invites them to join the Chapter loop, and makes sure they receive Keynotes. The secretary also participates in decision making for Chapter activities. Act as the right hand to the Chapter President and assist with any ancillary duties she requires.

Treasurer

The primary responsibility of the treasurer is to keep accurate records of all financial transactions pertaining to the chapter. This includes bank deposits and withdrawals, PayPal transactions and online payments. You will need to present monthly reports of the chapter’s financial condition to the board and to the chapter. An annual financial summary must be prepared for RWA National as part of our chapter affiliation documents. Requirements for the position include good basic math skills and a “comfort” with numbers, as well as good organizational skills. A background in finance, accounting or bookkeeping are a plus but not required. You should also be familiar with a financial spreadsheet program such as Microsoft Excel or equivalent, or at least be willing and able to learn. Above all, the treasurer must accept a high degree of responsibility in accurately recording and reporting on the financial condition of RWA/NYC and to participate as a board member in the overall administration of the chapter.♥

2015 GOLDEN APPLE AWARD WINNERS: SEPTEMBER 17

Join us on **September 17 for RWA/NYC's Golden Apple Awards**, when we will honor our GAA winners. Our reception will take place at Woodrow's, 43 Murray Street, downtown. This year's winners are:

Lifetime Achievement Award: **Thea Divine** (Top)

Publisher of the Year: **Carina Press**

Editor of the Year: **Kristine Swartz, Berkley**

Agent of the Year: **Kimberly Whalen, Trident Media Group**

Media Source of the Year: **HEA/USA Today**

Librarian of the Year: **Jaqueline Woolcott, NYPL**

Author of the Year: **Jeanine McAdam** (Bottom)



BE PRO!
BY MARIA COX



New to the PRO community! Please join me in welcoming the newest chapter members to join the PRO community:

Tamara Calixte w/a Kim Black
Carolyn Gibbs
Michael J. Molloy
Amanda Weaver

Congratulations on this big accomplishment!

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.

Questions: If you're interested in becoming PRO and/or would like more information, you can e-mail me at maria@mywritingden.net.♥

Cover designers are artists worth paying

Unless you *are* a designer, don't do your own covers. Seek out and hire a professional cover designer. (This is especially true if you plan on a series!) A striking, well-made book cover is a marketing tool you will use again and again and *again*. It reinforces your author brand and speaks instantly to readers, even before they click a link.

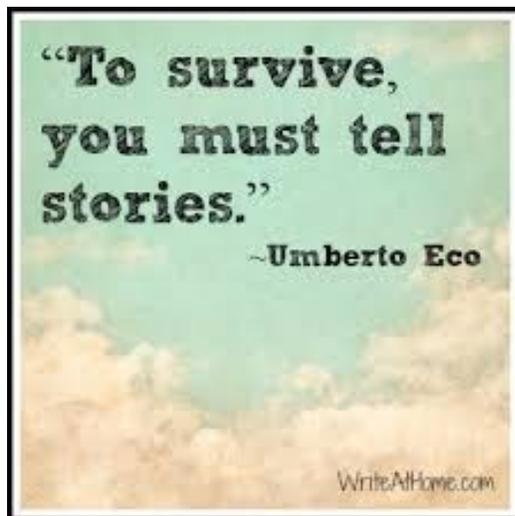
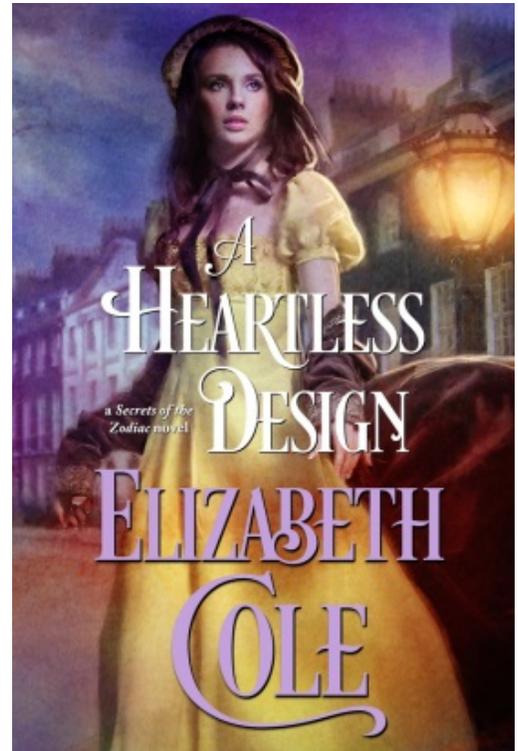
Create a virtual office

Once you hit publish, you're going to be making sales. That means money. YAY! If you're not comfortable handling all the financials on your own, don't. Hire an accountant you can email or call when you have questions (and when tax time comes around). Hire an author assistant to help with marketing management or other tasks. Use your true fans to build a street team. Doing research? Pay a short-term intern to gather information. Hire an agent just to handle foreign translation rights. It all depends on what *you* need.

Design your own system, with you at the top

Indie publishing is a growing market, which means that there are now many services for authors. It seems daunting at first, but once you find those professionals you love, you don't have to look again! I have built relationships with my pros over time, and I can now rely on them to offer advice and insight I would never have access to otherwise. Yes, working on all the aspects of publishing does take some time away from writing. But the reward is a book you can truly believe in!

Got questions? Get in touch with me at elizabethcole.co!♥



Elizabeth Cole is a romance author with a penchant for history, which is why she lives in an old house in an old city. She can be found hanging around libraries and archives, or curled in a corner reading, cat on lap. She believes in love at first sight. Then again, she also believes that mac 'n' cheese is a healthy breakfast, so don't trust her judgment on everything. Find about more at elizabethcole.co

**ASK ALICE: YOU TALK A LOT ABOUT THE POSITIVES OF INDIE PUBLISHING. IS THERE A NEGATIVE FOR YOU?
BY ALICE ORR**



**Answer: For me there definitely is one negative --
The emphasis on frequency of publication.**

The three requirements for Independent Publishing success as a fiction writer – according to what I’ve been told – are these.

1. Write in a popular genre.
2. Write a series.
3. Publish every 3 to 4 months. Preferably every 3 months.

I’ve got the first two covered. Romantic Suspense is a popular sub-group of a very popular genre. I’m also writing the Riverton Road Romantic Suspense Series.

I was doing all right with number three for a while. A *WRONG WAY HOME* launched in February. A *YEAR OF SUMMER SHADOWS* in June. Four months apart not three but still in the frequency ballpark. That looked okay on the calendar but I knew better. Making book number two’s publication date was a stretch for me. An uncomfortable stretch. To accomplish it I did a truly stupid thing: I rushed the manuscript straight from my editor’s hands into production. I didn’t do the final crucial read-through myself.

I’ve been around way longer than enough to know there are edits only the author’s eyes will see. I rushed it anyway. Because I didn’t want to commit the allegedly deadly sin of letting five months pass between published books. Since then I’ve committed other sins that also toll the death knell to my frequency of publication. Specifically I’m guilty of wanting and having a personal life. Complete with family and friends and even some fun.

In the 1990’s I set all of those aside to pursue a career as a literary agent. I was all business all the time and the goddess of commerce awarded me well. What I seem to be experiencing now is a case of Been There Done That when it comes to All Work and No Play Make Alice a Successful Woman.

Whatever the cause may be – I’m just not feeling the need for speed. I fully understand this flies in the face of my having told hundreds of writers in my workshops that they must be Warriors on Behalf of Their Careers.

All the same – I’ve decided not to renew my fast lane pass. Which also flies in the face of the three-prong program for independent publishing success. I’ve been fortunate to experience a number of worldly successes in my life. Maybe I’ve fulfilled my required quota of those. Maybe it’s time to seek another kind of success. The kind that perhaps doesn’t involve being a warrior at all.♥

A YEAR OF SUMMER SHADOWS – Riverton Road Romantic Suspense Series Book #2 – is available on Amazon. The ebook version of Book #1, A WRONG WAY HOME, is FREE. These are Alice’s 12th and 13th novel. Number 14 will probably take longer to arrive. Visit Alice at www.aliceorrbooks.com.

**AFTER THE FIRST BOOK: I DON'T KNOW WHAT I DON'T KNOW
(A TYPE A'S JOURNEY INTO SELF-PUBLISHING)
BY KATE MCMURRAY**



So, I've made the bold decision to self-publish some of my backlist.

I got (or will soon be getting) the rights back to two books originally published in 2011. My reasons for getting the rights back are complicated but boring, so we'll gloss over that part. Originally I wasn't going to self-publish because, honestly, self-publishing looks like a lot of work, and I have enough on my plate. My agent and I talked about trying to sell these old books to another publisher, instead.

The problem is that with so many digital and small presses going defunct, there are now quite a few authors with old books to put back out, and publishers are getting pickier about what they pick up. Most, in fact, only want your book if you will also write a sequel, or give them something new in addition to the old book. And I was on board for that. I had a sequel to *THE BOY NEXT DOOR* half-written already.

But then what I had written turned out to be kind of terrible, and writing new stuff this past spring when everything was crazy with my schedule turned out to be nearly impossible, and there was no way I'd ever hit the deadline my agent and I had worked out unless I could reach into the Harry Potter universe and borrow a Time Turner.

Unfortunately, while I stalled, *THE BOY NEXT DOOR* went out of print. The book is coming up on five years old, so it's not like I was selling droves of copy, but its unavailability definitely put a dent in my royalty statements.

But, I thought, I could totally put the book out myself.

Look, self-publishing scares me still. There's so much to do! At the national RWA convention, I sat through Courtney Milan's presentation on metadata and thought the whole time, "Crap. I have no idea what I'm doing. I never considered any of this. There's so much I don't know that I don't know what I don't know!"

There is a lot I do know. I've worked in book production for more than eight years. I know how a book is made. I can do page layout. I knew exactly what I wanted this cover to look like. I don't have a lot of experience with ebook formatting—I still work mostly in print books at my day job—but I could figure it out.

But, geez. Metadata and front matter and ISBNs, oh my!

A friend pointed out that many people who are way less tech savvy than I am have self-published books to great success. So, really, I should calm down.

So far, all I've got is a self-imposed deadline, an edited manuscript, and a new cover. So next, I have to figure out formatting and distribution. The hard part in other words. I've been getting recs and advice from people who have gone this route before, so I know what I have to do (kind of) but I'm still finding this daunting. And what if I put the book up everywhere but nobody buys it and I don't recoup my expenses? (I mean, just as an anxiety-prone control freak Type A, I've spent a lot of time researching and considering worst-case scenarios, full disclosure)

So then: marketing! It's become conventional wisdom that publishers don't really do much marketing/publicity, so if you have to do it all yourself anyway, you might as well self-publish! I hear this all the time. But I disagree wholeheartedly.

The BARE MINIMUM a publisher should do is send your book out for review to blogs. Reviews are worth their weight in gold because word-of-mouth buzz is the key to selling books. Publishers may or may not also send your book to trade publications like *Library Journal*, *Publisher's Weekly*, and *RT Book Reviews*. (They SHOULD, in my humble opinion. Sending a book doesn't guarantee a review, as it's sort of up to the whims of available reviewers, but even a so-so review in one of those publications is great exposure for you.) Many publishers will also do some or all of the following: buy ads featuring your book (on the Internet and in trade publications), some social media related to your book, feature your book on their website, organize blog tours, pitch you to media outlets, and similar things I'm not thinking of. (If your publisher does not do these things, it might be time to consider whether you're at the best place. Because if they aren't offering you some kind of marketing and publicity or at least sending your book out for review? Then, yeah, you are probably better off self-publishing. But a lot of publishers DO these things.)

So, basically, I've done my own blog tours before, but I'm finding the prospect of having to do all this other marketing exhausting in advance. I normally don't really mind marketing, but this is on a different level from what I normally do.

The thing is that, yeah, these days, authors have to do some legwork beyond just writing the book, but self-publishing authors have to do *everything*. Some authors thrive on that and want complete creative control. I am not one of those authors. So that's something to think about when you're considering various paths to publication.

I think it'll be fine, but my take away is that I will not underestimate all the work my publishers do, and also that this is not a decision to make lightly. That, yes, depending on your avenue toward self-publishing, it can be simple and easy, to someone like me, it can feel pretty daunting, too. So do your research and know what you're getting into. ♥

RWA/NYC VP Kate McMurray is 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.



THE WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY AND HOW OF LAUNCH TEAMS**BY ANN PEAKE**



Recently, the four gals of WoC (Write or Consequences) watched ten days of webinars that covered a wide range of topics on what it takes to make it in the self-publishing racket. One significant takeaway was the value of a Launch Team. None of us had heard of a launch team before, but the concept is fairly straightforward.

Prior to the launch of a book (when), you assemble a core group of friends, family and peers (who). They agree, often quite eagerly, to assist you when the time comes to go live on Amazon or whatever delivery vehicle you choose (what). While the structure of a launch team can vary, they do generally provide three valuable services at launch (how).

- 1. Buy** your book to jump start your sales.
- 2. Write** and post a review of your book to catapult you onto the “lists” that reach more readers and jumpstart your sales.
- 3. Push out** the information about your book launch to everyone in their e-sphere of influence, including their email list, online groups, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. (where) in order to . . . reach more readers and jump start your sales (why).

In return for boosting your sales and helping you reach more readers, launch team members garner rewards. Advanced copies, free resource giveaways, or perhaps prizes. But no matter what the offered enticement, the most important perk of a launch team member is input. Author engagement with her launch team might include offering them a chance to name a character, make suggestions on story direction, or provide feedback on where the next step in the Author’s career might go.

True, at first, your launch team might be made up of your Mother, Aunt Betty and some of your bestest writing pals, but over time the size of your group is likely to grow and fans enjoy engaging on a personal level with their new favorite author and helping her cast a wider marketing net.

Armed with their newfound knowledge of launch teams, Sandra K. Moore, Terri Richison, Dawn Temple, and Ann Peake of Write or Consequences have decided to embark on a new venture and will be looking to form their inaugural launch team. Part of the experimentation will be chronicling the before, during and after of the launch based on personal experience and the input from the team and then blogging about lessons learned.

Want to join your first launch team? Learn from the inside about our successes, failures, and recoveries right along with us? Or maybe you hope to hedge against your own future launch? Whatever your reason, visit often the Write or Consequences blog. Lurk or make comments, but visit and watch how four ordinary women are reaching for a publishing career with the energetic support of their newly forming WoC Launch Team.♥

Ann Peake wrote her first ditty when she was ten on an English seashore while visiting her British grandmother. From then on, her family members either acted in, or were treated to, plays, skits or commercial spoofs. This article first appeared in the Houston Bay Area RWA newsletter.

BOOK TRAILER HOW-TO
BY NANCY J. COHEN

Would you like to create your own book trailer in **Windows Live Movie Maker**? If so, be prepared to spend time on a learning curve. The first effort is the hardest, but then you'll know what to do for subsequent titles. Just follow these steps that apply to Windows 7, and you're on your way. It works with Windows 7 or Windows 8. Or check your list of Programs to see if it's already installed on your computer.

**View the Book Trailer for *Peril* by Ponytail:** <http://youtu.be/T2Vao7yDIVY>

Various companies will do trailers for you on the cheap, but their work is similar to what you can do with a slide show. I'd rather pick out the photos and music that best suits my story. If you're a big moneymaker, a bestselling author, or perhaps a thriller writer whose work demands a broader canvas, then you can go for moving videos, productions using real actors, or voiceovers. But if you're an average writer who wants to give your readers a taste of the story without making a big splash, this will work for you.

Do Your Homework and Watch Book Videos

Go to author sites on YouTube and find trailers for books in the same genre as your work. Write down the text on each slide and note the type of image accompanying it. Listen to the music. How does it make you feel? Does it create a certain mood? Does the story move quickly while giving you an idea of the plot and main characters? How long is the trailer? Is it too long? Or too short? What do the credits say at the end?

Write Your Text

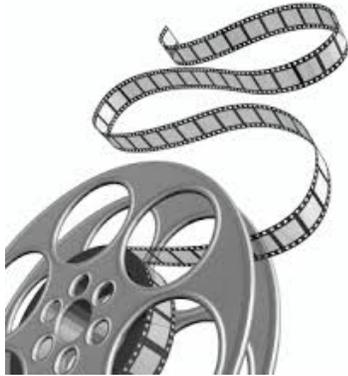
Now write your own text in verses to fit on each slide. Remain brief, offering your story points in as few words as possible. The text should give the reader an idea of what your story is about, the tone of your work, and an introduction to your main characters. Ask your critique partners for input. You'll need other critical eyes to help you hone down your plot to a few sentences with punch. It's not an easy task.

Remember the adage: Short and Simple. Try to keep your video under 2 minutes.

At the end: Add your book cover and publishing info, where readers can buy your book, music and photo credits, and review quotes if desired.

Search For Images

<http://www.123rf.com> One medium-sized image at 72 dpi for Web usage is approximately 824 x 581 px and costs 2 credits. You can buy 40 credits for \$38. Music is available here too. Make sure you read the fine print on the licensing terms. If you want to use an image as a book cover, you may need an extended license.



<http://www.bigstockphoto.com/> Small-sized images are 900 x 743 px and are 1 credit each. You can buy 10 credits for \$35 or 25 credits for \$49.

If you see a photo you like, look at the description and put that same wording into the search box. Similar photos will pop up. Or go to the photo you like and click on the Related Images displayed. Figure out how many credits you'll need per photo and what the packages cost. Also check the licensing terms to be sure they meet your needs.

Here are more photo sites. Some of them also have music available.

<http://www.istockphoto.com/> This one is pricey with 1 credit for \$12; 6 credits for \$60.

<http://depositphotos.com/> (30 credits for \$32)

<http://www.dreamstime.com/>

<http://browse.deviantart.com/resources/stockart/>

<http://www.canstockphoto.com>

<http://www.corbisimages.com/>

<http://www.epictura.com/>

<http://us.fotolia.com/>

<http://www.fotosearch.com/>

<http://www.freestockimages.net/>

<http://www.freedigitalphotos.net/>

<http://www.freefoto.com/index.jsp>

<http://www.freeimages.com/>

<http://www.freephotosbank.com/>

<http://www.fontplay.com/freephotos/>

<http://www.ingimage.com/>

<http://www.jupiterimages.com/>

<http://www.gettyimages.com/creativeimages>

<http://www.gettyimages.com/photolibrary>

<http://photopin.com/> (For Blog Posts)

<https://pixabay.com/>

Whichever site you choose, register for an account so that you have a Lightbox, or a Likebox as it's sometimes called.

In the site's Search feature, put in keywords for the type of picture you want (i.e. romantic couple, beautiful redhead, businessman, airplane over island). Scroll down until a photo catches your fancy. Click to add it to your Lightbox (at 123rf, you click the little heart). You can search this way for Photos, Video Clips, and Music.

Match an image in your collection to each verse in your text. Then purchase enough credits to buy the ones you want. Click on the image and then on Download. Save it to your computer.

Whichever site you use, check the licensing requirements before you make your purchase. As mentioned above, some may require an extended license to use the image as a book cover, in a collection such as on a Pinterest board, on a coffee mug you offer for sale, and so on.

Search For Video (Optional)

Live action can add spice to a video but it also takes up time and increases the size of your file. Many of the sites listed above will have royalty-free video clips, but here are some more.

<http://www.alunablue.com/>

http://www.archive.org/details/stock_footage

[http://www.artbeats.com /](http://www.artbeats.com/)

<http://www.footagefirm.com/free-footage>

<http://www.gettyimages.com/Footage>

<http://www.gotfootage.com/>

<http://www.stockfootageforfree.com/>

<http://vimeo.com/groups/freehd>

<http://worldclips.tv/>



Search For Music

Searching for the right music can be a time-consuming task. Decide upon the tone of your video and put keywords into the search feature on these sites. Is your story dark and scary? Light and funny? Upbeat and bouncy? Intense and mysterious? The music is important because it elicits an emotional response in your viewers.

Check the length of the music clip against the length of your trailer, and make sure it's long enough. You can repeat the music if necessary to extend its length on your video, but there might be a slight gap where the first one ends and the clip restarts.

<http://www.stockmusic.net/> \$39.95 per track; Pay once, use forever. My Favorite.

<http://www.melodyloops.com/>

<http://www.audiomicro.com/>

<http://freeplaymusic.com/>

<http://www.freesoundtrackmusic.com/>

<http://www.gettyimages.com/Music>

<http://www.ibaudio.com/>

<http://incompetech.com/music/>

<http://www.istockphoto.com/audio.php>

<http://www.opuzz.com/>

<http://www.stockmusic.com/>

Now What?

Open a New Project in Windows Live Movie Maker (File; New Project) and click Add Videos and Photos. Add one photo at a time, and the program will produce slides. If you want a blank slide to add text only, click the Credits button.



Once you have your pictures added, go back to the beginning. Click on Add Caption for each slide and add your text in the text box. You can drag this box to wherever you want it placed. You can also change the color of the text. If it's a light background, choose a dark text. If you have a black or dark background, make the text white. Alter the font as needed.

You'll now see Video Tools and Text Tools. These have little boxes where you can see the Duration. I try to have the duration of my text shorter than or equal to the video. So a video slide might run for 5 seconds, and the text for 4.50. Some slides you'll want longer, if you have more text or if you have an image like the book cover that you want to linger on screen. Under Text Tools, choose Effects. This gives you options for how you want your text to scroll or appear on the slide. Click on Edit if you want to make changes.

Under Video Tools, click on Animations. Here you can add Transitions between slides. Position your cursor in front of each slide. Then hover your mouse over each transition effect to see what it does. Click to select. Keep in mind that the transitions cut some of the time out of the slide before and after. Each time you want to view the effect, put the cursor in front of a slide and click the Play button. Next do the same for Pan and Zoom. Make choices there so your pictures aren't static.

When you have arranged your pictures and text to your satisfaction, click on Home and Add Music. Browse for your music file and click Open. The program adds it to your slide show. You can adjust the track as needed, like timing it to start further in by changing the Start Point. Also, hit Fade In at the beginning or Fade Out at the end if desired.

Add credits at the end by clicking Credits. This will be a text only slide. Here's where you put the sites where you found your images and music. You'll also want a slide to show your book cover. Either add text there or on a separate slide with your book info: Title, author, publisher, etc. The same Text Tools apply to these slides as for the others.

Remember to save your project often. Hit File and then Save Project.

When you are totally done, click File, then Save Movie and choose the Widescreen/HD version to save to Your Computer. Your trailer is ready to upload to YouTube and elsewhere. Don't hit the YouTube button on Live Movie Maker, or it may upload a smaller version. Then go to YouTube and upload the HD file to your account.

A book video is another tool in your promotional arsenal, but it's not worth breaking the bank over. Doing it yourself or hiring a low-cost company is the ideal way to go. It's another way to excite viewers about your upcoming release.



Where To Post Your Book Video

Amazon: <https://authorcentral.amazon.com/>

Book Goodies: <http://bookgoodies.com/contact-us/video-trailer/>

Book Trailer Central: <http://booktrailercentral.co/>

Book Trailers: <http://booktrailers.ning.com/>

Daily Motion: <http://www.dailymotion.com/us>

Preview the

Book: <http://www.previewthebook.com/previewupload.php>

Veoh: <http://www.veoh.com/>

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/>

Remember to add your video to all your social networking sites plus your website and blog.♥

Watch my Trailers

Mysteries

Peril by Ponytail: <http://youtu.be/T2Vao7yDIVY>

Hanging By A Hair: <http://youtu.be/gv5ldn9uw7I>

Shear Murder: <http://youtu.be/ePpShWy3Wbw>

Romances

Warrior Lord: <http://youtu.be/91cdYSftbmU>

Warrior Rogue: <http://youtu.be/cjV-PRVGoVs>

Warrior Prince: <http://youtu.be/aVm2FIumw0o>

Nancy J. Cohen has written over twenty published works, including the Bad Hair Day Mysteries and the Drift Lords paranormal romance series. A featured speaker at libraries, conferences, and community events, she is also the author of Writing the Cozy Mystery, a valuable instructional guide on how to write a winning whodunit. When not busy writing, Nancy enjoys fine dining, cruising, visiting Disney World, and outlet shopping, plus frequent visits to the salon for research. Currently, she is serving as President of the Florida Chapter, Mystery Writers of America.

Website: <http://nancyjcohen.com>

Blog: <http://nancyjcohen.wordpress.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NancyJCohenAuthor>

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/nancyjcohen>

YouTube: <http://bit.ly/1djD5nY>

Newsletter Sign-Up: <http://nancyjcohen.com/contact-nancy/newsletter/>

BookBub

Distributor Comparison Chart



	Ebook Distribution				Print Distribution	
	Smashwords	BookBaby	Draft2Digital	Amazon KDP	CreateSpace	IngramSpark
Upfront cost	\$0	· \$299 for ebooks · \$199+ for print	\$0	\$0	\$0	· \$49 for print & ebook · \$49 for print · \$25 for ebook · \$12 distribution fee / title / year
Distributor royalty per sale	· 15% for Smashwords sales · 40% for other retailers	0%	15%	30% (65% for certain book prices)	· 40% on Amazon sales · 60% on other retailers	· 60% for ebooks · 30-55% for print books
Payment Schedule	Quarterly	Quarterly	Monthly	Every 60 days	Monthly	Monthly
Distributes to	· Barnes & Noble · Apple iBooks · Kobo · OverDrive · Flipkart · Oyster · Baker & Taylor · and more	· Amazon · Barnes & Noble · Apple iBooks · Kobo · Flipkart · Oyster · Scribd · Baker & Taylor · and more	· Barnes & Noble · Apple iBooks · Kobo · Scribd · CreateSpace · and more	· Amazon	· Amazon (standard distribution)	· Amazon · Barnes & Noble · Apple iBooks · Kobo · Flipkart · Oyster · Baker & Taylor · and more
Formats accepted	· .doc (Word) · epub	· .doc (Word) · PDF	· .doc (Word) · epub · RTF	· .doc (Word) · PDF · HTML · RTF	· .doc (Word) · PDF · HTML · RTF	· PDF · epub · JPG (cover)
Formatting services	DIY	Included in upfront cost	Included for free	DIY	DIY	Conversion from PDF to epub for \$0.60 per page
Print available	No	Yes	Yes (just one paperback copy; no distribution)	Via CreateSpace	Yes (no ebooks)	Yes
Pre-order distribution	Yes	Print only	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ISBN	Included for free, or use your own	\$29, or use your own	Included for free, or use your own	Not required	Included for free, or use your own	Not included, must purchase your own from Bowker (starting at \$125)
Ebook Pricing Changes	Any time (takes 2-5 business days)	Once every 60 days (takes 1-3 weeks)	Any time	Any time	n/a	No

THAT DANG BUCKET LIST BOOK**BY JN WELSH****RWA NYC AUGUST AUTHOR OF THE MONTH**



I love to write. As a child in school, I used to write notes and stories about my friends dating the guys they liked in 6th grade. So my notes were pretty long. I had learned how to write these love story notes - young adult fiction - because as a voracious reader I would steal my older sister's Harlequins. These were books I had no business reading at that age.

In high school, I won a poetry contest and was published in a book with thousands of others, at age sixteen. My writing future seemed bright. I went on to study creative writing in college but as I got older the writing seemed to get pushed aside. The coffin was sealed when a professor told me that I didn't have a knack for writing. It wasn't his fault. He was a children's book professor and

though I used to write young adult as a child about my peers, I was an adult now and wanted to write about grownups. I was just in the wrong genre. I didn't know that at the time and a stable job and income seemed like a better path. I travelled the world trying to find that elusive passion for something else. Education came close but never quite hit the mark.

So, one day, I'm sitting at my desk as an education administrator and a question comes into my mind.

"If I died tomorrow, what would I regret?"

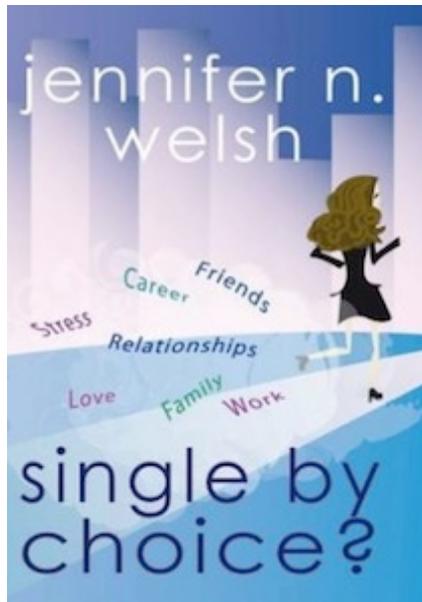
"Not publishing a book," I answered myself.

I was struck with a flurry of emotions. Panic was first. I thought back to grad school, where miraculously with my course load and job, would just write love stories. I wrote a short little 85,000-word story that I used to read and enjoy. I even thought of publishing it at one point.

Sitting at my desk I remembered that novel, but that professor's voice popped into my head and encouraged inaction. Then I wondered which would feel worse: inaction or having finally published that bucket list book?

I started researching. I had no connections so I started researching publishers, agents, how to write query letter, how to promote. I sent my novel out and the rejections started to come in. *Uh oh!* The doubt started to surface, again. "Can I write? Am I any good? Is the universe telling me that I'm on the wrong path?"

After 8 months I decided to self-publish. I did a bit of research and found Author House. I should have researched more, edited better but imperfectly perfect was the end result. This was 2005 and the self-publishing industry was very different. I could afford a super tiny marketing plan, but there was no big splash in the papers, blog tour or fanfare. The book, *SINGLE BY CHOICE?*, had a small cult following and nothing more.



Failure right? Not at all! Why? Well, because I made progress toward a goal and planted seeds of possibilities. So what did I do after that? Nothing. Actually, I was in a bad five-year relationship and drowned emotionally and creatively in corporate job, you know, the stuff that makes good books!

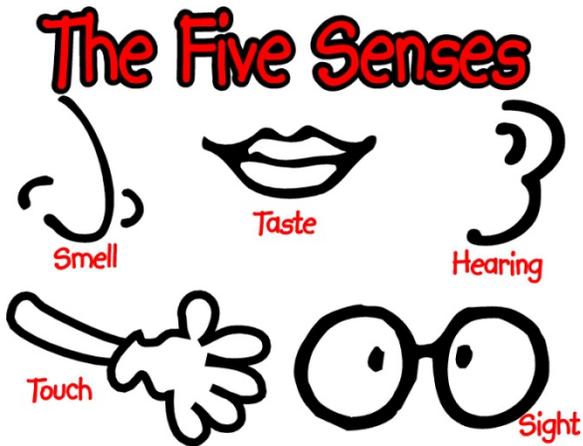
In March 2013, I transitioned out of that corporate job to pursue my dream of being a full time writer and pursuing my entrepreneurial dreams. Another big risk but I am finally working toward my dreams and goals with tenacity and that wouldn't have happened if I hadn't taken a chance and self-published, even when traditional publishing for my book seemed bleak. So, here are & things I learned which are not tips I have for you:

1. Write (create), Write (edit), Write (research)
2. Have a goal and write it down. Decide what kind of writer you want to be (ex. indie, hybrid, traditional). Know WHY you want this. It will drive you toward your goals.
3. Read and Research - This applies to your book, your genre and the industry. Try to become as good and consistent at this as possible.
4. Market yourself. Join groups, build relationships, find an accountability partner, find critique partners.
5. Practice total wellness. Eat well, exercise and meditate
6. Don't give up! Someone wants to read what you have written. FIND THEM!

I continue to write and work toward my ideal dream of being a hybrid author. You might have questions and/or would love to connect, so please email me at author.jnwelsh@gmail.com or via www.jnwelsh.com.♥

“No one can tell your story so tell it yourself. No one can write your story so write it yourself.”

CRAFT CORNER: CAN YOU FEEL ME? USING YOUR CHARACTER'S FIVE SENSES
BY ISABO KELLY



It's an often repeated piece of writerly advice that including all five senses in your fiction is vital to bringing the story to life. Visual details tend to be the default for most writers, while the other senses are frequently ignored. But without that added depth of detail, your story will be lackluster at best. In all this advice about using the senses, the primary focus is usually just making sure a writer remembers to add more than the visuals.

A worthy reminder because we all need it regularly.

However, those details are worthless to a reader *unless* they're filtered through a character's eyes and perception. Without this, your efforts will feel forced and distance the reader as much as leaving these details out.

Not all characters are the same—obviously—so they won't all have the same reactions to their senses. Like any other part of your story, it's important to ensure all sensory impressions come from the character: what *they* would see, feel, smell, taste, and hear. The feel of silk against one person's fingers might be exquisite, while another is reminded of something slick and slimy. The taste of savory fish could make your heroine shudder with delight or disgust. The sound of big band music might make your hero want to dance or make his ears hurt.

And it's not just the mere fact of the character perceiving these details that's important. You need to ensure the *interpretation* of those details reflects your character's life and experiences. Seeing blond hair and blue eyes might draw your hero's eye, or it could remind him of a crazy ex and send him scurrying across the street with a shudder of loathing. The smell of pine trees and sugar cookies might evoke a lovely memory of Christmas Eve for one protagonist. Those same scents might remind another of a terrible holiday in a mountain cabin with her self-destructing mother trying desperately to act like everything was normal by baking cookies every day.

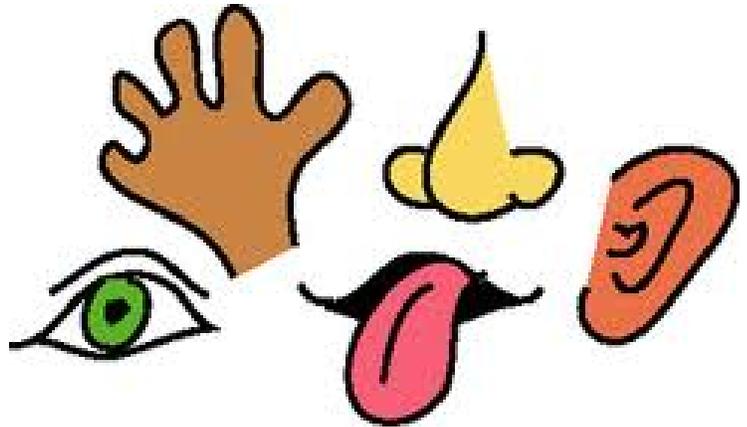
A character's current mood or changed circumstances can also alter how they experience sense details. If your heroine is kicking back, reading a book in her favorite chair, without a care in the world, she might only be vaguely aware of the traffic outside her apartment, considering it a kind of comforting white noise. But if she's feeling intensely stressed and overwhelmed, every time someone's breaks screech or a horn blares, your heroine might feel like jumping out of her skin.

As a personal example, I love the song "In My Room" by the Beach Boys. It was an anthem for me as a teenager and always brought to mind happy memories. But in recent years, it was used in a very touching commercial for a kids' cancer center. Now that I'm a mother and overly sensitive to anything to do with kids being sick, I get teary-eyed and choked up every time I hear the song. This reaction isn't even from something that has to do with a personal experience, just the *fear* of that

experience (fear of one of my boys getting cancer). This complicates my feelings for a song I really do love and informs my reaction to that song when I hear it. You can see from this example, perception of various sensory input can be complicated.

You'll also have to consider what your character would and wouldn't even notice. They might be limited by some deficit or their senses might be unusually acute for some reason. Writing about a shapeshifter,

for instance, might mean focusing on scents and smells throughout your story, but the humans in that world will have a much more muted sense of smell and so won't even notice the details your shifter might. As a real-world example, a pregnant woman's sense of smell often increases amazingly, and things that smelled good before will send her running to the bathroom during her pregnancy. Once the baby is born, her hearing tends to get more acute, too, allowing her to hear things a friend sitting right next to her might not notice right away.



Someone who wears glasses will have blurry areas in their peripheral vision that a person with perfect eyesight won't have to contend with. Certain drugs and illnesses can alter a person's sense of taste, rendering once pleasant flavors unappetizing. Aging can have a huge effect on a person's various senses—I hated corn as a kid but love the taste of it now.

Cultural associations (like my example with the commercial above) or societal backgrounds can also affect a character's interpretation of sensory details. A societal example might be the use of deodorants, scented soaps, and perfumes in many cultures to cover the "unpleasant" scent of body odor—as often as not in these cultures, people barely notice those "clean" smells, or if they do notice, they consider them pleasing. But in aboriginal cultures, those manufactured scents can be overwhelming and very unpleasant all mixed together in an assaulting hodge-podge of unnatural smells.

Your characters will all have these kinds of filters through which they interpret their senses, which means your descriptions of those details will always be as unique as your characters, even if you're describing something common. Using all five senses in your fiction isn't just a matter of conveying more than visual details, it's a way to reveal your characters to the reader, in depth and in ways that would be hard to simply describe. The reaction of a character to their senses shows more about them and their world than the detail itself ever could. That's where readers will truly connect with your characters and get carried away by your prose.♥

Isabo Kelly is the award-winning author of numerous fantasy, science fiction, and paranormal romances. The third book in her Fire and Tears fantasy romance series, WARRIOR'S DAWN, is now out in paperback. She's also in the process of re-releasing some of her out-of-print stories. For more on Isabo and her books, visit her at www.isabokelly.com, follow her on Twitter @IsaboKelly, or friend her on Facebook www.facebook.com/IsaboKelly.

THE GIDDY GRAMMARIAN: PUNCTUATION AND QUOTATION MARKS
BY LISBETH ENG



One of my duties as a compliance officer in the financial industry (the job that pays the rent, as opposed to my “real” job as a romance writer) is to approve letters our brokers send to their clients. Though my responsibility is to ensure that the letters comply with industry regulations (such as not making guarantees to clients), I can’t restrain myself from correcting grammatical errors. The upside is that it provides fertile ground for topics for this column.

Punctuation is a vast grammatical subject, so I’ll cover just one issue here, one that I see over and over in the letters I approve. It is among the most common sources of errors: incorrect usage of punctuation inside and outside quotation marks.

I will refer only to rules for American English in this column. British English varies from the American standard, and although an interesting discussion, the constraints of space here prevent a comparative analysis.

Though it may seem counterintuitive at times, periods and commas always go inside closing quotation marks, whether in the middle or at the end of a sentence:

- When the author refers to German soldiers as a group, they are described as a throng of “ants,” such as when the heroine views them from a distance.
- Rick admits to Erika that when questioned by the Gestapo, he “sold himself out” to “save his own ass.”

Use single quotation marks for quotations within quotations:

- “I want to vomit every time I have to say ‘Heil Hitler!’”

Here, you will note another issue regarding punctuation and quotation marks. If question marks or exclamation marks are used, emphasis determines their placement. In the above sentence, the exclamation mark is outside the single quotation marks, indicating that the entire sentence is stated emphatically. The emphasis is on the impulse to vomit and its cause, rather than on praise for the Führer. That, on the other hand, might be conveyed thus:

- “The audience was provoked into a frenzy, and at the end of his speech, all exclaimed, ‘Heil Hitler!’ ”

The difference is subtle but important. Please note, too, that you should leave visible space between the single and double quotation marks for ease of reading, and to avoid the appearance of a triple quotation mark, which does not exist in English.



When using quotation marks to indicate a special word or phrase within a sentence use double quotation marks. Single quotation marks are only used for a quote within a quote, such as in the above examples.

- The Waffen-SS became a “de facto” fourth branch of the German Armed Forces.

The final rule I’ll mention is that when quoted material runs more than one paragraph, start each new paragraph with opening quotation marks, but do not use closing quotation marks until the end of the passage.

On another note, if you’re wondering why I’ve included so many references to Nazi Germany, these examples come from a speech I gave a few years ago on that subject, when my World War II romance, *IN THE ARMS OF THE ENEMY*, was published. I trust you will not interpret this inclusion as an act of gratuitous, shameless self-promotion. However, if you are interested, please visit my website at www.lisbetheng.com or my blog at www.lisbetheng.blogspot.com for more information.♥

Lisbeth Eng works as a Compliance Officer in the financial industry by day and writes historical romance by night. She holds a bachelor's degree in English, and speaks a smattering of German, Italian and French. Please visit her at www.lisbetheng.com.

MEMBER ON THE SHELF: LAQUETTE

UNRESTRAINED: A Duology

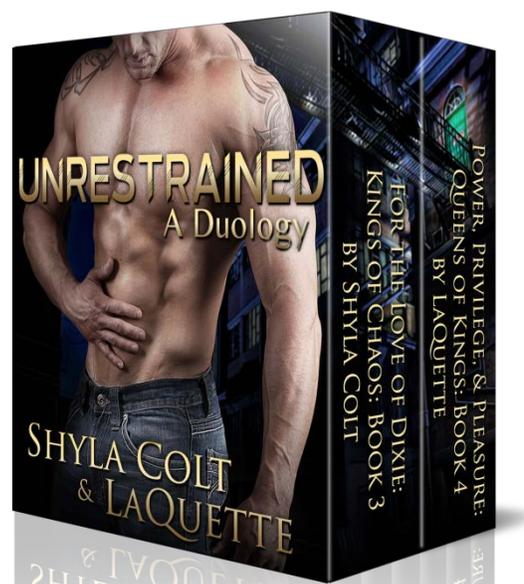
By LaQuette & Shyla Colt
Hot Ink Press

“Power, Privilege & Pleasure”

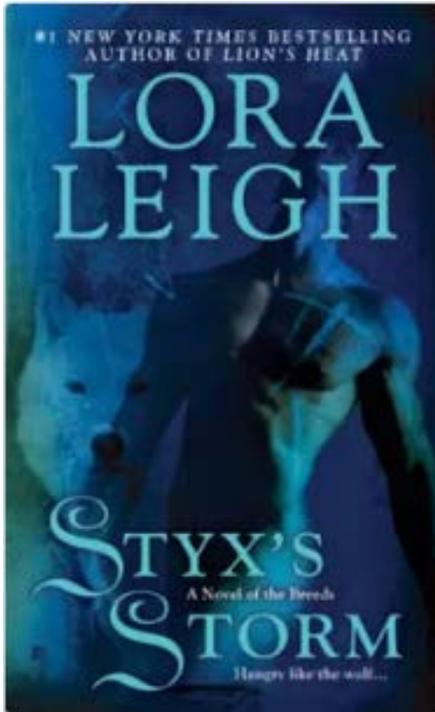
by LaQuette
www.laquettelikes.com

Power Games
Dark Secrets
Maniac Wreaking Havoc

Alexis-Jeovonni and Alan must work together to protect her family and their love.



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ROMANCE AND FEMINISM: AN INTERVIEW BY BRIANA MACPERRY



Interested in how popular romance genres are being experienced and shared by readers, writes, and industry professionals, Kelly Choyke, a teacher at Ohio University and a Ph.D. Candidate in Women's Studies, approached the RWA/NYC chapter to solicit interviews for her research study, *The Power of Popular Romance Culture: An Ethnography of Feminism and the Romance Genres*.

Being a qualitative research advisor myself, I was compelled to participate. Partly because I find her research topic interesting, but mainly because the interview was online, and thus I was not required to shower, change, brush my teeth, or unglue my ass from in front of the computer. I found her questions thoughtful and engaging and worthwhile for every romance writer to consider. I'm sure you will too.

Tell me about your history with romance novels.

Hm. Some include Anne Rice as a paranormal romance author, some don't. If you do, I would say my obsession with paranormal romance began at age thirteen with INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE. But it fell off once I got into college and had to read mainly textbooks. I didn't pick up a strict romance novel (ever in my life) until I was eight months pregnant. A friend handed me a copy of Lora Leigh's Breed Series, *STYX'S STORM*. I arched my eyebrow, curling my lip. She laughed and said, "I bought it for the plane. The flight flew by." That was the beginning of the beginning. I devoured her series in short order and wanted more. After a year, I decided I could write this stuff too.

When did you join the Romance Writers of America (RWA), when you decided to write?



First, I went to Milwaukee for a class reunion and sheepishly admitted to my good friend that I had gotten into romance novels and wanted to write them. He laughed and said, "My mom *loves* romance. I'll introduce you." Turns out, she's none other than Barbara Vey, well known romance blogger for publisher's weekly. She graciously advised me on my next steps, including joining RWA. She also provided me with an amazing opportunity to meet Sherrilyn Kenyon--who is a wonderfully kind and gracious woman.

Nice! How has your experience in RWA been?

Good. I think the most I have gotten out of it is access to contests, inexpensive online classes, participating in the local chapter, attending conferences, and being a part of a supportive community.



I hear that a lot from romance writers, how supportive the community is. In what ways is it supportive for you?

I think it's the benefit of having a shared experience. It's validating to meet women who have experienced similar things in terms of real life relationships, hopes for future relationships, and their experiences as writers. Also, there are more practical means of support, such as learning about opportunities to meet agents, pitch your ideas to editors, which blogs to follow, what contests to enter. A lot of my chapter mates follow my social media. And that helps build a platform.

What do your friends and family think about reading/writing romance?

Family and friends were supportive. When I told my family two of my aunts got very excited because (and I didn't know this) they love historical romances. Friends thought it was kind of scandalous and intriguing. My husband hated the idea and felt threatened. We ended up getting divorced. But that was just one small grain of sand atop a mountain of other things.

Why do you think men feel threatened by romance?

Because men are very practical and dissociate sex and romance from love and commitment. They feel "romance" creates an unreachable expectation in their lover's mind and so it arouses feelings of inadequacy.

What are your opinions on how society at large views romance readers/writers?

Love, sex, romance, how we interact in these kinds of relationships, it's all a mirror for our earliest issues. From the time we are babies, seeking the "right" about of love, nurturance, pleasure and satisfaction from our parents. However that need is addressed (or not) affects most specifically the way we interact with our lovers--because they are the most intimately involved with us. Of course, because of this, the topic of romance arouses the most deeply felt emotions in people. They then build elaborate defense mechanisms and structures to defend against the pain of those underlying resentments, unmet needs, etc. That manifests through anxiety, anger, shame, and an overall rigid rejection of what he or she is unwilling to confront. I think that is why romance carries this stigma. Because it forces people to consider what they are otherwise avoiding, or wish were better or different.

That is a great point, so you think the romance genres make people uncomfortable with the [state/quality] of the relationships in their own lives?

At least those that have a guilt/shame based ego structure. Obviously, not *all* people feel that way or we wouldn't be making money!

How has reading/writing romance regularly impacted your everyday life?

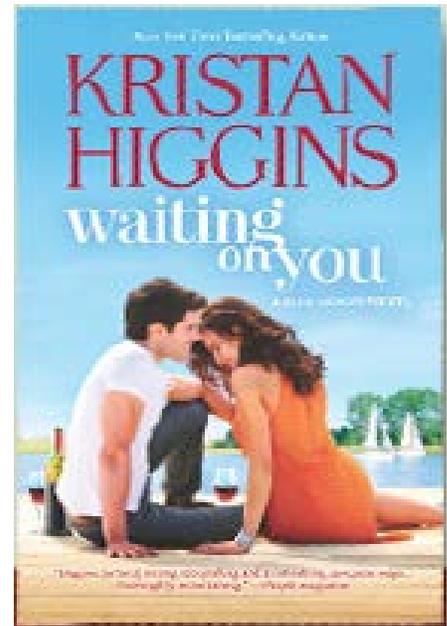
That is an ongoing struggle. I think there is a fine line between using your craft as a means of self-examination and diving into escapism. Character building is about being an examiner of the world and the people in it; like actors or therapists, digging into emotions and figuring out why people are the way they are. I think that's why romance writing appeals to me as a therapist. On a day-to-day basis, it structures my activities and how I distribute my time, between writing and other things.

What positive impacts do you think romances can have on women's lives? For example, do you think they are empowering in any way?

I think they are empowering when they show a woman how to stick up for herself, confront her issues, not be afraid to ask for what she wants/deserves, and be in charge of her own sexuality.

As a reader, do you find that you read specific sub-genres for specific moods/reasons?

When it comes to romance, I used to strictly read paranormal romance. Nothing else quite allowed me to lose myself in the characters the same way. I think because I could project too much of myself into other genres and that made it hard for me to suspend disbelief. But then I saw Kristin Higgins speak at the national conference in Atlanta, and I had to read her stuff. Mark my words; they'll make movies of her books one day. She's a great contemporary writer.



How would you define feminism?

I think the word is often misinterpreted. There seems to be this prevalent notion that feminism is about having equal rights and acknowledgement as men, because women are just as skilled or adept at doing the same things that men do, but it's more nuanced than that. It's about receiving validation and acknowledgement for the things that *women* do. For example, sometimes a homemaker might get a curled lip from a career woman, because she's "so oppressed." But having embodied both roles, I can tell you, being a homemaker is the hardest and most *thankless* job I have *ever* had. Women are intuitive and hold the emotional structure and growth of a relationship not only with her spouse/lover but also, typically, for the entire family. That is so important on such an essential level and it is often completely invalidated—most painfully by those who directly benefit from it. In this instance, the career woman is not being feminist in my opinion, she has adopted patriarchal worldview.

In your opinion, is there a relationship between feminism and romance novels?

I think there would have to be. All art is a reflection of one's self and his or her thought processes, if not his or her core issues. Books are just metaphors for conflicts human beings experience on a collective level. If they weren't, nobody would buy them. Romance sells more than any other genre alone in the publishing industry. And romance novels are written mostly by women. I think if a woman has the courage to put her thoughts, hopes, dreams, aspirations, fantasies, down on paper, then that is an act of faith and rebellion against a pop culture that seeks to paint her in a very specific, confining way.

I hope you enjoyed this interview, and if you are interested in participating in Kelly's study, please contact her at Kelly@kellychoyke.com.♥

For several years, Briana MacPerry has practiced as a Licensed and Board Certified Creative Arts Therapist in New York City, working predominantly with traumatized women and addiction. To learn more, please visit her blog at www.brianamacperry.wordpress.com, or follow her on twitter @macperrytweets.

**SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR AUTHORS:
PROMOTING YOUR BRAND
BY MARIA FERRER**



The main tip I heard at the RWA National Conference is that Writers need to establish an online presence through a website and social media.

Here are some other tips from the Conference about promoting your brand and social media:

- **Establish an online presence. Start getting your name out there.**

- build a reader community
- create website and/or blog
- setup social media accounts
- join yahoo author group
- start building an email mailing list
- join author and reader groups

- **Engage readers.**

- promote yourself
- promote other writers
- engage readers outside book selling (ie, talk about sports, pets, line dancing, etc.)
- shut down social media and Write! Learn to turn it off and write; be a part of your family

OTHER

- Readers are on Facebook.
- Readers like newsletters. (It can be one page and should include all links to website/blog/social media/sell sites. Always end with what is next for you.)
- Pinterest can be used to create storyboards for books and works in progress.
- Do not comment on any reviews -- good or bad.

**Reader Survey Results**

- 88% of readers follow authors on Facebook;
30% on Twitter; 20% on Pinterest.
- 88% of readers subscribe to authors' newsletters.
- 69% readers use Facebook to connect directly with authors; 53% use the author's website; 50% use the author's blog.

But most importantly, remember to turn off all social media and get back to writing your next book.♥

Maria Ferrer makes time for Facebook and Twitter. Visit her at www.marializaferrer.blogspot.com, and at www.mydelcarmen.com.

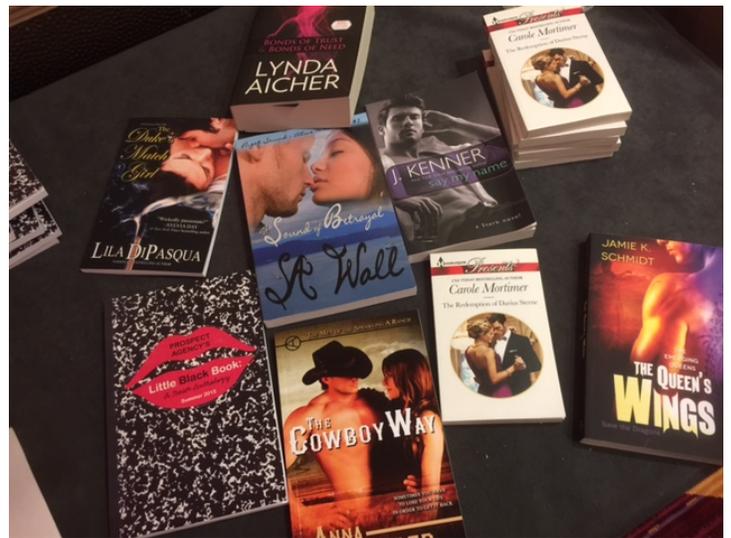
SWAG FOR KEEPS!
BY MARIA FERRER



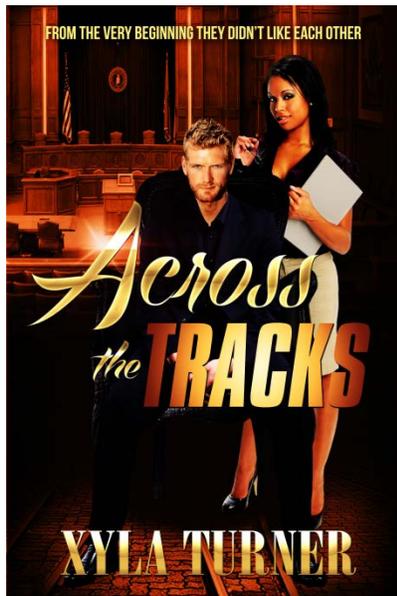
RWA Conferences are great for the workshops and the access to authors and editors. However, I must admit that I love the swag too. This year's conference was a winner and the Goody Room was full of goodies. I visited often since new items were added daily, however I tried to be discretionary and not just take everything that was available.

TIP: The best swag is one that readers keep. I skipped the paper flyers and the bookmarks. What I went for were the free books, bad boy calendar, pens, free download cards, and condoms.

What captured your interest?♥



MEMBER ON THE SHELF: XYLA TURNER

**ACROSS THE TRACKS**

By Xyla Turner

Azina Media Publications

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Across the Tracks is an interracial romance novel that stars a Philadelphia school teacher/journalist and a stubborn politician.

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THE END

Are you participating in RWA National's THE END challenge? Let President Ursula Renée know. This is a one way to prove you are seriously pursuing a writing career. Happy Writing!♥