

♥ Winner of the 1999 RWA® Mid-Sized Chapter Newsletter Contest ♥

The Mid-Michigan Mirror



A Reflection of Romance

A publication of the Mid-Michigan Chapter (#12) of Romance Writers of America ®



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“The purpose of the Mid-Michigan chapter of Romance Writers of America is to promote excellence in romantic fiction, to help writers become published and establish careers in their writing field, and to provide continuing support for writers within the romance publishing industry.”

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The MMRWA February meeting will be held at The Golden Rose in Lansing, at 11:30 AM on the 21st of the month. Please see page 17 for directions.

Have you ever had the urge to write a biography? A family history? Your memoirs? A personal essay? Well, you're in luck.

The MMRWA's February meeting will feature Virginia Law Burns – free-lance writer, magazine and newspaper columnist, journalist and feature writer. Virginia is the recipient of numerous writing awards. She teaches creative writing, conducts workshops and has founded her own publishing company.

Join us for Virginia's presentation on Creative Non-Fiction. She will discuss many aspects of this lucrative market, including achieving excellence in the field as well as gaining publishing credits.



Inventing the Future. . .

Welcome to February! I've always considered February a romantic month, the month of love, a month celebrated by romance writers as the holiday embodying their craft. . . . I recently shared this with another writer who said, "Oh really, I've always thought of February as the year's oubliette – the dungeon where you can see the light but you can't get out." Okay, not everyone shares my enthusiasm, and I can see her point.

As romance writers, we can do a lot to alleviate this feeling and make the world a whole lot brighter. We are the creators of the fantasy. We give the young mother an outlet. We remind the a weary lover that love is worth the work. We give so many life-burdened people a place to rest. We create a place for those stuck in the oubliette to escape for a few hours. We simply take our readers to another place and show the world the way love should be. As writers, it is our responsibility to hone our craft. February will debut two short, new features at the MMRWA monthly meeting. One will be Writers Tips, Tricks and Tools and the other will be the Dreaded Writing Exercise. Don't worry, they'll both be fun and helpful!

We have so many people who shine throughout the year. During the month of February, we will have the opportunity to recognize one of them. Please think about nominees for the Angel Award. We have several exceptional members who are eligible. The nominee can be a leader, a mentor, or a tireless worker. Please submit your nomination in writing, along with a few reasons why you think that person should be this year's Angel, to committee chair Maris Soule or a member of the board. The Angel Award committee will be meeting before the March meeting to choose the recipient.

I hope February will shine for each and every one of you. Happy writing! Even more important, Happy Celebration of Love!

Michele Hickerty, President



Recap of the January Meeting

If you were unable to attend the January 2004 MMRWA meeting, you missed a thoughtful, stimulating presentation by our own Rosanne Bittner. Her speech, entitled, WE'RE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT, explored the misconception that there are vast differences between published and unpublished writers. Aside from the obvious distinction, we really are all in the same boat.

The concerns plaguing published and unpublished authors stem from the same virus – Writer's Paranoia. The symptoms are as follows:

- + Fear of not selling another/a book.
- + Am I really any good?
- + How can I possibly meet this deadline?
- + Writer's Block! What if I run out of new ideas?
- + Ugh – I think I hate this character. How can a reader/editor possibly like him/her?
- + Sagging middle – the literary equivalent of the sniffles. The only way to get around it, is straight through. Life doesn't stop for a cold, and the deadline doesn't vanish because of the sagging middle.
- + I have no idea how to end this story.
- + It's done, but it sucks. (The published variation on this theme is fear that the publishers will want their money back.)
- + What if the book doesn't sell?
- + What if everyone hates it?

Writer's Paranoia is a virulent illness. There is no cure.

However, there is hope. By cultivating and maintaining friendships with other writers, we can lessen the effects. Don't be afraid to share your fears – we all have them. A hand to hold in the darkness, a hug, a clear perspective, laughter, support – these are all things we can offer each other as we clear our own paths through the literary jungle. Throw your friends and colleagues a rope when they need one. Ask for help when you need it.

Remember –

- + Write because you love it.
- + Don't worry about competition – no one else writes like you do.
- + It doesn't matter who else is out there – you are your own competition.
- + Don't let Writer's Paranoia make you curl up in the fetal position – get up and write!

Chris Allen Riley, Vice president



Happy February Birthdays



Lana Miersen 4 ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ Kimm Jayne

Member News

Chris Allen Riley: Nearly finished with SIM; sending to Shannon Goldwin at Silhouette; next week starting next SIM (also requested by Shannon Goldwin).

Jen Armintrout: Well, I became treasurer of MMRWA.

Irene Atkinson: starting again on last Fall's ms.

Dawn Bartley: Glad to survive the holidays!

Rosanne Bittner: Finished 2nd Inspirational for Steeple Hill (*Walk by Faith*) and looking forward to vacationing in Mississippi in February; then launching book signings and advertising campaign for 1st Inspirational, (*Where Heaven Begins*) April '04 and for my next "American West" book (*Into the Prairie*) July '04.

Annette Briggs: Entered the Mid-Michigan Mirror in the 2004 RWA National Newsletter Contest.

Dana Corbit Nussio: Hoping to turn rejection into a sale.

Patty Gordon: Starting out with a "clean slate" (blank screen) for 2004.

Peggy Hanchar: Back to writing on that *!*! book; goal to write every day and finish it.

Michele Hickerty: Working on rewrites of *Ghost of a Chance*; doing a lot of writing for work.

Tammy Kearly: Got request for full from Silhouette plus lots of agent rejections; working on contemporary ST.

Lucy Kubash: Doing revisions on a completed ms; I hope to submit to *Love Inspired*; writing my Pet Corner column.

Laurie Kuna: Managed to get Christmas letter out in January; contemplating proposal for *ImaJinn*.

Pat Lazarus: Revising *Storm Master*.

Juli Schuitema: Working on fantasy and new movie script.

Maris Soule: Two rejections; will be at *Love is Murder* February 6-8; will pitch *A Party to Murder*.

Cheryl Steimel: Within two chapters of finishing my romantic comedy paranormal; sent out a query to Harlequin Flipside.

Barb Wismer: Finished revising first 2 chapters; working on re-plotting the book.

The Grind:**The Things We've Learned**

By The Friday Night Mudslingers (Michele Hickerty, Christine Allen Riley, Cheryl Steimel, Jen Armintrout, Patty Hall, Leslie Burkhammer, Lisa Cardle and Marti Ocilka)

The Friday Night Mudslingers is a diverse group of fourteen authors, both male and female, who write everything from Contemporary to Horror to Inspirational to Paranormal (and everything in between.) These writers vary in experience. While none are published in fiction, some are on the brink. Some are just starting out. Below are a few thoughts on the writing industry from the MMRWA members of that group:

(1) How did you discover your writing strength--in other words--how did you find out what kind of book/genre/subgenre you were good at? What experiences did it take?

Michele: Every time I turned around, someone was getting killed, kidnapped, stalked or embroiled in some sort of mystery. I moaned, "Why did my characters have to do this? Why couldn't they just have a secret baby or be cowboys?" I fought it, but the stories fought harder. So here I am writing my 4th romantic suspense.

Marti: I can't remember a time when I didn't write. I think the first "real" writing I did was our class play when I was in second grade and it was all uphill (or downhill depending on your POV) from there. I've tried a lot of different genres -- I'm really great at starting, but lousy at completing -- and when I would "hit a wall" or something would go wrong, I'd lose interest. I found I could sustain my writing if I just relaxed and let myself be myself. I'm not "zasily witty" like some writers or even "hold your sides" funny, but I need some element of humor in my stories. My "strength," if you call it that, is a grasp of good mechanics, but that gets pretty boring. So I try to relax and let the words flow as if I were talking to my reader. Sometimes in fragments. Sometimes violating grammar rules. When I do that, my writing is stronger. I have to have humor in what I write and a heroine who can laugh at herself. For those reasons, I could never write suspense/intrigue or horror.

Patty: I've always loved Harlequin Romances--I read my first one, *The Doctor's Wife*, the summer before I turned fifteen. I gobbled through them by the grocery sack! But as I matured and grew in my Christian faith, I realized that, for me at least, I needed romances that dealt with everyday issues from a Christian perspective. My heart is to write about real people in the real world learning to lean on a real God.

Jen: By reading books. If I don't enjoy what I'm reading, I'm definitely not going to itch to write it. Regency, for example, is one of those genres that I just can't dig into as a reader. I tried to write it once and it didn't read right. If I had tried to shop that book around I would have been exposed as a fraud.

Chris: I discovered it completely by accident. I used to love to read historicals and paranormals. I blithely thought those would be the subgenres I focused on. Wrong, wrong, wrong--while I did passably well with fftp, I couldn't breathe life into those wax-museum rejects no matter how hard I tried. Who knew?

Cheryl: I discovered my strength entirely by accident. I'd been humming along in the contemporary world when a writing exercise, a string of e-mail notes and the homicide of the Easter Bunny introduced me to a heroine I couldn't refuse. From her, I learned that humor is the best vehicle to express my craft. Now I deliberately look for ways to introduce it into my story (and keep my critique group in tears of laughter.)

Lisa: By writing. With my first novel (a YA written longhand at age sixteen) I learned that I liked dialogue and a lighthearted style. The same elements emerged when I resumed writing years later. I think I truly found my voice, though, when I started working on my current paranormal, my hero's speech, values, beliefs, etc just fell into place.

Leslie: I have been writing since elementary school, mostly fantasy and some contemporary. I have been pulled toward fantasy, in my writing and drawing ability. Being an only child for 12 years, gave my imagination time to expand and take me into worlds of my making. I've always believed in the unknown and lived in houses where some of my family spirits walked.

(2) Did you start out thinking you were good at writing one kind of book and then discovered your strength writing something else? What made you change your mind?

Michele: My first two books were historicals. The stories were pretty good even if the writing wasn't so hot. And yes, they had suspense in them, too. Then I entered a contest where the judge pointed out every single historical inaccuracy right down to "that word didn't exist until 1345." I was crushed. I tried to write historical after that, and I couldn't. I questioned every single word I wrote. I almost quit. Because I'm a writer and the urge to write doesn't go away, I moved into the 21st century and tried my hand at contemporary writing. My writing improved and so did my confidence.

Marti: Heck yes. Over the years, I've wanted to be everything from Carolyn Keene (10 years old) to Rosemary Rogers (rampant hormones at 25) to Maris Soule (mid thirties) to Robert Jordan or Tolkien (40's). For all the reasons stated in #1, it didn't work for me. I've been published in non-fiction (including national computer publications), but never fiction. Non-fiction is sooooo much easier. If you can research it, you can write it. It's fairly easy to find a buyer if you have a topic. But fiction is my love and that's where I'll keep striving to be published.

Patty: I thought I would probably write great humor--after all, my life is more 'I Love Lucy' than 'Little House on the Prairie.' But what I've been told is I'm tops at the tear-jerking emotional scenes. Instead of four stars, my critique partners give me four hankies.

Jen: I have about a thousand half finished historicals on my hard drive. I started doubting my ability to write. Then I tried to write in a contemporary setting, and it took off. Now the vampire part...it was a "write what you know" kind of deal. I know more about vampires than about being a single twenty-something living in New York and working at a publishing house, so I figured I'd better stick to paranormal romance and pass on the Chick-lit.

Chris: With no small degree of embarrassment, I admit that I was contemporary romance snob - especially category. But one day I was working on a short story and before my eyes it morphed into a contemporary romance and a category at that! Even more surprising - it was fun and I was fairly good at it. Go figure. My dearest friend and critique partner shared some of her favorite category novels with me - and wonder of wonders - I completely enjoyed them.

Cheryl: See above. After I discovered I could make someone laugh from what came out of my head, I tried returning to straight contemporary. My "voice" became forced and uninteresting. Write your strengths. The weaknesses, whether it is grammar, plotting or characterization, can be learned through books or workshops, or patched together with help from others.

Lisa: Actually yes. My current paranormal started out with a very suspenseful, almost horror-like quality. Don't know where that came from, but it definitely wasn't something I could sustain. I don't even like to READ horror!

Leslie: I started out with contemporary, but found myself limited by the realms of our perceived reality. So I delved into the paranormal and found a warm, fuzzy world for my imagination.

(3) Can a writer find clues in rejection letters or contest results as to her strengths?

Michele: When I got my first contest results ever, they were HORRIBLE. That year the contest I entered had some trouble with judges saying some pretty nasty things. Even knowing that, it hurt. A lot. But you learn how to have a thick skin and a sense of humor. That contest was four years ago. I think if I would have gotten those comments today, my jaw would have dropped, then I would have laughed, then I would have thrown them across the room, then I would have called my critique partner and laughed some more.

Marti: You know, if you get a form rejection letter, it could mean one of several things: a) the publisher liked your work but didn't have the ability to take on your book (most houses can only publish so many titles a year), b) It really didn't fit their needs (check their guidelines and learn you market), c) some overworked assistant finally was determined to whittle down the slush pile and went through 5 in an afternoon, or d) The editor thought your writing was lousy and your storyline was ho-hum. Hello! Big news. It usually does not mean D. But we as writers tend to assume it does. Instead of falling into that trap, polish it up and send it off again. If you get a personal rejection or a personal note on a form rejection, for gosh sakes, heed what it says! The editor who wrote that note saw potential in you and took the time to be personal. Feel good about yourself and try again.

Patty: I get a lot out of rejection letters/contest scores--at least I do once I've emptied out the half-gallon of chocolate chip cookie dough. <G> My first book was rejected by two publishing houses--an event that would cause most folks to pack it in for a while--but these editors told me they like my voice and encouraged me to keep submitting. And contests--please remember, SUBJECTIVE, SUBJECTIVE, SUBJECTIVE! Just because some judge thinks my manuscript isn't worth the paper it's printed on doesn't mean an editor won't love it!

Jen: Well, I've only done one contest, but it really helped me gain confidence in my writing. Okay, I didn't final, but my scores were great. It also helped that I got two completely different judges. One was a stickler for the technical stuff, and one who was caught up in the story and critiqued that. I'm sure there are some letters and scores that probably aren't very constructive. Even those can help, because you can laugh at them.

Chris: An unequivocal yes . . . and no. Like Marti said, a form letter from an editor could mean any number of things, and the rejected author will likely never know exactly what. A personal rejection with specifics can help immensely. As for contest scores I think they can help - particularly if you enter the piece in multiple contests. While some opinions of the elements of your story will vary, often there will be a consensus. For example, through many contests most judges agree that I'm fairly good at dialog and characterization and I rather suck at plot and setting. When I stand back and look at my work as objectively as possible, I tend to agree. The most important thing to remember is that they are subjective, very very subjective.

Cheryl: A good critique partner beats a contest judge any day. Judging is subjective. Some of the comments I've seen have been off base. Saying that, I usually find something that improves the manuscript, is it worth the contest fee? Only if you final and get your work in front of the right editor.

Lisa: Definitely. Especially if two or more judges comment on the same things (whether positive or negative.) It may shed light on areas of strength as well as weakness.

Leslie: Most definitely. We should always be open to learning, good and bad. I found I was consistently starting my books in the wrong place. So sitting on the floor and spreading them out, I highlighted, read aloud and even pulled Mark in to listen. I (hopefully) figured out my problem. I still start it in the wrong place, but now I know to look for the real starting point.

(4) Do you think it's important to know the market when you're trying to discover what kind of book to write? Do you just write the book of your heart and try to sell it?

Michele: The most important thing is finding your own voice and not trying to write like someone else. After that, I think knowing the market makes a 100% difference. It gives you direction, and you're not scrambling at the end to make or cut word count. You're not including elements that won't sell. However, I don't think you should try to write something you don't like just because there's a market. There are many markets for many types of books, know your niche first. That said, if you want to sell the book of your heart, see if there's a market first. If not, don't write it. Unless you don't want to sell. If you don't care if you ever sell it, go ahead and write it. All writing is good.

Marti: Yes. If you don't know the market, you could be writing just one more story about a group of assorted fantasy creatures out on a quest (Can you say LOTR?). Or worse, you're submitting wonderful, imaginative stories to houses that aren't looking for that type/style and you collect reject slips that erode your confidence in your writing. The old saying is that everyone has a story to tell. Sometimes you have a story that you need to write even if it isn't marketable. I guess it's important that you know WHY you're writing it. Some of the writing I do is cathartic. I doubt I'll ever use it in any marketable form, but it allowed me to rewrite the world around me into the ending "I" wanted. I don't feel it's a waste of time or procrastination. All writing is good practice and helps us perfect our craft.

Patty: I'm an old softie. My heart rules my head every time. Do I watch the market? Yes, but all the market research in the world isn't going to sell a book. I look at it this way--God has a perfect time for me. If I sell a book next week, next year or never, I'm on a path that He's laid out just for me.

Jen: If you're looking to get published it is important to know the market. Luckily for me, the books I want to write are very marketable right now. I do notice, though, that when I get a new idea I think "What line could I sell this to?" Right now I have an idea I'm kicking around that doesn't seem very marketable, but I might write it anyway.

Chris: It can't hurt to know the market. However, if what's popular isn't anything you feel passionate about, don't try to force yourself to produce something just because it's "in." Your lack of enthusiasm will likely show in your writing. Conversely, an author's interest in and passion for a subject will enhance the story. And when editors are asked

what they're looking for, they almost always say, "A good book." Make your book something you'd love to read as well as the best book it can possibly be.

Cheryl: To not write the BOYH is to prostitute yourself for an ever changing market. Yes, it's important to know enough to not send your erotica to the ex-inspirational editor, but if you write a "formula" book, the writing will be flat and lifeless and never see print.

Lisa: Yes, if you're writing for publication. Not so much, if you're just writing for the joy of it, or the sense of accomplishment. I believe it helps to know the market because it may be possible that your "book of the heart" has marketable qualities which you can stress. That football playing hero may also be a warrior personality, or there may be a strong emotional theme to your book which will overcome the "less-desired" (in terms of marketability) occupation of your hero.

Leslie: That depends on the book. The story of your heart is from your heart. You can't write it for a certain market. It's just there. If you're writing to sell (which I hope we all are, and if not, that's ok too), you should do your homework and find out what is being looked at.

(5) Speaking of the BOYH, is that book an indicator of your strength as a writer, or is it an itch you have to scratch? Or what is it, exactly? What makes a BOYH?

Michele: I think it may be an itch to scratch, not necessarily what you're good at. For example, the book of my heart is definitely woman's fiction. It's not something I write or even want to write, but this story is fighting to come out. It's one of those books that I might write someday, but I don't expect to ever sell.

Marti: Wow, tough one. To me, the book of my heart is a story I simply have to tell, capturing some of my ancestry. I doubt if it will ever be marketable, but it's a story I want to tell for my parents and grandparents. Someday, I will. For other people, it can be other things.

Patty: The BOMH happens to showcase my strengths, and I believe that's why so many editors have indicated an interest in it.

Jen: For me it's the characters. When I'd feel guilty for killing them off in the outline stage, that's when I know it's a story I have to tell.

Chris: A BOYH is a story you can't not tell. (Double negative - I know.). I believe a BOYH is the story that refuses to go away, the characters that poke and prod you when you're trying to sleep, that crowd your mind when you're awake. So far, these are the only stories and characters I've dealt with so I'm not sure if it's an indicator of my strength as a writer or my inability to say "no" to these people.

Cheryl: A BOYH is a parasite that takes over your life. Every waking (and sleeping) moment is focused around it. How can I add tension? What can the heroine do next to get in more trouble? Ideas and snatches of dialogue consume you to the point that you find yourself writing at stoplights and jumping out of the shower to capture that vital piece of information. A BOYH can not NOT be written. The trick is to lasso it, add your strength and hang on for the ride.

Lisa: To me the book of my heart is the book that is speaking to me right now. The characters who keep popping up no matter where I am, demanding that I get their story down on paper.

Leslie: I think it's an itch that just won't go away 'til you spill your blood and guts over it. It can also be an indicator, letting you know where you need to focus your energies (dialogue, description, conflict).

(6) What have you discovered about being a writer that you didn't know when you started out?

Michele: I learned that most of what I needed to know, I didn't learn in school. I never learned POV or character arc or even how to plot a story longer than 30 pages. I learned that other writers aren't competition. They're people from whom to learn and my greatest resource. And finally, I learned to trust in myself and my instincts.

Marti: I learned how many people think that a writer just sits down at a word processor for a couple of nights, spits out a 1000-pg manuscript (in a week or less), sends it off to an editor, who opens the package, reads the first page and then sends you a book contract AND a million dollar check in the return mail. What? You mean it doesn't happen that way?

Patty: That writing is hard work! <G> That there is no such animal as 'an overnight success.' And that I wouldn't give it up for the world.

Jen: It's a lot easier than I thought it would be. Maybe it's not easy. Maybe it's just more fun than I expected. I'm also pretty surprised by the egotism that goes along with it. I think of Kathleen Turner at the beginning of *Romancing the Stone*, where she's writing the scene and crying with joy about what a good writer she is, and that is exactly the same sort of thing I catch myself doing.

Chris: I didn't know just how much I'd care about these people in my head and how real they'd become to me. I didn't know how simultaneously exciting and infuriating writing a novel could be. I didn't know just how much I'd love this job.

Lisa: Revisions suck. :-) Really! They do! But they make your book, oh, so much better.

Leslie: How hard it is. The first draft is easy. It just flows. The bulk that comes after is the learning part. You have to look at your writing with a microscope--grammar, spelling, flow of the story. Sometimes you just have to put it away and start again. Stories have their own time to be told and if you try to rush them--Katie bar the door!

Cheryl: I need discipline. Left on my own, the story will be written eventually. With a critique group riding my heels, expecting work from me, I'm sure to park my butt in front of my computer and FINISH THE DAMN BOOK. Carve time from your day to write. Shut the door, let the dishes soak and discipline yourself to pander to those voices in your head. Think of it as a bubble bath for your writer's soul. Have faith in your talent and don't let anyone stop you.



RWA® Member Alert

In case any of our members have missed this important notification from our national RWA headquarters, this is a recent statement to members:

RWA has recently learned that at least one major literary agency has inserted in publisher/author contracts negotiated by the agency a clause which we feel could be detrimental to authors.

This clause is a deviation from agency norms. It appoints the agency “as the author’s sole and exclusive agent with respect to the work for the life of the copyright (and all renewals and extensions thereof) and authorizes and directs the publisher to make all payments due or to become due to the author.”

It additionally states that as sole and exclusive agent, the agent is “hereby irrevocably authorized and empowered by the author to act on the author’s behalf in all matters arising from and pertaining to this agreement . . .”

Traditionally, this clause has appointed agencies/agent as the sole and exclusive agent for the life of the agreement, not the life of the copyright.

What does it mean to the author?

It means that even if you leave that particular agent, and the rights to your book revert back to you from the publisher, you will still be obligated to pay that agent a commission for as long as the copyright lasts (copyright of a work generally lasts for the life of the author plus an additional seventy years).

This includes foreign sales, movie sales, or resale of the book, even if the agency does nothing to cause that sale. It could mean you will be paying two agency commissions, which could amount to thirty percent or more. This also would apply to the author's heirs.

We have been informed that this clause is being inserted into some contracts without notification to the authors with whom the agency has established fiduciary relationships.

This situation highlights just how important it is for authors to scrutinize their contracts, particularly the agency clauses.

It seems particularly ironic that while many publishers are moving toward more author-friendly agreements, an agency, which should be protecting its authors, would move in the opposite direction.

We are contacting the agency at issue and requesting that they remove this clause in contracts they negotiate or, at least, that the implications be explained to their authors (that even if they leave the agency, and rights from the publisher are reverted back to the author, they must still pay this agency a commission for up to seventy years or more for resale of the book, foreign sales, movie sales, etc.)

While we want to alert our authors about the clause, we also wish to emphasize that we are not advocating action on the author's part. Every writer should have the freedom to negotiate in his or her own best interests and make their own individual determination and evaluation regarding this clause and all other provisions of contracts being negotiated.



Retreat From Harsh Reality 2004

Brochures for **Retreat From Harsh Reality** have been mailed out to all MMRWA members! The 20th Annual Retreat will be held April 30-May 2, 2004 at the beautiful St. Ives Resort where we met last year.

Members only registration is open through February 7 and you can reserve a spot by returning your completed registration form and a deposit or payment in full. After Feb. 7, registration will be opened up to nonmembers. All registration closes on Saturday, March 27.

Don't forget about the MMRWA Gear orders too. Prices are the same and there are a few new items to choose from.

If you have any questions, please contact Pam Trombley at ptrombley@voyager.net. See you there!



Contests



2004 Laurie Contest, Smokey Mountain Romance Writers
Received Deadline of February 12, 2004 (Deadline extended)
First chapter (max 25 pgs) and synopsis (5 page max)
<http://www.smrw.org/contests/laurie/laurie.html>

Between the Sheets, Greater Detroit
Postmarked by February 14, 2004
Love scene (10 page max with a one page set-up)
<http://216.234.116.27/gdrwa/sheetform.html>



Grand Beginnings Contest, Northwest Indiana
Postmarked by February 14, 2004
First five pages.
<http://www.nwinrwa.org/contestform.html>

Magic Moment, Heart and Scroll
Postmarked by February 14, 2004
First ten pages.
<http://www.passionatepen.com/scroll/magicmoment.htm>

Stella Cameron Romance Genre Contest, Pacific Northwest Writers Association
Postmarked by Feb. 17, 2004
Max: 50 pages, includes first chapter and synopsis (5 pg max).
<http://www.pnwa.org/home.html>
Annual Erma Bombeck Writing Competition
Deadline Midnight February 20, 2004
You can enter online...no postage!
Cash prizes...Personal Essay - 450 words or less.
<http://www.wcpl.lib.oh.us/adults/erma.html>



Realizing the Dream, Phoenix Desert Rose
Received by February 28, 2004
Entrants must attend Conference!
First chapter (maximum length 10 manuscript pages) and the synopsis (3 manuscript pages)
<http://www.desertroserwa.org/realizedream.html>



Fabulous Five Contest, Wisconsin RWA

Received by March 1, 2004

First Ten pages

http://www.eclectics.com/WisRWA/fab5_entry2004.html#print**THE FOUR SEASONS AWARDS**, Sponsor: Windy City RWA

Receipt deadline: March 1, 2004

Enter: Prologue/first chapter (25 pages max)

<http://www.scribesworld.com/windycityrwa/fourseasons.html#contest>**WLT 2004 Novel Manuscript Contest**, Writers' League of Texas

Postmarked by March 1, 2004

First 20 pages

<http://www.writersleague.org/contests.htm>**Annual Orange Rose**, Orange County Chapter

Deadline: March 13, 2004

Beginning + synopsis (55 page max)

Information is not up at the website as of 1/27/04

Send SASE to: Angie Ray, 7128 E. Suffolk Circle, Orange, CA 92869

<http://www.occrwa.com/>**The Daphne du Maurier Contest for Unpublished**, Kiss of Death RWA Chapter

Received by March 15, 2004

First 15 pages, plus one page synopsis

<http://www.rwamysterysuspense.org/UnpublishedContest.html>**Dixie First Chapter**, Magnolia State Romance Writers

Deadline: March 15, 2004

First 25 pages max.

Information not on website as of 1/27/04

email pboswell@jam.rr.comwww.members.tripot.com/MSRW-Jackson/**Write From the Heart**, American Christian Romance Writers

Postmark by March 15, 2004

First 25 pages...

<http://www.acrw.net/conference/contest.shtml>**Spring Into Romance**, San Diego RWA

Received by March 20, 2004

First 35 pages

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

Second Annual Haunted Hearts Contest, Gothic Romance Writers

Received by March 20, 2004

Enter the first twenty-five (25) pages of your manuscript, plus a one-page, single-spaced synopsis (un-judged).

<http://www.gothrom.org/contest.html>

Jasmine Contest, Lowcountry Romance Writers

Postmark Deadline March 24, 2004

First 45 pages (or less) + five page synopsis

<http://www.lowcountryrwa.com/jasmine.htm>

Touched by Love, Faith, Hope and Love Chapter

Received by April 1, 2004

Synopsis (10 pg max) The beginning, not to exceed 50 pages total.

http://www.faithhopelove-rwa.org/tbl_rules.htm

2004 \$25,000 John T. Lupton "New Voices In Literature" Awards

Writers will submit a professionally written Query Letter and Book Proposal for a book not previously published.

Postmarked by April 5, 2004

<http://www.booksforlifefoundation.com/php/luptonawards.php>

2004 Winning Beginnings Contest ("The Sheila"), Valley Forge Romance Writers

Received by April 7, 2004

Synopsis (up to 7 pages) and beginning of manuscript not to exceed 35 pages total for synopsis and manuscript pages.

<http://www.vfrw.com/contest.htm>

2004 Foot in the Door, Los Angeles Romance Authors

Received deadline: April 15, 2004

Synopsis (10 page max) Query letter (1 page max)

<http://pages.ivillage.com/laromance/index.html>

Share the Dream, Scriptscene Chapter of RWA

Postmarked by May 15, 2004; Received by May 23, 2004

First fifteen pages of screenplay.

<http://www.geocities.com/rewrit2002/contestrules.html>

Compiled by Donna Caubarreaux. Printed with permission

Donna Caubarreaux is a member of Coeur de Louisiane, NOLA Stars, Heart of Louisiana, Kiss of Death, and Scriptscene Chapters of RWA. She received a RWA Service Award in 1997. She sponsors several writing lists.

<http://www.geocities.com/donnacaubarreaux/Main.html>

Directions to the Mid Michigan February Meeting at The Golden Rose, 3056 Okemos Rd., Mason, MI 48854 (approximately 1/2 mile south of the intersection of I-96 & Okemos Road). Phone: (517) 349-9500.

FROM EAST:

- *Merge onto I-96 W toward LANSING.
- *Take exit number 110- toward MASON/OKEMOS. 0.38 miles
- *Turn LEFT onto OKEMOS RD. 0.63 miles

FROM SOUTH: (Jackson)

- *I-94W/US-127 N
- *Take the US-127/M-50 exit- exit number 138- toward LANSING/JACKSON. 0.33 mi.
- *Take the ramp toward LANSING/CHARLOTTE. 0.11 miles
- *Merge onto US-127 N. 25.57 miles
- *Take the HOLT RD exit toward HOLT. 0.40 miles
- *Turn RIGHT onto HOLT RD. 2.18 miles
- *Turn LEFT onto OKEMOS RD. 2.11 miles

FROM SOUTH (Kalamazoo)

- *Merge onto I-94 E. 27.25 miles
- *Take the I-69 N/US-27 N exit- exit #108- toward LANSING. 0.93miles
- *Keep LEFT at the fork in the ramp. 0.45 miles
- *Merge onto I-69 N. 33.80 miles
- *Merge onto I-96 E via exit number 72 toward DETROIT.12.81 mile
- *Take the exit- exit number 110- toward OKEMOS/MASON.
- *Turn RIGHT onto OKEMOS RD.

FROM WEST: (starting in Holland)

- *I-196 E. 31.66 miles
- *I-196 E becomes I-96 E. 72.00 miles
- *Take the exit- exit number 110- toward OKEMOS/MASON 0.38 miles
- *Turn RIGHT onto OKEMOS RD. 0.42 miles

Schedule of 2004 Chapter Meetings

- February 21 Lansing-Virginia Law Burns/Creative Non-Fiction
- March 20 Grand Rapids-Marti Osilka/Personality Testing & Character Development
- April 17 Jackson-Developing & Maintaining a Critique Group
- April 30-May2 St. Ives Retreat!
- May 15 Grand Rapids-Sword Fighting Demo
- June 19 Plainwell-Sandra Portko/Stress Reduction=Increasing Productivity
- July 10 Lansing-Kevin Brink/ Naval Intelligence (tentative)
- August 21 Jackson-Jennifer Armintrout, Building a Better Vampire
- September 18 Plainwell-Golden Heart Preparation
- October 16 Lansing-Merry Zylstra, Psychic
- November 20 Grand Rapids-Bounty Hunter/Private Investigator
- December 11 Laurie Kuna's-MMRWA Holiday Party

Other special dates:

July 16-20 Dallas Texas RWA® National Conference
October 1-3 Lisle Illinois Autumn Authors Affair

Your contributions to Mid-Michigan Mirror are welcomed and valued. Please contact editor Annette Briggs at afbriggs@hotmail.com with submissions. The deadline for contributions to the March/April Mirror is March 20.

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