

# The Mid-Michigan Mirror

...A Reflection of Romance

Winner of the 1999 RWA® Mid-size Chapter Newsletter Contest

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## MISSION STATEMENT

THE PURPOSE OF THE MID-MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF ROMANCE WRITERS OF AMERICA® IS TO PROMOTE EXCELLENCE IN ROMANTIC FICTION, TO HELP WRITERS PUBLISH AND ESTABLISH CAREERS, AND TO PROVIDE CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR WRITERS WITHIN THE ROMANCE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY.



## —THE BOARD ROOM—

### October Meeting Rebounding Panel

by Margo Hoornstra  
Vice President/Publicity Chair

Nobody likes to lose or be rejected. And, while many try to avoid loss and rejection, writers invite it. For writers, those of us who create characters and their stories then send them out to editors and agents—sometimes even to our fellow writers—to be read, inspected, considered and ultimately judged worth of sharing further, rejection is all part of the process. Unfortunately, a huge part.

Then, after scores of the aforementioned rejections, your manuscript beats the odds and makes the cut to a contract. Where more perils await. Lines close—sometimes after several manuscripts, yours maybe—are contracted. An editor you've been working with who absolutely adores your voice is suddenly gone, and your manuscript is returned with a form rejection slip.

Misery, as they say, loves company. So, join your fellow MMRWA members—Nancy Gideon, Lucy Kubash, Margo Hoornstra and Diane Burton, with moderator Connie Smith—for a panel discussion on Rebounding From Rejection, an interactive meeting on Saturday, October 16, 2010 at the Belle Notte Restaurant in Jackson.

See you there!

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NOTE: Inquiries were made regarding an alternate meeting place in Jackson for the October meeting. Specifically, the Board was asked to look into the Old Country Buffet at Jackson Crossing Mall. However, Old Country Buffet does not have a private meeting room. Further inquiries did not result in an alternative restaurant. Therefore, the October meeting will continue as planned at Bella Notte Restaurant (directions located on page 2). Please note that consideration is being given to eliminating Jackson as a meeting location for 2011.

## The President's Corner

*By Lucy Kubash*

Last month we learned about blogging, Twitter, Facebook, and some Social Media we'd not even heard of yet. It was a very informative program, and even if you're not into that sort of thing, as a writer you need to at least be aware of today's new ways of communicating to readers.



This month, our MMRWA meeting will focus on Rebounding, or how to come back after a major setback, be it rejection, closing of a line, publisher bankruptcy, or something of a more personal nature. Most of us who have been writing for any length of time have experienced at least one, and probably more than one, of these issues. On October 16<sup>th</sup>, we'll talk about how to deal with the publishing world's and life's efforts to trainwreck our writing.

November we'll have another critique session, but we also would like to talk about the future of MMRWA; how we can develop a long-range plan to keep our chapter strong and relevant to all our members. There have been many changes in the last few years, some because of RWA®, some because of rules and regulations of the IRS concerning not-for-profit groups. We've managed to go with the flow and make the necessary changes, but how will those changes affect us in the long run? Where do we see MMRWA going in five years? Ten? How can we keep the members we have, increase our membership and encourage more people to serve on the board? These are important questions, and we'll try to discuss them and take a look at the issues discussed at this year's Leadership Seminar that Florence attended at the national conference. When it comes right down to it, we are a professional organization, and if we don't grow with the times and serve the professional writers in our chapter, we will have a hard time keeping up with all that's happening in the publishing world. Unpublished, just-published, multi-published, it doesn't matter. We are all in this together and the more we learn the more power we will have as writers.

As the year comes to a close, I hope we'll have a good turnout for these next two meetings. I think they will have a lot to offer all of us.

Happy Writing!

*Lucy*

### 2010 Officers

President  
Lucy Kubash  
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President-Elect  
Florence Price  
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Vice-President/Meetings & Programs  
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Secretary  
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Treasurer  
Rosanne Bittner  
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### 2010 Committee Chairs

Cover to Cover Editor  
Nancy Gideon  
covertocover@midmichiganrwa.org

Historian/Membership/Policy  
Dawn Bartley  
members@midmichiganrwa.org

I Will Write a Book/Write for the Money  
Diane Burton/Laurie Kuna

Library  
Lucy Kubash and Maris Soule

Member Recognition  
Florence Price

MMRWA Angel Award  
Laurie Kuna

Mystery Gifts  
Cathy McClain

Newsletter Editor  
Alyssa Marble

PAGE Liaison  
Margo Hoonstra

Publicity  
Margo Hoonstra and Donna Garrison

Retreat Chair  
Julie McMullen  
retreat@midmichiganrwa.org

Retreat Speaker Chair  
Laurie Kuna

RWA® Pro Liaison  
Tammy Kearly

Website Liaison  
Lynette Curtis  
info@midmichiganrwa.org

## MMRWA 2010 MEETING SCHEDULE

- January** – No chapter meeting.
- February 20**  
Grand Rapids – Member critique
- March 20**  
Lansing – Tax Strategies for Writers  
Speaker: Bruce Meyers  
Hantz Financial Group
- April 16 – 18**  
Kalamazoo – Retreat from Harsh Reality  
Speaker: Jo Ann Ferguson
- May 15**  
Jackson – A Writer's 7 Steps to  
Positivity  
Speaker: Connie Smith
- June 19**  
Grand Rapids – Member critique
- July** – No Meeting
- August 21**  
Lansing – Query Letter Idol
- September 18 –**  
Kalamazoo – How to Access the  
Internet
- October 16**  
Jackson – Rebounding Panel
- November 20**  
Grand Rapids – Member Critique/  
Leadership Discussion
- December 11**  
Lansing – Christmas Party

## October Meeting Directions

Directions to:

**Bella Notte Restaurant**  
**137 West Michigan Avenue**  
**Jackson, Michigan**  
**Phone: (517) 782-5727**

**From Grand Rapids:** Take I-196 E toward Lansing. Merge onto I-96 E. Take exit 106A to merge onto US-127 S toward Jackson. Continue onto NW Ave/MI-50 E/US-127 BUS S. Turn left at Wildwood Ave. Continue onto W Michigan Ave.

**From Lansing:** Take US-127 S toward Jackson. Continue onto NW Ave/MI-50 E/US-127 BUS S. Turn left at Wildwood Ave. Continue onto W Michigan Ave.

**From Kalamazoo:** Take I-94 BUS E/MI-96 E. Continue to follow I-94 BUS E. Take the ramp to Battle Creek. Merge onto I-94 E. Take exit 138 for US-127 N toward Jackson/Lansing. Turn right at NW Ave/MI-50 E/US-127 BUS S. Turn left at Wildwood Ave. Continue onto W Michigan Ave.



## CHAPTER ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Change in November Program

The November program is member critique. However, the business meeting will be extended to include a discussion regarding the Chapter's short-term and long-term goals, its mission, and how we see the Chapter in the future. This discussion is a product of the RWA National Leadership workshop. Florence Price, MMRWA President-Elect, attended the workshop. See page 6 for a synopsis of the workshop. Please keep the future of MMRWA in mind as we approach the November meeting and come prepared with your thoughts and ideas.

### A Writer's 7 Steps to Positivity, by Constance Smith

MMRWA Member Constance Smith presented *A Writer's 7 Steps to Positivity* at the MMRWA May chapter meeting. She has generously agreed to allow each of the seven steps to be reprinted in the Mid-Michigan Mirror in a seven part series. *Step 3: Fill Your Cup* appeared in the September edition of the Mirror. The series will resume with Step 4 in the November newsletter. Thank you for being so generous with your time and information, Connie.

### Christmas Donations

As in past years, donations will be collected for the Kalamazoo YWCA. Christmas donations and items on the in-kind needs list are needed. The in-kind needs list is located at on the web at <http://www.ywca.org/site/pp.asp?c=bpLJJTOvHmE&b=471795>. Dawn Bartley will be collecting donations at the November meeting, although other arrangements can be made. Please donate to this worthy cause and make someone's Christmas a little brighter.



**HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY!  
October**



02	Florence Price	16	Julie McMullen
02	Diane Burton	20	Karen Holthof
10	Katharine DuBois	23	Anne Stone
12	Holli Bertram	31	Lisa Childs-Theeuwes

## Bylaws Amendment

As you may or may not know, RWA recently decided that if chapters are going to use the name PAN for their published authors' group, they will need to go by the current "rules" set forth for membership in PAN. The current criteria you must meet to join PAN is as follows:

"Any RWA General or Honorary member in good standing who has either: (1) earned at least \$1,000 in the form of an advance on a single Eligible Novel or Eligible Novella (—Option Onell); or (2) who has earned at least \$1,000 in the form of royalties or a combination of advance plus royalties on a single published Eligible Novel or Eligible Novella (—Option Twoll) shall be eligible for membership in PAN."

If we are going to call our chapter's published authors' group PAGE (Published Authors' Group Exchange) we have to also amend our bylaws to reflect this change.

Here is the how the amendment reads:

### **Changing from:**

**Section 4.8** Communities of Practice: PAN and PRO. In addition to, and separate from, the membership classifications listed in Section 4.1, members may also be classified as being PAN members, or PRO members, or neither.

**4.8.1** PAN. Membership in this chapter's PAN group shall be open to any General member who has attained the status of PAN as defined by RWA.®

### **To:**

**Section 4.8** Communities of Practice: PAGE (Published Authors' Group Exchange) and PRO. In addition to, and separate from, the membership classifications listed in Section 4.1, members may also be classified as being PAGE members, or PRO members, or neither.

**4.8.1** PAGE. Membership in this chapter's PAGE group shall be open to any General member who has been paid an advance, royalty, or flat fee for a published work. Members may also belong to RWA® PAN, as long as they meet the guidelines set forth by RWA. ®

We could still have a PAN liaison, who would belong to the ChapPan loop, but that person would have to be a member of national's PAN and could only represent the members who belong to PAN. It appears that we may be able to have two groups within the chapter (PAN and PAGE).

A ballot will be sent out on the Business loop. Everyone should vote on the issue, as it affects everyone, published or not. Discussion on this topic will occur at the October meeting.

Please, when the ballot goes out, let's have everyone vote. It may not seem important to you, but it is very important to the chapter.

## 2010 MMRWA Board of Directors Election Guide

It's the time of year when we learn about and vote on next year's Board members. Voting for the 2011 Chapter Board Members will occur at the November chapter meeting. The candidates and their bios are listed below. Please take a moment to read about our fellow chapter members.

Also, thank you to Florence Price, Lorelee Lillibridge, and Laurie Kuna for working on the nominating committee.

### The Candidates

#### **Florence Price, Candidate for President**

I've been a member of Mid-Michigan RWA since 2008, and I love being a part of the MMRWA Chapter. The workshops, meetings and (of course) the yearly Retreat From Harsh Reality have all been wonderful experiences for me. I feel that these experiences, and the fellowship I've enjoyed since joining the MMRWA, have enriched my life. I'm looking forward to serving as your 2011 Chapter President, because I'd like to give something back to the Chapter and help it to continue to offer our members opportunities to learn and grow.



#### **Laurie Kuna, Candidate for President-Elect**

I'm a former MMRWA president, vice-president and secretary. (I never considered running for treasurer because I wouldn't want the responsibility of handling anyone else's money.) I write paranormal romance for ImaJinn Books, both historical and contemporary, and my first book, A War of Hearts, was published in 2002.



#### **Lucy Kubash, Candidate for Secretary**

I have been a member of Mid-Michigan RWA since 1984 and have served previously as Vice-President, Treasurer, Co-Librarian, Publicity Chair, and as President for the past 2 years. It's been a learning experience but an interesting one with all the changes that have taken place. Even though I've reached my six year term limit, I've decided to serve as secretary next year, as no one else has volunteered for the job. I look forward to working with next year's board and the chapter. We are a group of incredibly talented authors, and I've always been proud to say I'm a member of MMRWA.



### **Margo Hoornstra, Candidate for Vice-President**

Nearly thirty years ago, as an aspiring romance author, I was introduced to a relatively new writers' organization, Romance Writers of America®, through a local chapter near Detroit. Getting many others like myself around the state—or more accurately, seeing so many fellow romance writers come out of the woodwork—I was urged to help expand the group, and became a cofounder of Mid Michigan Romance Writers of America®.

A few years, and six unpublished novels later, disillusioned by too many rejection letters coupled with too little time, I 'went corporate' as I call it, into public relations. The job did allow me to continue writing, but in the form of magazine articles, television scripts and speeches. Other people's words, not my own. Unfortunately, I lost touch with my RWA friends in the process.

My short stories, essays and poems have been published in *Woman's World*, *Country Woman* and *Grit*. And, after reconnecting with MMRWA, I've had more short stories, and a full length novels published through The Wild Rose Press. And, reconnected with my writing friends.

Biographically, I am wife to one, mother to four, mother-in-law to three and grandmother to three. Empty nesters by choice, my husband Ron and I live in Mid-Michigan.

I'm pleased and flattered to be asked to once more serve such a special group.



### **Roseanne Bittner, Candidate for Treasurer**

ROSANNE BITTNER has had 57 books published since 1983 and is the recipient of numerous writing awards, including the prestigious WILLA Literary Award given by Women Writing the West, for her book, *WHERE HEAVEN BEGINS*. Her Native American novel, *SONG OF THE WOLF*, was nominated in 1993 for a RITA award for Best Historical Romance. Rosanne loves American history, especially stories of the Old West. Her novels always include real locations and real history, all told through fictional characters who reflect the kind of courage and sacrifice it took to settle America. Many of her titles have been sold to Russia, Norway, Italy, Germany, Taiwan and France, where she is extremely popular. Rosanne has taught many workshops at writers' conferences and is available for public speaking. She and her husband Larry have two grown sons and three grandsons. They live in Coloma, Michigan but spend part of their winter in Las Vegas, Nevada, from where they often travel for research. Rosanne is a member of Women Writing the West, Western Writers of America, the Oregon-California Trails Assoc., Mid-Michigan Romance Writers, Romance Writers of America, and the historical societies of Nebraska, Oklahoma and North Berrien Co. (Michigan). She is treasurer of the Coloma Lioness Club, which does charity work for Rosanne's community. She also helps do reports and book work for two family businesses, so she is well qualified to be treasurer of MMRWA.



*The following article first appeared in the September 2010 issue of In Print!, the monthly newsletter of Houston Bay Area RWA. Permission granted to reprint or forward to sister RWA chapters with proper credit to author and chapter.*

## **The Agony and The Ecstasy: A Second Look At Contests**

*by Robin Haseltine*

When I began to take my writing seriously, per advice of an editor friend, I spent a year entering contests. In a time of binder or butterfly clips, weighed and stamped return envelopes, and contrasting color sheets between printed entries, each contest was an expensive and painstaking endeavor. While I finaled on a rare occasion, I benefitted a LOT more from the experience than the sparse feedback from an agent or editor final judge.

Following instructions. If a writer can't follow instructions, no matter how exacting, their submission will never survive the delete button in an agent's or editor's email box.

Proper formatting. Contest submissions follow generally accepted guidelines for agent/editor submissions. Getting into the habit of double spaced, TNR 12 or 14 will keep an entry from winding up in the Golden Heart trashcan.

Craft lessons. Judges' feedback helped me understand SHOWing over TELLing, passive writing, and the importance of opening, and chapter hooks.

Subjective nature of the business. For every judge who loved my voice, my characters, and/or my plotline, there was another who disliked my voice, my characters, and/or my plotline. In essence, contests are a microcosm of the query process. Some agents/editors will ask for a partial or full or offer a contract, while others will hit the delete key after reading the exact same email.

Winning doesn't guarantee a sale.

Not finaling doesn't signify failure.

Both negative and positive feedback is beneficial. The more contests entered, the more feedback received, the easier to balance negative comments with positive assessment. Don't overdose critique partners with the same chapter rewritten fifteen times. Instead, experiment through contest entries, which provide anonymous, objective feedback from judges who view your work with a fresh eye.

I now have a wall of 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place certificates (although I'm still missing that elusive win and request leading to a sale). I've gone from entrant, to judge, to contest category coordinator. As an entrant, I waded through sometimes confusing results. As a judge, I've seen how a specific score sheet can tie my hands, so that my scores don't adequately reflect my true assessment of an entry. As a coordinator, I've seen how one judge's 86 is worth another judge's 100.

The process thickened my skin. Contest losses prepared me for agent and editor rejections. However, judges' encouragement and positive feedback spur me to continue honing my craft and offer hope an editor will also embrace my work.

*Robin Haseltine is an award-winning parenting columnist with articles appearing on Oxygen, Moms Online & Oprah.com. Robin has been writing fiction since 2006, finaling in several contests and working with an agent in pursuit of a book contract.*

*The following article may be used by other RWA sister organizations with proper credit to chapter and author. It was first used in the April 2010 issue of MARA Matters, newsletter for the Mid-America Romance Authors*

## It's Your Health, and Yes, You Are Worth It

*by Aimee Carper*

Many years ago I was a ballet dancer. I danced five to seven days a week and I had a body that showed it. I could stand on my toes, lift my legs to impossible heights, do the splits in every direction and out leg-wrestle football players. I was strong, and I thought I was healthy, but I wasn't. My eating habits were atrocious, I smoked and drank, and suffered from depression and insomnia. If I'd been a house, my foundation would have been cracked.

I was in my twenties before I began to take an active interest in my health. I was working as a secretary at a college that had just put in a fitness center. To run the center, they hired a female health guru in her fifties. I was still dancing at the time, though not nearly as much, and I had developed a serious fear that while working full time at a desk, my butt might expand to fill my chair. So I decided to check out the fitness center.

Since I didn't know anything about fitness, I had no idea what I was getting myself into when I agreed to do a fitness assessment. The health guru weighed and measured me. She pinched my skin and measured my body fat (definitely not one of my favorite memories), and then she had me take a cardiovascular endurance test. I had to walk. I don't remember for how far or how long, but I know I went round and round the gym, and to cheer me on, the health guru went with me. I was in my twenties; she was in her fifties. I should have been able to keep up with her, right? The woman lapped me. Several times. While smiling and cheering and calling out for me like a cheerleader. I was so angry and humiliated by the time I finished I just wanted to walk out and skip listening to the results of my test. But I didn't. I sat down in her office and I began to learn.

Nearly twenty years later, I'm still learning. But I'm also teaching. I work as a physical education and health teacher, and I've come to understand that the number one thing I need to teach my students in order to ensure they have the keys to live a healthy lifestyle is an understanding of what health is. If you don't understand it, you might be struggling to build a beautiful outward appearance while the cracks in your inner foundation keep causing you problems.

So here it is. Health is a tripod. (Yeah, I'm borrowing this analogy from *The Girl Next Door*.) If one leg of the tripod isn't working, the others will collapse as well. So what are these legs made up of? For health, they consist of physical, emotional, and social well-being.

When I agreed to write this article, I asked the members of MARA to tell me what their biggest writer related health challenges were. Including my own, I got twelve responses, every one of which included physical issues, and only three of which included social or emotional concerns.



At first glance, I thought, “Uh-oh. The tripod’s already out of balance.” But then I charted everything and realized that regardless of the health issue (with the exception of things beyond our control, such as recovering from surgery and dealing with medication that affects our ability to think clearly), every concern had something in common. Every last concern involved remembering to take care of ourselves.

So whether your concern involves physical pain, eating/drinking habits, guilt, depression, will power, or even carpal tunnel syndrome, I encourage you to seriously consider what I’m about to say. The first step toward improving health is to decide and believe that you are worth it. Sounds simple and maybe even obvious, but think about it.

How many of us routinely put ourselves and our health last? How many routinely drive children to every outing or sporting event humanly possible while not finding time to so much as take a walk? How many of us scrimp and scrape for every writing moment we can get even if it means forgetting to eat or only eating the quickest, least healthy options? How many of us push through physical pain because we’re finally on a roll with our manuscript and fear that if we leave the chair or look away from the computer screen the creative well will run dry?

Please don’t misunderstand. I am as guilty of many of these things as the next writer. And nothing I can tell you will offer a magic fix. I don’t have a recipe to add eight extra hours to your day that will give you time to do what you already do and take care of yourself. Believe me, if I did, my day would already have sixteen extra hours. But I can promise that if you don’t force yourself to make yourself (and by that I mean your tripod of health) a priority—if you continue to stare at the computer screen while your eyes are getting more and more tired and sore, you will eventually find yourself staring at your doctor while he tells you it would be better if you didn’t use a computer at all.

So what will you do then? Hand write everything? At least until you’ve developed a serious enough case of tendonitis that the doctor is telling you it would be better if you stopped trying to write by hand and only typed (of course you better get yourself a wrist pad or a split key board or carpal tunnel will be on the way, not to mention a program that will read your typing back to you since you’re still not supposed to look at the screen)... Is this a drastic scenario? Absolutely. But you get the point.

What follows are suggestions for specific physical concerns. But please believe me, nothing is as hard or as important as that first step.

For those who answered my question about health concerns related to writing, the biggest concern was diet. We all know it’s important that we eat, and that what we eat and how much of it makes a big difference. Food is the substance that supplies our bodies with the energy to keep moving. The parts that move our bodies are the muscles, so clearly muscles must have energy in order to keep moving. Once they’ve used all the energy your body has stored for them, they force you to slow down and/or stop—think of the way your legs begin to shake when you’ve walked or run too much, too far, or too fast.

Well, your heart and your lungs are also muscles. Your lungs are responsible for pulling in the oxygen your body needs. Your heart bears the responsibility of pumping the blood that carries the oxygen throughout your body. If your heart is not functioning optimally, things like your brain won’t function optimally either because they won’t get the necessary oxygen. What’s the solution? Make sure you eat enough to keep everything functioning at peak performance. And since healthy foods offer more nutrients than unhealthy foods, they’re the best option for you.



So how do you make yourself eat if you get so caught up in your writing that you forget to eat? You revisit step number one. Decide you are important enough and make yourself do it. Since that might be a big step and little ones are easier, little things you can do to help you achieve the big step include, cooking enough when you do cook to make sure you have leftovers that can be easily reheated during writing times. If the preparation for a healthy meal is what keeps you from making one, then prep ahead of time (e.g., grate enough cheese so that you don't just have enough for what you're making now, but also enough to last you through the rest of the week and any other meals you might want grated cheese for).

If snacking while writing is your downfall, make sure you aren't skipping regular meal times (whether that be three square a day or six mini-meals spread throughout the day). When you skip meals and your body becomes hungry, you are more likely to binge. Also, since cutting out snacking all together is probably unreasonable, keep a supply of healthy snacks on hand. Last but not least, don't ever take the box or bag or even a bowl-full with you. Grab a handful of whatever you want at a time. Chances are a handful will be enough to curb your hunger until your next meal time. If it's not, go back for another handful. If you take the entire container, you are more likely to eat three, four, six, or even ten handfuls because the food is in front of you and readily available.

As far as drinking goes, that eight cups of water that is recommended for you daily is not a joke. Roughly sixty to seventy percent of your body is made up of water. Whenever you sweat or urinate, you are losing water. That water needs to be replenished for your body to function optimally. Does soda contain water? Absolutely. But it also contains sugar and caffeine and other things that dehydrate your body, thereby working against the purpose of the water. So, when doctors and nutritionists say eight cups of water, they mean at least eight cups of WATER.

The good news? Your body craves water so much that once you get used to drinking it, you will likely find it more satisfying than any other beverage out there. If it's hard to leave the computer and fill your glass whenever it's empty, get a bigger glass or take more than one to your desk with you. But remember this, if you do leave your desk to go refill your glass whenever it's empty, you'll be helping to reduce the next biggest concern reported in response to my question—physical pain that comes from sitting at a desk and staring at a computer for far too long.

Repetitive motion injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome, back, neck and shoulder pain, dry eyes/vision problems...these are things anyone who sits at a desk and stares at a computer for long periods of time is at risk for. And if you are experiencing any of these problems regularly, I strongly recommend you speak with your physician. That being said, however, there are basic things that can be done to help prevent these things from becoming major health problems.

Make sure you are working in an environment that is as ergonomically friendly as possible. It's not good for your wrists to be bent at a ninety degree angle when you're typing, so you want a chair that allows you to sit high enough and a typing surface that is low enough for your body.

Your body is designed to sit up straight, not to slouch, so choose a chair that helps make that possible for you. Other considerations include wrist pads for the keyboard, or my personal favorite, the split keyboard. Also consider a good mouse, adjustable arm rests, and be sure to sit at an appropriate height and distance from your monitor.

However, regardless of how great the things that make up your writing environment are, they are only as good as the person using them. So be smart. Take your hands away from the keyboard when you're thinking or reading back, shift position and stretch your neck and back at regular intervals. Give your eyes a break as well. After an hour of work at a computer, it is recommended that you allow your eyes a few minutes to complete an



alternate task (perhaps this would be a good time to refill that water glass), but even simply closing your eyes will fulfill this need. Also remember to rest your eyes. The best way to do this is to allow them to focus on something at a distance (your muscles don't have to work as hard this way). Personally, I like to out the window so I always make sure my desk is near one.

Another concern directly affected by the sedentary nature of a writer's career is physical appearance. Let's just face it. Even though most of us don't particularly enjoy exercising, our bodies need it. Back in the days of the cavemen people couldn't just drive to the grocery store for food and then use their stove or microwave to heat it. They actually had to work. Walking five to ten miles a day was not unusual. Sitting in one spot for hours on end, however, would have been. In the present day, the situation is reversed. Unfortunately, our bodies haven't changed with the times. They're still designed to be used—to be exercised. If they're not exercised, things don't function optimally and they sure don't look optimal either. No rocket science in that. But when you're juggling writing deadlines, family issues, and/or perhaps another full-time job, finding the time to exercise can seem like rocket science. Once again this is where step number one comes in. You have to decide you're important enough. This is sometimes easier when we understand the many benefits exercise can give us.

In addition to helping us look and feel better, which in turn increases our self confidence, exercise (particularly cardiovascular exercise) helps elevate mood, brain function, and energy. It does this by affecting the development of chemicals such as Serotonin, Norepinephrine, and Dopamine and by strengthening areas of the brain that are necessary for learning. This is great news! If we exercise, we might not need those eight extra hours in the day.

Consider this, if exercise creates extra energy to do the day to day things in our lives, we'll be more efficient which will in turn free up some time. An elevation in our mood means we'll feel better and be able to make the time we spend with friends and family better quality time. (Remember that health tripod?) Since we won't have to feel guilty about not taking care of ourselves or spending quality time with loved ones, our confidence will increase as well. And finally, if our brains function better, everything we do will be easier. On top of all that, because cardiovascular exercise is the only thing that burns fat, we'll look better too. It's a win-win situation. All we have to do is make ourselves exercise.

Again, since little steps are easier, I recommend you find a form of exercise you really like. For me, that's walking. Jogging might give me the same results faster, but I hate doing it. If you hate the form of exercise you're trying, you'll find more reasons not to do it or you'll quit sooner. Next, find a place where you're comfortable. If that's a gym, join a gym. If it's outside, make sure it's safe and remember your sunscreen. If it's your living room with an aerobics DVD or a treadmill, more power to you. Last, if you are a master of finding excuses not to exercise, get yourself an exercise buddy. It's hard to put things off when someone else is counting on you. Not only will you both feel better physically, you'll get to enjoy some social interaction as well. Just remember this, whatever form of exercise you choose and wherever you do it, there will be benefits. Remember to celebrate those. You're worth that too. And when you're finished exercising remember to drink plenty of water, eat some healthy food, and then hop in the shower. After that, put your butt in the chair and write.

***Aimee Carper writes Romantic Suspense under the pen name Naomie Park. She is the winner of the 2010 Golden Rose for Romantic Suspense and is a finalist in this year's Orange Rose competition. A former P.E. and English teacher, she now lives in San Diego where she is searching for a job that will allow her to support a writing career. You can learn more about Aimee at her website: [naomiepark.com](http://naomiepark.com).***

*The following article first appeared in the August 2010 issue of Rumples Sheets, the monthly newsletter of Missouri RWA. Permission granted to reprint or forward to RWA chapters with proper credit to author and chapter.*

## Literary Fiction vs Genre Fiction or, Why Pizza is a Health Food

*by Kristi Lea Schmits*

After a single semester of Freshman Composition in college, I avoided the English department. It took only that one taste to realize that I didn't fit with "those people".

You know the type: the literary snobs. The ones who sneer at paperback covers graced by Fabio or tattooed shoulders or exploding space ships or dragons. The ones who pronounce the word "genre" with a twang to the n that makes it sound like they're discussing prison inmates or dirty diapers.

Ok, so I also passed a quick judgment against a large group of bibliophiles based on my impressions of one lone graduate student. I was seventeen, clearly knew everything about everything, and already owned a collection of over one hundred fat paperback romances. And they insulted my favorite pastime. Over and over and over.

At seventeen, I didn't know everything. But nor did I have the self-confidence to stand my ground and defend the books I loved. It would take me another thirteen years before I attempted to put words to (electronic) paper and begin writing something of my own.

I have known all along that there were gems hidden in the bodice rippers, the sword-and-sorcery, the chick lit. The more I write, and read about writing, and think about writing, the more I realize just how wrong all those literary snobs were. Pizza really is a health food. No, that isn't a cut-and-paste error. I didn't just splice a food blog post in the middle of my literary musings.

I distinctly remember a particular assignment that I did in the fifth grade. Everyone had to choose a card containing the nutrition information of various foods, and draw a graph. Each graph had a series of bars, representing the percentage of different nutrients contained in the food. Mine was pizza. Every bar on my graph was tall. Pizza was clearly a miracle food--full of calcium, vitamins A and C, B vitamins, protein. It had everything.

When the teacher asked who had chosen healthy foods, I raised my hand. And was laughed at by the entire class. Despite my towering bars of nutritional greatness, despite the hard evidence before their eyes, the rest of the fifth grade class thought I was crazy. Pizza is junk food. End of story.

I also struggled with my weight for years. I spent my twenties about fifteen pounds overweight. Not bad by some standards, I suppose. But it ate away at my self esteem. In order to solve the problem, I had to go back to that fifth grade lesson. I had to graph and analyze what I was eating. Choose options that had tall bars and flavors that I loved. I wasn't willing to cut dessert and pizza out of my life in order to shed a few pounds. And you know what? I didn't have to.

Twenty something years later, I still don't call pizza "junk food". Any more than I call romance, or scifi, or fantasy, or chick lit, "trash". Making a food taste good does not diminish its nutritional value. Adding entertainment--adventure, romance, horror, suspense--to a novel does not diminish the message the author was trying to express.

"That's a miracle pill?"

"Chocolate coating makes it go down easier"

--from *The Princess Bride*

Healthy food doesn't have to taste like dirt and deprivation. Thought-provoking novels can have sex and ray guns. Yes, I do believe that writing fiction had a positive impact on my weight and outlook on food, nutrition, and exercise. And realizing that I can look healthy and eat dessert has had a positive effect on my outlook on writing. I can attempt to process big, dark themes and ideas, and laugh while I write.

So please pass the parmesan. Because I'm not done with my pizza yet.

***When Kristi Lea Schmits isn't debating on the healthy aspects of pizza, she spends her time writing contemporary and paranormal romance. She's a member of the Missouri RWA chapter. Learn more about her at: <http://www.kristilea.com>***

Ideas are like pizza dough,  
made to be tossed around.

- Anna Quindlen

Anna Quindlen. (n.d.). BrainyQuote.com. Retrieved October 7, 2010, from BrainyQuote.com  
Web site: <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/annaquindl395368.html>



Please be advised that the article *Forensics Genealogy* has been retracted from the October edition of the Mid-Michigan Mirror due to plagiarism concerns. MMRWA and the editor extend our apologies to the original authors and advise that the article and the contents therein may not be reprinted or used in any way.



## —CHAPTER CHATTER—



### MEMBER NEWS

**Nancy Gideon:** Almost finished with first draft of Book 5.

**Lucy Kubash:** Rosanne and Lucy will be signing books at The Swallow's Nest bookstore on Saturday, October 23rd, in Quincy, MI, from 1pm to 3pm, as part of their Quincy Daze village celebration. It is also the tenth anniversary of the bookstore.

**Rosanne Bittner:** Running for Treasurer of MMRWA again for 2011. Be sure to vote! Book signing October 23d at The Swallow's Nest in Quincy, Michigan. Lucy Kubash and I will be there from 2:00 - 4:00 pm that Saturday. Just took over as Treasurer of our local charity organization, the Coloma Lioness Club, so with that and MMRWA and doing books for our family business, this right-brained writer is exercising the left brain more than she'd like, but still writing! Working on a paranormal set in Virginia City, Nevada.

**Cindy Arends:** Had to edit *Beauty School Demon* to change first person sections to third. Also working on cutting 7,000 words.

**Margo Hoornstra:** Got edits on latest contracted book into my editor for the Class of '85 series. Have about three more books to contribute to the series.

**Cathy McClain:** Had a busy summer! Focusing my writing on very short stories and magazine submissions. Preparing my novel manuscript for the Golden Heart.

**Ann-Marie King-Jakubiak:** Busy summer with grandkids staying with us. A two-year-old reminded me why god made biological clocks. Took five of eight grandchildren to Great Wolf Lodge for a week. Now getting ready for serious surgery.

**Annette Briggs:** Having a great time taking a class about writing steampunk. What a hoot.

**Loralee Lillibridge:** Sent in two partials to agent

who requested them. Still working on single title contemporary western.

**Laurie Kuna:** Spoke at the Englehardt Library in Lowell. Spoke on panel at the Portage Library on paranormal romance. Wrote a nomination for the Grand Rapids YWCA Tribute Award.

**Diane Burton:** Half-way through P.I. story (to finish by November 30 for I Will Write A Book). Entered three manuscripts in contests. Signed up to judge RITA's.

**Ami Weaver:** My ms, *THE NANNY'S SECRET* took second place in GRW's Maggie Awards, in the Contemporary Series category. I'm quite pleased with that. However, I'm looking forward--entering the Golden Heart w/ this same ms and hoping to sub it sometime this month. I did enter it in the Hot Prospects contest, too, but since I accidentally sent a draft form of the first fourteen pages I'm not holding my breath. I've got a couple of free hours in the afternoons now, so I've been going to Biggby to work and I've gotten a ton done. Also, just hanging on 'til the craziness of fall sports (6 soccer games a week, anyone??) is over and we can have our evenings back!

**Lana Miersen:** Working on GMC charts for my WIP characters. Revising synopsis. Meeting to brainstorm with Diane Burton. Traveling a lot!

**Florence Price:** Working with Laurie Kuna and Loralee Lillibridge on nominations for the Board positions that are open. Also, now that the kids are in school, I've started on my WIP again, finally! And, I've been enjoying the beautiful Fall weather.

**Dawn Bartley:** Summer went too fast! Still getting new clients that are keeping me busy.



## Members' Current and Upcoming Releases Fall/Winter 2010 and Spring 2011

**Jackie Braun:** *A Dinner, A Date and a Desert Sheikh*, Harlequin Romance, June 2010, and *Inconveniently Wed*, the third book in the *Girls Weekend in Vegas* continuity, Harlequin, August 2010. Coming in October 2010 is *Star-Crossed Sweethearts*, the seventh book in the *Brides of Bella Rosa* continuity from Harlequin Romance. [www.jackiebraun.com](http://www.jackiebraun.com)

**Arianna Skye/Sidney Ayers:** *Wings of Desire* is available in e-book and at Amazon.com through Eternal Press. [www.ariannaskye.com](http://www.ariannaskye.com) *Beauty School Demon* will be available in June, 2011 from Sourcebooks Casablanca. [www.sidneyayers.com](http://www.sidneyayers.com)

**Nancy Gideon:** The first three books in a shape shifter series from Pocket Books: *Masked by Moonlight*, June 2010, *Chased by Moonlight*, July 2010 *Captured by Moonlight*, August 2010. [nancy.gideon.com](http://nancy.gideon.com)

**Melissa Ford Lucken w/a Isabelle Drake:** *Roughneck by Request*, from Ellora's Cave (Quickie), available January 19, 2010 [www.isabelledrake.com](http://www.isabelledrake.com)

**Alison Hart/Jennifer Greene:** New releases by Jennifer Greene from Silhouette Romantic Suspense: *Secretive Stranger*, April 2010, *Mesmerizing Stranger*, September 2010, *Irresistible Stranger*, December 2010. Also coming in November, 2010 is a Special Edition, *The Billionaire's Handler*, by Jennifer Greene. [www.jennifergreene.com](http://www.jennifergreene.com)

**Maris Soule:** *As The Crow Flies*, another P.J. Benson Mystery, published by Five Star, a subdivision of Cengage Learning, will be released in March 2011. [www.MarisSoule.com](http://www.MarisSoule.com)

**Katharine Ashe:** *Swept Away by a Kiss*, Katharine's debut historical romance, became available on July 27, 2010 from Avon. *Captured by a Rogue Lord* will be available from Avon in April 2011. [www.katharineashe.com](http://www.katharineashe.com)



—THE FINAL REFLECTION—

## The Future of MMRWA

By Alyssa Marble  
Editor, Mid-Michigan Mirror

The past few years have resulted in a lot of changes in the publishing industry. Self-publishing, e-publishing, and announcements by some large publishers like Dorchester and Harlequin have begun to change the traditional publishing model and sent it in a new direction.

Social media such as Facebook and Twitter have changed the marketing and publishing business as well.

Authors have weathered these changes and will weather more. Our chapter must keep up with these changes to remain a viable organization. We need to look to our chapter's current and future goals.

To bring us into the next year and changes yet to come are our new, 2011 Board candidates. Florence Price, Laurie Kuna, Margo Hoorstra, Rosanne Bittner and Lucy Kubash. These ladies have graciously agreed to donate their personal time to the Chapter for next year.

Thank you for guiding our chapter into the future.

*Alyssa Marble – Editor*

### Submission Guidelines

**Topics:** writing-related—business/marketing, craft, how-to, interviews with industry professionals, book reviews, member news, member bios, members' latest releases, and program recaps, etc.

**Manuscripts:** single-spaced, readable 12 pt. black font, no special formatting or colors, one-inch margins, saved in rich text format.

**Deadline:** the 2nd Saturday of the month, unless otherwise stated. Member News deadline is the 3rd Saturday (meeting day).

### Policy

The Mid-Michigan Mirror's policy is to offer our original MMRWA articles to other RWA® chapters and loops to use with all credits given unless the author specifies restrictions in the article. The Mirror staff reserves the right to edit submissions for such things as spelling or typographical errors, punctuation, grammar, size requirements, etc., and content with author's approval.

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### Chapter Information

Non-members seeking information about Mid-Michigan RWA, our meetings, and joining our chapter, may email our membership chair at [members@midmichiganrwa.org](mailto:members@midmichiganrwa.org), write to MMRWA, P.O. Box 2725, Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2725, or visit our chapter online at [www.midmichiganrwa.org](http://www.midmichiganrwa.org) to learn all about us.