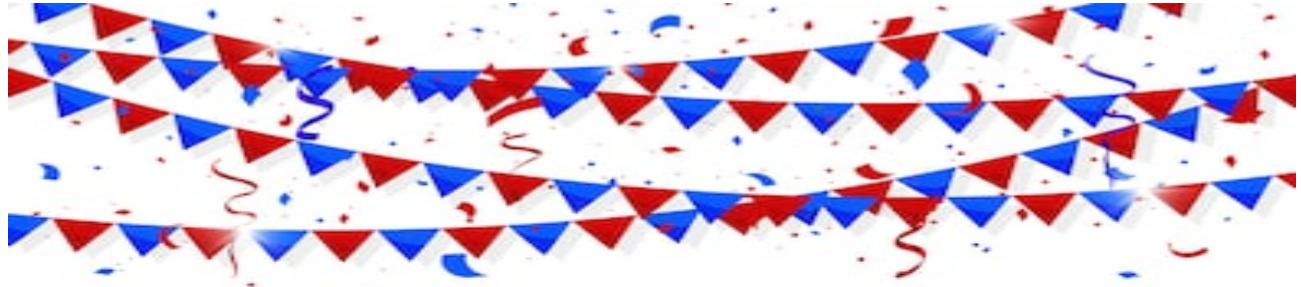


KEYNOTES



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



NEXT MEETING: SATURDAY, JULY 6

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

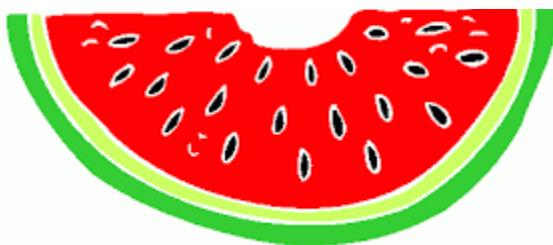


SPEAKER: TARIA REED

**TOPIC: DESIGNING THE RIGHT COVER FOR THE
RIGHT MARKET**

Your cover is the visual representation of your book. Choosing the design that both intrigues and inspires the reader's imagination is pivotal to your story's commercial success. Discover some of the important elements necessary for a best-selling book cover.

BIO: A self-proclaimed romance audio book junkie, In 2013 Taria opened her stock site, *The Reed Files*. She specializes in a vast array of mainstream and multi-cultural stock photography and offers her talents for custom cover art creation.

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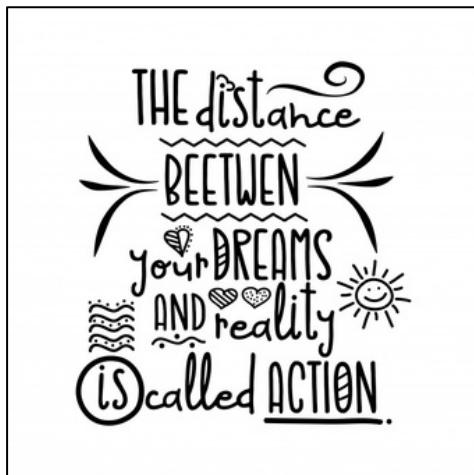
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

LaQuette, Sylvia Baumgarten, Kay Blake,
 Alexis Daria, Kate Dunn,
 Jean Joachim & Kate McMurray

MEETING INFORMATION

RWA/NYC meets the first Saturday of each month. Meetings are held at TRS, 40 Exchange Place, NYC. 12 noon. Membership is at the discretion of the Board. Annual dues are \$40. Make all checks payable to RWA/NYC. There will be a \$20 fee on returned checks.

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

**AUGUST THEME****HOT ISSUE**
Let's Talk about S-E-X.

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

DEADLINE: 15th of the month

RWA/NYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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KEYNOTES DEADLINE

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: THE MAKINGS OF A SERIES
BY LAQUETTE



Series are all the rage in publishing. Every time a deal is publicized, it's for a series. When our favorite self-published authors talk about the thing that helped them build their readership, there's usually a series at the heart of their success. Why? The answer is simple. Readers enjoy revisiting the worlds and characters they love in our books. If they loved book one, they're more than likely to pick up book two. With built-in marketing such as this, a series can be a smart way to build momentum in your writing career.

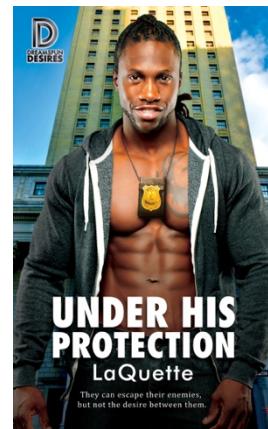


Yes, series are great marketing tools. However, they can also be a great deal of work. So, before you commit to writing one, here are several factors to consider when deciding whether or not to turn your book idea into a series.

First, how many books do you want to commit to writing? Before you map out the outlines and plot points, make sure you truly want to write more than one book in a particular world. As I mentioned previously, series are a great deal of work. Between attempting to keep all the worldbuilding and character details straight, it can be a tedious and often exhausting task to write a series. Therefore, before you do any real pre-writing work, consider how long you want this series to be.

Second, you need to know how it all connects. Series don't necessarily have to be a continuation of the preceding story. They can, but they don't have to be. They can be a set of interconnected standalone titles that feature a common theme, location, or event throughout each book. If you do want them to be a continuation of each story, they can either focus on one set of protagonists throughout the series or, you can choose a new set of main characters from previously appearing secondary characters. However, you choose to link them, figuring out what the common thread is between each book will help you flesh out your idea.

Third, is your story arc strong enough and detailed enough to last three or more books? If you're writing a romantic suspense series and there aren't enough connecting suspense elements to link all your books, your five-book planned series can turn into a standalone novel in the blink of an eye.



Fourth, can the current series evolve into a possible spin-off? I mentioned that each book in a series sells the next. The same can be true for a related series. When you're designing your series arc, consider if it can branch off into another related, but independently sustainable series.

Whatever your decision, series can be a fun and strategic way to grab and grow your readership. Just don't forget how much work is involved when considering whether to begin one or not.

Keep it sexy!

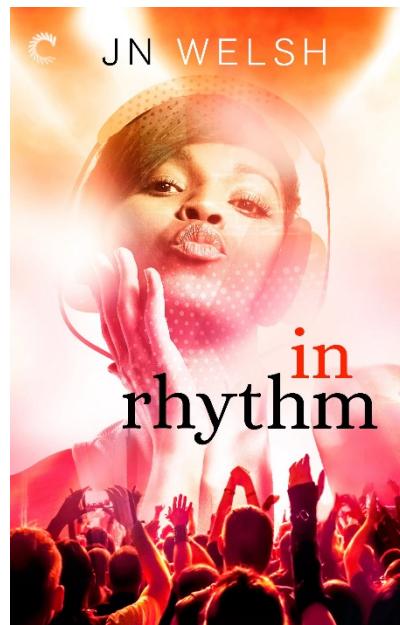
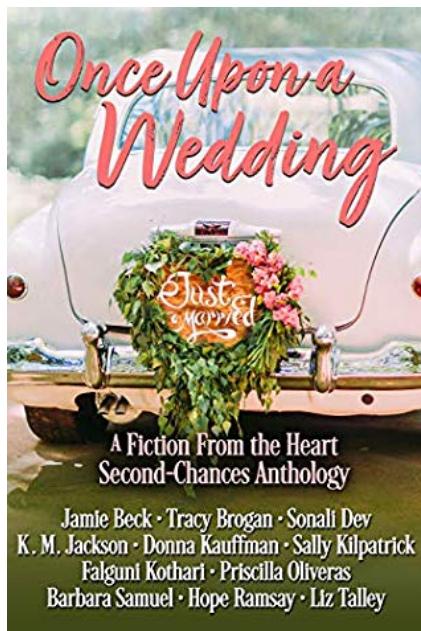
LaQuette

LaQuette-President of RWA/NYC, is the 2016 Golden Apple Award Author of the year winner. She writes bold & sexy tales for diverse characters who are confident in their right to appear on the page. Represented by Latoya C. Smith of the LCS Literary Agency. Websites: LaQuette.com,

MEMBER NEWS

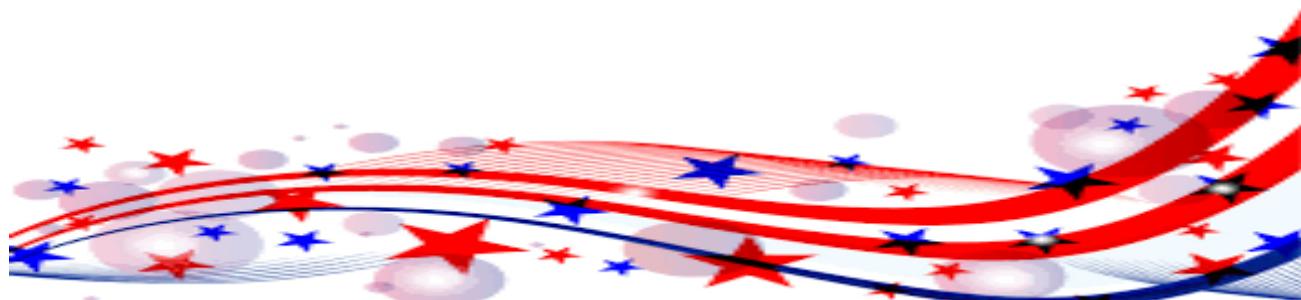
Congrats to Kwana & Falguni. Both have stories in the anthology ONCE UPON A WEDDING, which hit the USA Today's Bestsellers List!!

JN Welsh is pleased to announce that IN RHYTHM, book 2 in her Back on Top series, will be out in December. Meanwhile, here is her gorgeous cover.



JOIN THE RWA/NYC BOARD

Are you interested in joining the RWA/NYC Board of Directors? All Members in good standing are welcome to run. All positions are open --- President, two Vice President positions, Secretary and Treasurer. Feel free to talk to the current Board Member or her job. Email President LaQuette at president@rwanyc.com if you are interested in running. Elections will be in the Fall.



**July 23 (TUE) – RWA/NYC and PRW Industry Mixer**

7pm, Marriott Marquis, Westside Ballroom Salon 2, 1535 Broadway



You're cordially invited to a romance industry mixer hosted by Romance Writers of America/New York City & Philadelphia Romance Writers. Please join us for light refreshments while we mix, mingle, and start the national conference off with a bang. Please RSVP by July 16. Admission is \$30, includes wine and appetizers. Register at www.rwanyc.com.



Romance Writers of America®
The Voice of Romance Writers

July 24 - 27 (WED – SAT) – RWA National Conference

Conference opens at 8am at the NY Marriott Marquis Hotel

---11am – Annual General Meeting—all members welcomed

---5:30pm – First Timer's Orientation

**July 25 (THUR): PRO Retreat, PAN Keynote, Workshops, Indie Book Signing, Golden Heart Awards Luncheon, Industry Marketplace

**July 26 (FRI): Workshops, Book Signing, RITA Awards Ceremony, After Party

**July 27 (SAT): Librarians Day Breakfast, Workshops, Chapter Leadership Seminar, Readers for Life Literacy Autographing (open to public)

July 24 (WED) – Lady Jane's Salon Welcomes RWA

7pm, Madame X, 94 West Houston

Lineup: Brenda Jackson, Angelina M. Lopez, Felicia Grossman, Nita Brooks & Melonie Johnson
Admission is \$5, Cash only. Cash bar. Bring a friend!♥



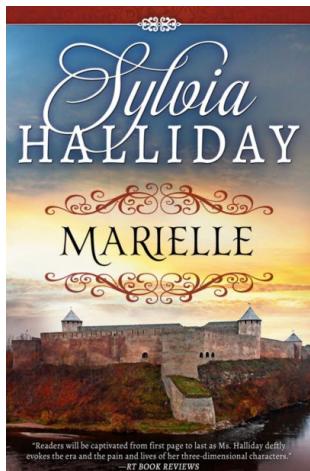
MONTHLY THEME

IS IT A SEQUEL?!

Inquiring minds want to know



HOW TO WRITE A SEQUEL BY SYLVIA BAUMGARTEN AKA SYLVIA HALLIDAY



Or maybe how not to!

Diversion Books has just released several of my backlist titles on e-books. They have titled the trilogy I wrote as the French Maiden Series. They are MARIELL, LYSETTE and DELPHINE, the first three books I ever wrote.

Now, when you write a sequel, there are several things you must keep in mind. First, you must leave enough threads in the previous book to hang a new plot on. That means enough characters, as well. And enough unresolved issues, without “cheating” the book you’re working on, or leaving the reader with a sense that there’s still a major problem left hanging.

As an example: my book, PROMISE OF SUMMER, by Louisa Rawlings. It's set in France, though the hero has a plantation in Martinique. He had been a pirate in his past, and had run afoul of his captain, who had vowed to kill him some day. In the book, he's uneasy when he's in a seaport, still concerned that the captain is searching for him, though he's not obsessed with a sense of danger. His heightened fearfulness and awareness is what reveals to the heroine his dark past. It's a small point, and doesn't hang over his head later on in the book. But I knew, when I wrote the book, that I had planted a thread I could use if I ever wrote a sequel, particularly since the book ends with the lovers boarding a ship for America and the islands. (And a pirate ship assaulting them on the voyage?)

Another thing you must keep in mind is that the reader may not have read the first book. This is VERY vital! You've got to approach the second book as though it were a “first”, and the first book is

merely the backstory. You fill in the details bit by bit, as you would do with a “first” book, and resist the urge to put TOO much backstory in. The readers who have read the first book can fill in the gaps themselves; the readers who haven’t might become bored with too much detail.

Okay. Got it? Now, back to my first trilogy. I wrote MARIELLE, then got encouragement from editors I contacted to keep writing, though no one was buying historicals at that moment, since Judith Krantz and “Glitz and Glamor” had become fashionable. LYSETTE was easy to set up, since the hero in Book One had a best friend, who made a perfect hero for the sequel. And since Marielle herself didn’t appear in Book Two for quite some time, it was easy to introduce her without the tedious backstory that might be necessary in the beginning of a book. She simply appeared as the wife of hero #1 and became friends with Lysette.

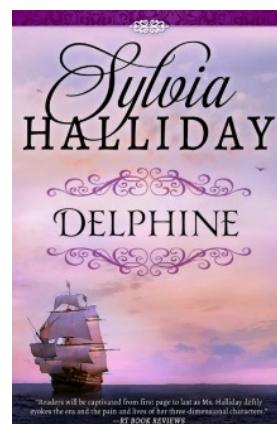
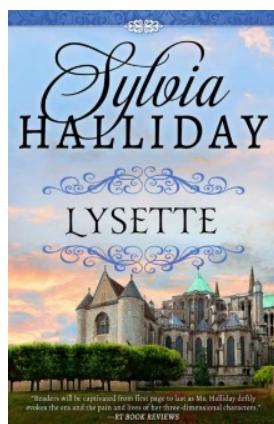
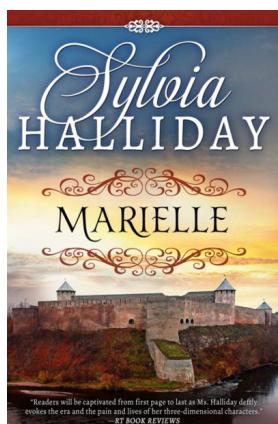
Now comes the problem. I was still in touch with several editors after I wrote LYSETTE. One of them steered me to an agent. (In those days, it was easy to contact editors---difficult to get an agent.)

The agent asked me to write an outline of a third book, so she could sell it as a trilogy. I was stuck. The books were set in time of Louis XIII. If the third book dealt with the children of Marielle and Lysette, I would be in the era of Louis XIV, a very complicated time, which would involve heavy research---very intimidating for a novice like me.

What to do? I had left no interesting characters to carry on the story. I looked over my four principals, and decided that, all things considered, Marielle could safely die, and her husband would sooner or later find another woman. And so, DELPHINE begins with the hero still mourning the loss of his wife the year before. I never realized it was a No-No until I was at a conference and a reader came up to me and said accusingly, “You killed off Marielle! How could you?”

At any rate, the trilogy was sold to Pocket Books. MARIELLE launched their Tapestry line and had a print run of 300,000. And I learned, belatedly, how NOT to write a sequel! ♥

Award-winning author Sylvia Halliday’s first historical novel, written as Ena Halliday, was chosen by Pocket Books to launch their Tapestry line. She subsequently wrote for Popular Library/Warner and Harlequin Historicals under the pen name of Louisa Rawlings, the name of her maternal great-grandmother. She has written for Kensington/Zebra under the pseudonym of Sylvia Halliday. She has published 14 historical romances. Her FOREVER WILD earned 5 stars from RT Book Reviews and Affaire de Coeur, and was a RITA finalist for the Romance Writers of America. Visit her blog, Life Lessons From An Old Bitch, at www.sylviahalliday.blogspot.com.





SEQUELS? YES. KIND OF. BUT ONLY IF YOU HAVE A PLAN.
BY KATE MCMURRAY

Major publishers love series books. The main reason is that they sell each other. If a reader stumbles upon your book in a store and loves the characters or world, odds are good that reader will snatch up the rest of the series.

There are three kinds of series in romance:

1. Series books that follow the same couple through every book, developing the relationship over the course of the series. (Example: Jordan L. Hawk's Whyborne & Griffin series)
2. Series books that focus on a different couple in each book but which have overlapping storylines and close links between the characters. It is recommended the books be read in order. (Example: Suzanne Brockmann's Troubleshooters series)
3. Series books that are all set in the same world and focus on a different couple in each book but can be read as standalones. (Most historical romance works this way. Example: Joanne Shupe's The 400 series.)



All of these are valid and can help you develop a loyal reader base!

I want to make a distinction between series and books that happen to have sequels. A series often needs to have a plan. Sequels may not. And the issue with unplanned sequels in romance is that you have to undo the HEA. By that I mean, you've written a great romance novel with characters who readers love and a happy ending that made readers sigh with delight, and you love the characters so much you want them to go on another adventure, but in order to have enough tension in the book, you have to put a conflict in the way of the characters' continued happiness. There probably are ways to do that well, but do you really want to? Does it mitigate the HEA of the original book?

But a series is a different beast. And here's the catch: you have to plan for it.

The reasons are two-fold. The first is practical: if you're pitching a series to a publisher, they want to see at minimum your plan for the series. Most book proposals require a synopsis of the first book and at minimum blurbs for each of the rest of the books.

But even if you aren't going the traditional route, a series still requires planning and preparation. If you're writing a series that follows the same couple, you will need to map out their arc. It's the undoing-the-HEA problem; the series will work better if the relationship develops over several books rather than the characters getting their HEA in the first book, because you want to maintain some tension between the characters. (This likely means that each book ends with a Happily For Now ending until, say, a big wedding climax in the final book.)

If you have a big series like Brockmann's Troubleshooters or JR Ward's Black Dagger Brotherhood, a series that may span more than ten books and have multi-book arcs and overlapping storylines, you'll need to do some planning for that, too. At minimum, you'll have to plan a few books in advance so that the multi-book arcs make sense and you have a sense for when and how each storyline will resolve.

If you're writing a series in which the books are basically standalones, you still should have a sense for who the couples will be in each book and the role the setting plays in tying the books together. (For example, are the heroines three sisters? Did the heroes fight together in a war? Does the series take place in London? New York? Baltimore? Outer space? What makes these three—or more—books a *series*?)

Bottom line is that series and sequels are not something to be done on a whim, in my opinion. Having a plan is the key to getting it right! ♥

Kate McMurray is a current member of the RWA National Board of Directors and Past President of RWA/NYC. She 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 lives in Brooklyn, NY. Visit her at www.katemcmurray.com.



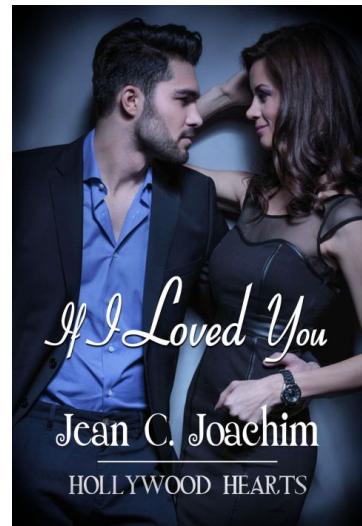
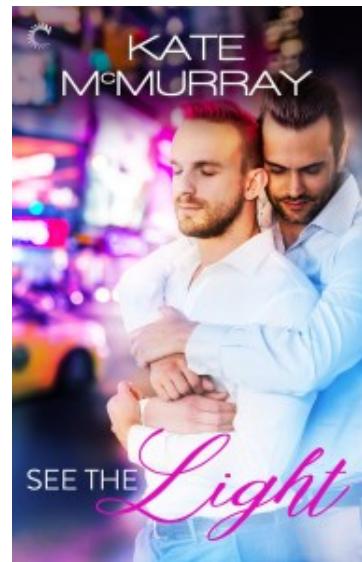
WRITING SERIES BY JEAN JOACHIM

What is a series? A series is a group of three or more books written with a common theme. The theme can be any of many subjects – from a small town to a big city, from a family to a profession or business, or even a team, to name a few. Any way you can tie stories together through a common thread can be a series.

One popular one is comprised of stories that take place in the same small town. Debbie Macomber does this often and well. I took inspiration from her Cedar Cover and Dakota books. If you like steamier fare, try Marie Force's Gansett Island series.

Family can be a series. Sandy Sullivan wrote a nine-book series called "Cowboy Dreamin'" about a family of brothers. I have a series called Hollywood Hearts, based on the movie business, with the main characters of each book working in some aspect of the film industry.

Sports romance is a popular genre for creating a series. A team naturally sets up a common thread to lay the groundwork for more linked books. Each book is a natural progression. You simply pick another member of the team to write about. Readers of sports romances comment often about how



much they like to see characters from past books in new books. Once they fall in love with a character, they don't want him or her to disappear.

Okay, so now you have your theme, what's next? Whether you are a plotter or a pantser, it helps to take the time to sketch out at least a list of books you intend to include in the series. You don't have to outline each book, but you will need to have an idea who will be the stars. It helps if you have a number of books in mind, even though that might change, once you're underway.

If you plan a six-book series, who are you going to write about? Jot down the main character's name, which book



he or she is going to claim, first book? Book three? It might be helpful to make a note of the overall theme of each book in the series. Are you going to have a second-chance romance in one, a friends-to-lovers in another? How about enemies-to-lovers?

Having a plan, an idea of where the series is going and who's going to be starring makes it easier to sit down to write. Of course, plans change, which isn't a problem. Nothing is set in stone but having a mental picture of your journey through the series may help you get started.

Keep a list, or a "series bible" of who is in each book, the details about the town, team specifics, anything that appears in book-after-book. I use an Excel spreadsheet for my sports teams. There I keep the names and positions of the players, their women, and the names of their opponents. I also note the names of significant players on other teams that I mention in the books. Keeping the players straight and marking it down on my spreadsheet gives me a reference and helps avoid making a mistake that jolts the reader out of my story.

Writing series is fun because you get seriously invested in the characters and can develop them over time. Readers love series. Series also allow you the luxury of running low-priced first-in-series book promotions, knowing you will make additional income on the sell-through to the other books.

Though a series is a commitment that can take you a year or more to complete, the satisfaction of getting to know your characters inside and out makes it worthwhile.♥

Jean Joachim, is an award-winning, international best-selling author of contemporary romance, romantic suspense and sports romance books. Visit her at www.jeanjoachimbooks.com to learn more about Jean and her books.

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



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

**CRITIQUE GROUP INFORMATION
BY KATE DUNN**

The critique group meets once a month from 6-8pm (5:30 for eating/ chatting) on the second floor of Smiler's, 54th and Madison. If you would like to participate, please let us know and we will send you an invitation to the Google Group. The rest of the critique group dates for 2019 are listed below. If you have any questions, please email us offline and we will be happy to chat with you. Happy writing! Kate and Candace ♥

August 12 September 16 October 21 November 18 December 16

**GOLDEN APPLE AWARDS
BY VICE PRESIDENT ALEXIS DARIA**

Here are the winners of our Golden Apple Awards:



Lifetime Achievement: **Brenda Jackson**

Author of the Year: **Alyssa Cole**

Agent of the Year: **Rachel Brooks**, Bookends Agency

Editor of the Year: **Cat Clyne**, Sourcebooks

Publisher of the Year: **Sourcebooks**

Bookstore of the Year: **WORD Bookstore**, NYC

Watch this space for more information on our upcoming GAA Reception in September, where will present our winners with their awards. ♥

FREE PUBLICITY!



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF US! Have a new book out? Entered and won a contest? Have an interesting topic, research, tips you want to share? An event, book, conference you'd like to review?

Keynotes is a FREE Promotion Opportunity. We welcome all subjects. Send in your articles, news, book covers, reviews, etc., to keynoteseditor@gmail.com. Articles will also be published on the Chapter Blog for DOUBLE the promotion!

Deadline: the 15th of every month. ♥

**ABOUT PAN
(PUBLISHED AUTHOR NETWORK)**



The purpose of the Published Authors Network (PAN) is to establish within the RWA framework a network of communication and support to effectively promote and protect the interests of published romance authors; to open channels of communication between those romance authors and other publishing industry professionals; and to encourage professionalism on all levels and in all relationships within the publishing industry.

To be eligible for General PAN Membership: RWA General or Honorary members in good standing should have earned at least \$1,000 on a single novel or novella that meets the definition of Romance Fiction.

To be eligible for Provisional PAN Membership: RWA General or Honorary members in good standing should have: (1) contracted for the publication of a novel or novella for an advance of at least \$1,000, but said work is not yet commercially available ("Option One"); or (2) published a novel or novella, but not yet earned \$1,000 ("Option Two"). Works offered through Predatory Publishing companies shall not qualify.♥

About PRO



The purpose of the PRO Community of Practice is to establish within RWA a network of communication and support to effectively promote and protect the interests of romance writers in the areas between manuscript completion and PAN eligibility.

To help members reach the next level, PRO focuses on the business side of writing rather than craft. This program is available to any active General or Honorary member who: (1) is not PAN-eligible and (2) has one complete original work of romance fiction of at least 20,000 words, or multiple complete original works of romance fiction which combine for a total of at least 20,000 words.♥