

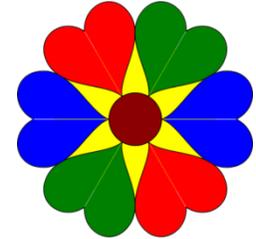


KEYNOTES

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

APRIL 2016

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING: APRIL 2
TRS, 40 EXCHANGE PLACE, 3RD FLOOR, 12:00-4:00PM

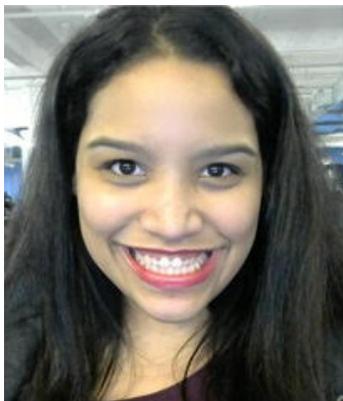


TOPIC: Agent -Editor: Teamwork & Submissions

SPEAKERS: Linda Camacho, Prospect Agency
Norma Perez-Hernandez, Kensington Publishing



Linda Camacho joined Prospect Agency in 2015 after a decade in publishing. She attended Cornell University and her experience since graduation created a great background for a career in agenting. She interned at Simon & Schuster and Writers House literary agency, worked at Penguin in production, and settled into children's marketing at Random House before making the move to Prospect. She received her MFA in creative writing from the Vermont College of Fine Arts. She's interested in MG, YA, and adult fiction across all genres (particularly romance/women's fiction, horror, fantasy, and contemporary). She also seeks select literary fiction (preferably with commercial bent). Diversity of all types welcome (ethnicity, disability, sexuality, etc.)!



Norma Perez-Hernandez is an acquiring editorial assistant at Kensington Publishing Corp. She has worked on a variety of projects, including fiction, mysteries, thrillers, and non-fiction. A New York City native, Norma studied English literature at the Macaulay Honors College at The City College of New York and is a graduate of the Publishing Certificate Program at City College. She is thrilled to build a list with diverse authors and books. She is seeking: Fiction (historical romance, contemporary romance, multicultural romance, women's fiction, historical fiction, traditional and cozy mysteries, suspense, select young adult) and Nonfiction (strong narrative based nonfiction and memoir; books about pets changing a person's life).♥

CRITIQUING & WRITING MARATHON, 3:00-4:00pm

STAY WITH US! Bring 2-3 pages for critiquing and/or bring your laptop/notepad and write the afternoon away. You can work on your novel or write a 100-word Paper Doll Flash Fiction piece; see p19.♥



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page
3—President's Message
5—Minutes
6—Industry News, Members on the Shelf
8—Embracing My Particular Brand of Crazy
9—Going the Indie Route
11—About PRO and PAN
12—The Writer's Life
14—My Writing Den
15—Ask Alice
16—Romance Festival Letter
17—Getting Your Facts Straight
18—Paper Dolls

THANK YOU!

To Our Contributing Writers

Stacey Agdern, Alyssa Cole, Maria Cox, Dee Davis, Maria Ferrer, Kwana Jackson, Falguni Kothari, LaQuette, Kate McMurray, Alice Orr, Joan Ramirez, Ursula Renée, Catherine Stine & JN Welsh

2016 CHAPTER CALENDAR

Jan 9	Feb 6	Mar 5	Apr 2	May 7	Jun 4
Jul 9	Aug 6	Sep 10	Oct 1	Nov 5	Dec 3

KEYNOTES DEADLINE

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

RWA/NYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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 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, PO Box 3722,
 Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163
www.rwanyc.com
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rwanycblogginginthebigapple.blogspot.com

MAY'S THEME



WHO'S THAT GIRL?

Meeting Today's Heroines.
 What Kind of Women Are
 Romance Writers Writing About?

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:
HARDER, BETTER, FASTER, STRONGER!
BY PRESIDENT KATE MCMURRAY**



New Yorkers are busy folk. I feel as though everyone I know is always trying to juggle a dozen balls—myself included. All this activity can make it hard to find writing time. However, it is absolutely possible to write more without losing sleep or burning out. And I think that's something we career-focused writers should strive for: writing harder, better, faster, and stronger, and improving our process and our finished novels as we go.

In March, I read two writing books: *2,000 to 10,000* by Rachel Aaron and *AND WRITING FASTER FTW* by L.A. Witt (both are short and available as ebooks, and I definitely recommend them). I read both books in part because I was putting together a workshop on how to write better first drafts, and I thought these books might have some tips. They did, but they had some useful advice for me, too, and also take somewhat different approaches to writing faster.

One bit of advice from both books is to use your time more wisely.

Aaron recommends keeping a detailed log of when you write, how long you write for, where you are when you write, and how many words you wrote in that time. When she did this for herself, as she details in the book, she discovered that she wrote more per hour if she wrote for several hours consecutively, and she was most productive in the afternoons when she turned off her wifi. She explains that this isn't necessarily true for all people (it's not for me; I'm more on my game first thing in the morning) but the point is to keep track so you can determine when your most productive time is. Which is to say, you don't have to carve more time out of your already jam-packed schedule in order to write more, but you should assess when your most productive hours are so you can make the most of that time. It's not about writing more, it's about writing smarter. Then guard your writing time—don't plan other things during it and minimize distractions.

Witt talks in her book about those distractions. We all know what a time suck the Internet can be. How sometimes "writing" means browsing Facebook for three hours. There are also often environmental things that keep us from writing: your chair is uncomfortable, your back hurts, you have a headache, the neighbors are playing their music way too loud, your kids are screaming in the other room, and so on. Sometimes, the writing just isn't going to happen. But sometimes you can get up and fix those things so they aren't distracting you.

To me, it's about priorities. Writing is one of my first loves, and if I could do it more, I would. I sometimes prioritize writing over things like housecleaning, although I haven't quite mastered the art of time management yet, especially having just started a new job. So I read these two books about making the most of your writing time, and I sat with their advice for a little bit.

Aaron says in her book that, if writing isn't a joy for you, you're doing it wrong. Which is to say, yeah, sometimes you have hard days. But the reason you sit in that chair every day (or however often you write) is that you love it. Writing is a difficult career to succeed at—it's a lot of work, it's competitive, and sometimes it pays in Styrofoam packing peanuts—but a lot of writers get into it for love. They love writing and storytelling, love developing characters, love the time spent living in other worlds. So writing should always be something that brings you joy, or at least some level of satisfaction. It should be fun.

It's not always. I know that. I find deadlines debilitating sometimes. I have days when I feel like the worst hack. Sometimes I'll sit down in the chair and the words just won't come, or I'm stuck on something, or I'm procrastinating on revising because I know how much work it will be.

Here's one takeaway from Aaron's book, though. She challenges us to ask *why*? When writing is not joyful, why is it such a struggle? What is our resistance, what are our blocks? One suggestion she has is that often writers block is born of the fact that we don't know what comes next. An easy solution is to spend five minutes with a notepad working out the next scene and figuring out what you don't know. As an avowed plotter, I can testify to the fact that having a plan is so enormously helpful in combatting the dread blank page and the cursor blinking at you mockingly.

But Aaron argues that we need to look deeper for the answer to that *why*. What are our blocks? There are a lot of possibilities worth examining. Insecurity is one; that's something Witt talks about in her book. The trick, Witt argues, is to silence that insecurity. One way to do that is to realize that every writer has insecurities, but they power through them anyway. And so can you! Another possible block is imposter syndrome, something a lot of creative women suffer from—it's that "I'm not worth" feeling, or the sense that you're not worthy of praise because you're a talentless hack and everyone else is delusional or lying to you, something I am well familiar with—but focusing on writing the best book we can is one way past that. We block ourselves in other ways, too—assuming we won't be successful, or that no one wants to read the kinds of books we're writing, or that we just can't compete with all the other books being published. I try to believe that all things are possible, because these kinds of negative assumptions definitely hold us back and impede our progress. It's hard to summon the energy to write if you don't think you'll be successful, you know? But you definitely have it in you to be a successful writer. Yes, even you. It just takes some hard work and elbow grease.



More to the point, you can't publish a book that hasn't been written, so sit down and write it! In other words, take the time to work out what is holding you back, or what is making writing hard or undesirable, and work on those things. Then when you sit down to work on your novel, the words will come easier.♥

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; and as Vice President of RWA/NYC. She lives in Brooklyn, NY. Visit her at www.katemcmurray.com.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Michelle Alerte
 Sylvia Crin-Brown
 Cristina Fahrback-Connors
 Paola D'Angelico
 Lise Horton
 Catherine Maiorisi



CHAPTER MINUTES: MARCH 2016
BY SECRETARY STACEY AGDERN

The meeting was called to order by Mimi Pizarro Logsdon at 12:19pm and the February Minutes were approved by Ursula Renee, with a second **from XXXX**.

Treasurer's report: Tamara reminded the chapter that the day of the meeting was the cutoff for renewals. She also reported that we have \$6,780 in the bank.

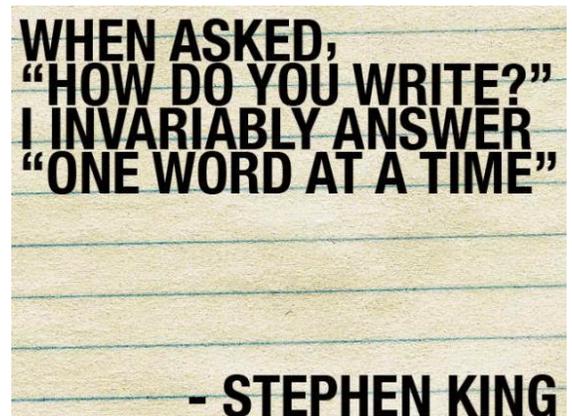
Secretary's report: Stacey told the chapter that we had no new members since the February meeting, but that she was also waiting for renewals.

Keynotes: April's topic is 'the Writer's life.' Send your articles to Ursula by the 15th of the month.

Committees:

- Critique: Mimi Logsdon reminded the chapter that critique meetings take place twice a month on Wednesdays.
- Romance Festival: Our romance festival will be on June 25 at the Morris Jumel Mansion. This will be our third festival; last year's took place in the pouring rain and we had a turnout of 250 people! There will be baskets made and opportunities to donate.
- Brooklyn Book Festival, Sept 18: We need volunteers. You can also take a two hour slot at the table to sell your books, as well as volunteer. Michael Molloy also pointed out how important it is for members to promote RWA-NYC on their social media, as well as their blogs (if they have them), as a way of trying to create interest in the chapter.
- PAN: We are in need of a new PAN liaison.

Meeting Ended at 12:45.♥

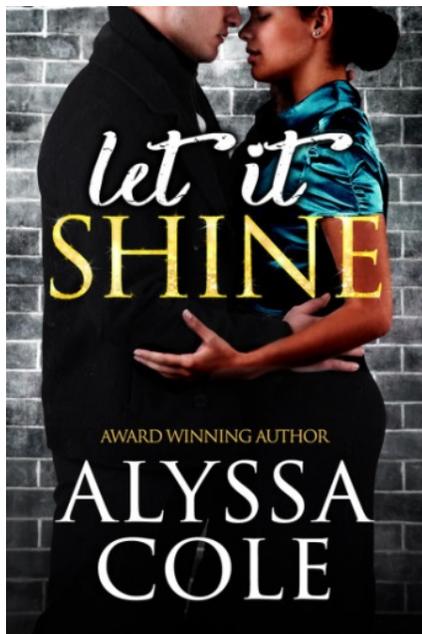


INDUSTRY NEWS BY KATE MCMURRAY

- Samhain Publishing announced at the end of February that they are starting to wind down operations. They are closed to submissions but still publishing books that were already scheduled when the announcement came through. There have been hints that something new may be on the horizon, but for now, many authors are requesting their rights back and most of the editorial and art staff have been laid off.
- There are some big changes at Berkley/NAL (part of Penguin Random House) including a number of layoffs and Nora Roberts moving to a new publisher (Macmillan). It's unclear what the end result will be, but there may be some significant changes to the imprint in the near future.
- RWA issued a statement regarding Pocket Books and a statement made by one of their editors at RWA in New York last year that hinted that they do not acquire multicultural authors. For more information, go here: <https://www.rwa.org/p/bl/et/blogid=20&blogaid=1454>
- RWA National approved a new standing committee on diversity.
- RWA News: Early registration for this summer's RWA national conference ends on April 5. The registration fee goes up \$50 after that. RITA and Golden Heart nominations were announced on March 25.♥



MEMBERS ON THE SHELF

**LET IT SHINE**

by Alyssa Cole

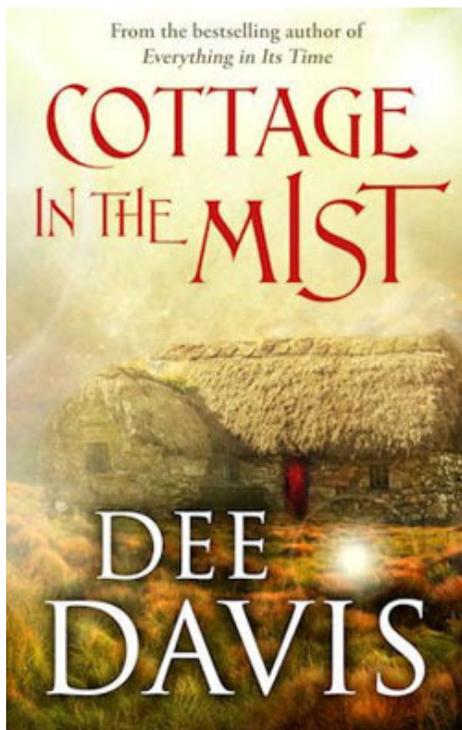
www.alyssacole.com

continued.....

**CONGRATULATIONS, ALYSSA!
2016 RITA FINALIST
FOR ROMANCE NOVELLA.**



MEMBERS ON THE SHELF...CONTINUED

**COTTAGE IN THE MIST**

by Dee Davis
Pocito Press
www.deedavis.com

**WITCH OF THE CARDS**

by Catherine Stine
Konjur Road Press
www.catherinestine.com

FREE PROMOTION!



Keynotes is a FREE Promotion Opportunity. We welcome all subjects.

Have a new book out? Entered/won a contest? Interesting topic, research, tips to share? An event, book, conference you'd like to review? Send in your articles, news, book covers, reviews, etc., to keynoteseditor@gmail.com. Articles will also be published on the Chapter Blog for **DOUBLE** the promotion!

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

**EMBRACING MY PARTICULAR BRAND OF CRAZY
BY LAQUETTE**



Embracing my crazy...one character at a time.

**THE APPROPRIATENESS OF PROFANITY IN ROMANCE:
WHY I'LL NEVER CONSIDER CENSORING MY
CHARACTERS**

First, let me preface the subsequent information presented in this article with this little token: My name is LaQuette, and I write erotic romance novels. Now that I've gotten that out of the way, let us begin.

My characters suffer from potty mouth and I make no apologies for it. Nope, no apologies at all. The truth, I can't even muster enough shame to feel bad about it, so if you're looking for remorse, please be forewarned that it won't happen.

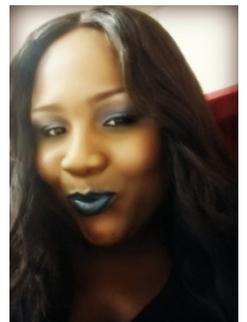
Cursing in my novels is not something I do for shock value. I do it because it feels right at the time. My characters' profane language serves to express a very real and raw emotion. I'm of the opinion that their language should reflect that too. After all, isn't that what we do in real life? Don't believe me? Keep reading and I'll show you I'm right.

Imagine saving up enough money to buy your dream car. You've saved for years and now you can finally get the car of your dreams. You go to the dealer; you have just enough to cover the cost of the car and liability insurance *only*. You get the keys, you drive off the lot, and you stop at the red light. All of a sudden you hear squealing tires, and then you feel a hard jolt to your car, followed by the sound of crunching metal. You put your car in park; get out the car to see a little old lady has plowed her monster-sized circa 1969 boat of a Caddy into your cute little sporty coupe. Upon looking at the wreckage, the first word that comes out of your mouth is...? See...*that's* why my characters curse. Only a naughty four-letter word is going to accurately express the emotion and probable rage going through that driver's mind at that moment.

Lastly, I'll reiterate, I write erotic romance. I write about sex and love in a very frank, adult, graphic, and vivid (some would say dirty) way. I pretty much feel if you're picking up my book to read about all the titillating things my characters do to one another to express their love and you're enjoying that titillation, then a little potty mouth isn't going to hurt you, and it should probably be expected.

Thanks for spending a little time with me. This is LaQuette, your friendly erotic romance author, embracing my crazy...one character at a time.♥

2015 Georgia Romance Writers Maggie Award Finalist in Erotic Romance, 2015 Swirl Awards Finalist in Romantic Suspense, bestselling erotic romance author, LaQuette, is a native of Brooklyn, New York. She spends her time catering to her three distinct personalities: Wife, Mother, and Educator. LaQuette loves hearing from readers and discussing the crazy characters that are running around in her head causing so much trouble. Contact her on Facebook, Twitter, @LaQuetteLikes, her website, www.NovelsbyLaQuette.com, Amazon, her Facebook group, LaQuette's Lounge, and via email at NovelsbyLaQuette@gmail.com.



GOING THE INDIE ROUTE: COLLABORATING ON ANTHOLOGIES
BY ALYSSA COLE



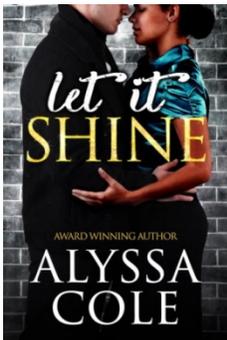
The best part of indie publishing is having control over every aspect of your work. But there are certain situations where giving up some of this control can be beneficial; one of them is working on an anthology. I've worked on two historical romance anthologies: *FOR LOVE AND LIBERTY: UNTOLD LOVE STORIES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION* and *THE BRIGHTEST DAY: A JUNETEENTH HISTORICAL ROMANCE ANTHOLOGY*. Working on an anthology can be lots of

fun, but there are many factors to take into consideration, both good and bad, before you begin.

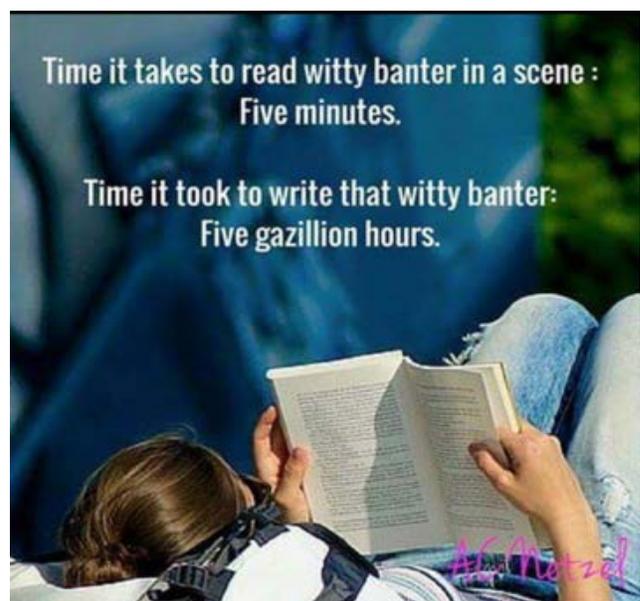
- 1.) **You're the one in control! *You're the one in control.*** The collaborative effort of an anthology can be exhilarating: coming together with like-minded authors to create something special. But don't think that more people mean less work. Even if everyone carries their load, the act of coordinating several stories by several authors is hard. You're not dividing the work of self-publishing you're multiplying it. Keep this in mind before you begin.
- 2.) **Did I say you're in control? That was kind of a lie.** When you do an anthology, everyone will, ideally, be giving up a portion of their control over the final product for the greater good of the project. Every aspect of the anthology must be plotted out and agreed upon by the group. The cover. The story length. The editing process. The marketing plan. Be sure that you're truly prepared to work with a team---and give up some of the control you'd usually have---before you begin.
- 3.) **Someone has to be the banker.** Handling finances as an indie author can be daunting. When you publish an anthology, one author will have to handle the financial logistics. That person will have to be in charge of disbursing payments over set periods of time, and tax stuff as well. The person in charge of finances is also generally in charge of handling the uploading/publishing portion of the project as well, so keep this in mind. You might have to draw straws, but someone's got to do it.
- 4.) **Co-author compatibility.** This one is super important. As I already mentioned, the anthology is a team effort, and you have to be sure that everyone on the team is ready to play. Try to find co-authors who match your working style. If you're laid back and your co-authors are type A, that's a set-up for unneeded aggravation. Conversely, if you want to keep a strict schedule but the other authors are chronically late, you'll end up tearing your hair out. Make sure you choose people who have a somewhat similar working style to avoid conflict.

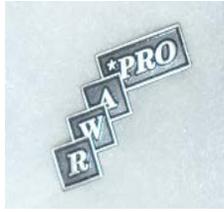
- 5.) **Find your special skill.** Ideally, each person contributing to the project has something to offer beyond their story. Some people are good at marketing, while others are good at the project management aspect. Perhaps you have someone who knows how to create cover art and promos, and someone else who has connections to quality editors and proofreaders. Everyone has something they excel at, and when each person uses their individual skill set to better the project, it's a beautiful thing.
- 6.) **Sign an agreement.** "But so-and-so is my friend. Why---" Okay, let me stop you right there. This is still business, even if you're having an awesome time working with good friends. Each author should sign a contract covering topics such as duration (i.e., how long the story must remain in the anthology before it can be published elsewhere), funds (e.g., max/min for total cost of project), etc. There are templates available online that can be modified to create an agreement tailored to your project. This can avoid headaches down the line.

Working on an anthology can be extremely fulfilling for a writer. In a profession that can sometimes be isolating, it's an opportunity to share in a creation bigger than any single work you produce. But it also requires compromise and lots of hard work (split as evenly as possible). Be sure to consider all the factors before indie pubbing your anthology!♥



Alyssa Cole is an award-winning author of sci-fi, historical, and contemporary romance. She lives in Martinique with her husband and their animal menagerie, watching anime and craving a New York slice of pizza with every particle of her being.





ABOUT PRO

 PRO Liaison: Maria Cox

Hello fellow RWA/NYC chapter mates! Maria Cox, your PRO Liaison here.

If you are a PRO member of RWA you can now join our Yahoo! Group. Please click on the link below and I will approve your request:

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/rwanycpro/info>

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. (Revised guidelines, April 2015)

Questions: Please send me an email at maria@mywritingden.net.♥

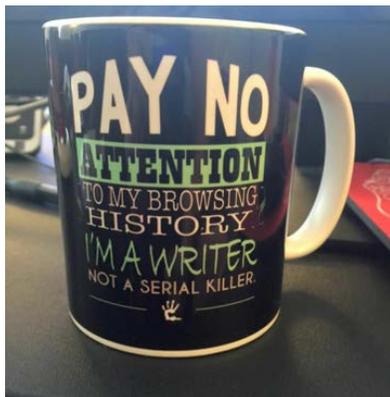
ABOUT PAN (PUBLISHED AUTHOR NETWORK)

 PAN Liaison: TBD

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 an novel or novella, but not yet earned \$1,000 ("Option Two"). Works offered through Predatory Publishing companies shall not qualify.♥



Our theme this month is

THE WRITER'S LIFE

Here's what our members have to say.

PLAYLISTS & PLOTS BY JN WELSH

Music gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything. –Plato

The first thing I do when I get into the car or arrive home is to turn on the music. Normally, it's a mix that I have created and one that I listen to over and over again. People sometimes ask me if I don't get bored or tired of listening to the same playlists, but the truth is that the songs that I have put together inspire me, and in some way shape or form, influence my storytelling. When I hear an exciting new song that I instantly love, I can play out a whole novel or a scene during the length of that song.

I enjoy listening to music when I write. Listening to music when I write is inspiring but can be distracting. For this music lover, I often see music as the main event, not the pre-show. This is why I create playlists for my stories and listen to the same ones as a sort of ritual to get me engaged with my story and characters. If I hear another song that reminds me of the story, then I will add it to the playlist.

So, what kind of music do I listen to? Well, I listen to all types of music from classical to electronic dance music. Depending on what I'm writing and the emotion I want to convey, the music will change. In the current series I am writing, music is a huge part of the story. As a result, I have several playlists including live music sets by artists that remind me of my characters and music that not only evokes a feeling, but also help me to describe the nuances, sounds and overall experience for my reader.

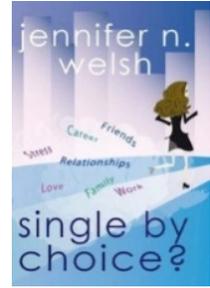
Sometimes the music inspires what my characters will do and often times elicit a sudden turn or intensity of emotions. I think to myself, "this is what (character name) would listen to in his or her apartment," or "something like this might be playing in the background," or "if this was a music video I could see this entire scene being played out."

The more slow and sultry stuff is great for good love scenes, but I always have to test that scene with my critique group. So here is the caveat. Since music is so emotionally charged, there is a bit of caution that I have learned to take when editing my work.

Don't play music.



The reader is not in my mind or in my house and thus will not be associating a particular scene with the song I listened to or playlist I created. Therefore she or he may not make the same emotional connections to my storyline or an intense moment in my novel. So though music can be integral in inspiring and driving the creative process, I highly suggest quiet for reading and editing and see where the novel takes you without the music.



With any luck the story will give soul to the universe you created, wings to the mind of your reader, flight to their imagination and bring your novel to life.♥

Jennifer Welsh continues to write and work toward her ideal dream of being a hybrid author. If you have questions and/or would love to connect with her, please email her at author.jnwelsh@gmail.com or via www.jnwelsh.com.

MOTIVATIONAL SENSE MAKES LOTS OF CENTS

BY JOAN RAMIREZ



Have you ever gotten up early in the morning and stared at a blank page? You're looking at the clock. Only one hour to write and then you have to get to work, take your kids to school, or run an errand that can't wait (or you think can't wait), and so on.

As a freelance educator and, I hope, a future full-time novelist, I spend my days switching hats.

Let me set a scene. Whether you're in a permanent job in an office or working from your home, you still have to get up and show up at the office or your home-based work space. You've been trying to submit a novel to an agent or an editor for a while now but can't seem to motivate yourself to focus on finishing your work in progress.

1. Pat yourself on the back for getting this far.
2. Breathe in and out five times. On each inhalation, tell yourself that you're in control. On each exhalation, breathe out any doubts.
3. Set an intention for the day: I'm going to complete ten pages by (make a definite date with yourself) and keep on going until (make a targeted finish date) until it's done.
4. Deal with distractions. Life interrupts and often, it's not politely. Things happen that are out of our control. Reason with a challenging client, student, or situation and move on.
5. Don't tell me there's no one around to give you positive reinforcement. When you're all alone, look in the mirror (or if you're in the office please do this in the ladies room) and say to your reflection, "My work matters and has merit to me and my readers."

6. End the day with another intention. I did well today and tomorrow my work will be even better. Then, give yourself a big hug. Feel the warmth surround you.

Here come the cents: If you apply these motivational senses, the cents will turn into dollars from contracts that you'll be depositing into the bank.♥

Joan Ramirez has published three nonfiction books as well as many online short mystery stories and is currently a freelance educator and journalist. The best is yet to come: Published romance and romantic suspense novels.

**HELLO AND WELCOME TO MY WRITING DEN!©
YOUR BRAIN ON WRITING
BY MARIA COX**

I'm restless by nature. And, when not writing, I tend to be anxious. Why is that? Because a writer's brain is seldom at rest.

Take this for example, while in line at the supermarket, or at the nail salon, or even while on a crowded subway I'm constantly watching people. In my mind, I have shamelessly flirted with good looking men on the train, even with some of the men in my office. Does that make me a bit of freak? Maybe. Or maybe, I could simply call this behavior *practice*.

Look some of the bestselling authors out there have imaginary foes and friends. Many great novelists –in fact – have spent years developing relationships with make-believe pals. It's no coincidence then that some books can captivate and fascinate thousands of people. This writing acumen doesn't happen by chance, this acumen is perfected over many years of researching, observing, mimicking...*practicing*.

In my case my vivid imagination has produced several sexy novellas. From scorching love affairs to salacious office liaisons, my short stories have been the source of much guilty pleasure for many readers.

So, if I ever appear to be staring into space, please know I'm not simply daydreaming, I'm likely formulating my next racy love story. Practice makes perfect!♥

Maria Cox is a PRO member of Romance Writers of America; she has also served 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 NEW site www.mariacox.net and/or follow her on Twitter.





**ASK ALICE:
TIME MANAGEMENT IS MIND AND HEART MANAGEMENT
BY ALICE ORR**

Question: What is your biggest Time Management problem?

Answer: My biggest Time Management problem is Me!

If you'd asked me this question last month or maybe even last week I'd have said this. "My biggest Time Management problem(s) is (are) other people and life and all of the demands these entities make on my time and my energy and my spirit too. So there!"

Reassessment tells me that (those) are not true answer(s) to the question. Why not? Because they leave Me totally out of the equation. As if the power in my life to live my life and parcel out my time somehow resides outside of myself in other people and other circumstances.

The true answer has been banging on my head for a while now. Often from the advice wise friends have tried without success to give me. Also from my own observation of other – or the same – friends. Even from my priest who's been talking a lot about self-care lately.

My biggest problem with Time Management is the same problem I have with managing too much of my life in general. I simply do not know where to put myself in the lineup of my priorities. As one of those wise friends put it – I don't put myself at the center of my life.

I've been long conditioned for this behavior. My mother used to tell me I always wanted to be at the center of things – as if that wasn't at all where I belonged. Even my sainted grandmother raised me to believe that if I wasn't making the world a better place I shouldn't be here.

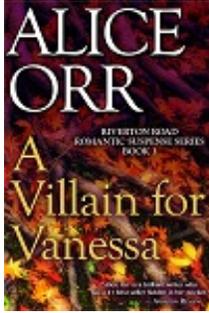
All of which I interpreted as a clear admonition to put everybody else first. To do everything I could for everybody else whenever possible. And most pointedly – at least in my hearing of it and therefore in my head – that to do for myself or take care of myself was a bad thing.

BTW both of those women followed their own advice. One of them did so with teeth gritted and resentment in her heart and happenstance didn't happen well for her. The other did so with love and kindness in her heart and she fared better but not as well as she deserved to or should have.

Meanwhile I carried on the family tradition by launching myself straight into the helping professions in first one form then others. Schoolteacher. Community organizer. Social worker. Book editor. Literary agent. That last requiring perhaps the most outpouring of self of all.

Guess where most of my time was spent through all of that. And where it was not spent. "You have a right to have your own needs satisfied." That was another wise friend saying. My response was to stare at her as if she were speaking a language from an alien galaxy.

I'm telling this whiny story first because I need to tell it. But even more so because almost every writer I know – maybe almost every person I know especially if she's a woman – needs to hear it. Because so few of us put ourselves solidly at the center of our own lives.



We have to change our minds about that and our hearts too. Otherwise we will never be able to manage our time or our energy or our hungering and thirsting spirits. Not to mention we won't be able to manage our careers either. So there! ♥

Alice Orr's "Ask Alice" column was born from many years of being asked questions about writing and publishing. She has lists and lists of those questions and attempts to answer some of them here. Alice would welcome your questions as well. A WRONG WAY HOME is Book 1 of Alice's Riverton Road Romantic Suspense series, and a free ebook on Amazon. A VILLAIN FOR VANESSA – coming soon – will be the fourth book in the Riverton Road Romantic Suspense Series. Visit Alice at aliceorrbooks@gmail.com or at <http://www.amazon.com/Alice-Orr/e/B000APC22E/>

ROMANCE FESTIVAL: JUNE 25 FROM FALGUNI AND KWANA



Dear Chaptermates:

This is Falguni & Kwana once again coming to you with an appeal for monetary donations for our Romance Festival Baskets and to give a huge heartfelt thank you to those who donated last year!

As you know on June 25th we are once again holding our Annual Romance Festival at the Morris-Jumel Mansion. This year we'd like to make it better than ever and attract even more visitors to come, browse and hopefully purchase books from our fantastic authors. That said we are putting together 3 themed gift baskets to be raffled off to attendees.

We will have a Spa basket, an Oscars/Movie basket and a final grand prize basket with a Kindle inside! (We have the Kindle donation already!)

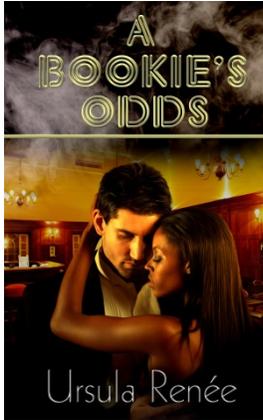
As we said previously, we will be taking monetary donations in order to fund putting together the baskets and once again at the following Saturday meeting, Kwana and I will be taking monetary donations or checks, made out to the chapter (that will go to the chapter's treasurer) to fund the baskets.

Or if you can't make the meeting you can do donate the easy way by clicking on the **donation button** on the chapter's website under the **Romance Festival tab** and paying through the site. It should be set up already.

We are happy with all donations so please help us out and participate.

We will also be collecting paper swag (**no more than 3 pieces per member**) such as postcards or bookmarks to add to the baskets if you'd like to give a little promo for your wonderful books!

Thank you so much for your generosity and kind attention.♥



GETTING YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT: CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS BY URSULA RENÉE

The answer to the question was difficult. There were times Randy missed the solitude of the farm. With the closest neighbor three miles away, everyone pretty much kept to themselves. People were not in his business and the only chance they had to express their opinions was the few times a year that he ventured into town.

On the other hand, he did not miss the kerosene lanterns, the mule and cart, and, most of all, cold winter morning trips to the outhouse.

Randy grew up on a small farm in the 1920s and even though I never lived on a farm and was unable to travel back in time; I was able to get a sense of Randy's experiences, thanks to conversations with my grandmother who lived in rural North Carolina until the 1950s.

Besides books, newspapers, and letters, authors can learn about what life in a different time or location by interviewing people. Parents, grandparents, and friends can provide a wealth of information and paint a more realistic picture of what life was like for the average person.

When interviewing a relative or someone you are familiar with, remember to follow the same rules of etiquette that you would follow if the person was a stranger.

1. Inform the interviewee that you are conducting research for your novel and you would like to ask a few questions. Do not assume that the person is willing to speak with you simply because she is a family member or a friend.
2. Show up on time for the interview. No matter how old a person is, what stage he may be in his career, or how close you are to him, he has better things to do than sit around all day waiting for you
3. Be prepared with specific questions that you want to ask. Do not leave it up to the interviewee to know what information you seek. She is not a mind reader. Also, she may not be readily available for a second interview in the event that you forgot something.
4. If there is a question that the interviewee does not feel like answering, do not press the issue. Realize that there are some memories that a person may not feel comfortable reliving or information they may not want to divulge.
5. However, if the person enjoys telling stories, sit back and listen. If you are lucky, the interviewee may have pictures that they would like to share with you or evening magazines or newspapers for you to look at. Old receipts can give you an idea of what people wore and how much they cost.
6. If she goes completely off topic or you do not have the time for her to tell you her entire life story, politely steer the interview back to the specific question you asked.

7. If you want to record the interview, ask before you pull out any recording device. Not everyone feels comfortable being recorded.
8. After the interview is completed, thank the interviewee for his time. It is also a nice gesture to follow up with a thank you letter or a token of appreciation.♥

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

PAPER DOLLS: IS THERE TIME FOR LOVE? **BY MARIA FERRER**



Years ago, Kathryn Hayes, one of our Founding Mothers, and I did a workshop called, Paper Dolls. We gave out photographs we cut out from magazines and asked members to come up with a character profile and a story outline. I've decided to revive the **Paper Dolls with a Flash Fiction Twist** – so this will be a monthly writing exercise and a promotional opportunity.

This month we're talking about The Writer's Life and Time Management so check out this photo. Where is the love? Is the honeymoon over for these lovers? Or are they trying to catch up on their emails after a night of sizzling passion? Does she earn more than him? Does he care? Does he have more toys than she does?

A picture may be worth a 1000 words, but for our Paper Dolls Flash Fiction, we only need a 100.

Write a *100-word* mini scene (about 6 sentences) using this photo and email it--along with your bio--to keynoteseditor@gmail.com by the 15th of the month. We will print your Paper Dolls Flash Fiction in the Keynotes and on the Chapter Blog. And you can also post on your blog/website for extra exposure.

Let's play Dolls!♥

Maria Ferrer loved playing with paper dolls as a child and still does. She rips photographs of people and places regularly from magazines, and now with the internet she also copies photos she finds on Facebook and Twitter. As her collection grows so do the ideas in her notebook; sometimes it's a scene; sometimes a character profile. Paper Dolls are great inspiration. Visit her at www.marializaferrer.blogspot.com, and visit her alter ego, Del Carmen, at www.mydelcarmen.com.
