

The Love Knot

Newsletter of the Ottawa Romance Writers' Association



April 2011

In this month's issue:

- ♥ President's Message
- ♥ Current Releases
- ♥ Upcoming Workshops
- ♥ Articles
 - Between the Lines
with Kara Lennox
 - Subgenre Spotlight:
Regency Romance
 - The Do's and Don'ts of
Magical Thinking
 - Book Review: Beginnings,
Middles, and Ends
 - Anchoring
 - Nibbles & Bytes of History:
Character occupations
 - How to Use Twitter to
Connect with Your Readers
- ♥ Editor's Message

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*"As with all other aspects of the narrative art,
you will improve with practice, but practice
will never make you perfect. Why should it?
What fun would that be?"*
Stephen King

Well, we may argue about the "fun" part of this quote, but I'm sure none of us would argue against aiming for perfection. And that is what April's workshop is all about. Practice, practice, practice. Practicing pitching won't necessarily make you perfect, but it will force you to sum up your work concisely; focus on the salient points of your story; prepare a pitch that is as perfect as you can make it and which will grab the immediate attention of an editor or agent. And, just as important, is practising how to sell yourself. A bit like an interview for a job you really, really want but know there are hundreds of others after it too. So, practice how to present yourself in the best possible light, and your work as a future Times best-seller!

REPORT ON OUR MARCH MEETING

As of March 17 (the date I sent the Chapter Renewal documents to the RWA) we had 33 fully paid up members and two new members whose applications are pending. Since that date, we have had two more renewals bringing the 2011 membership total to 35. In order to encourage new members and make the process of application easier, we are updating the online membership application and adding a PayPal button to facilitate payment.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (continued)

The 2010 audit was conducted by Debbie Mazzuca and Teresa Wilde and the Audit Report was presented to, and accepted by, the members present.

After receiving only one entrant for the First Impressions Contest, the Executive sadly had to announce cancellation of the 2011 contest. However, the sole contestant was offered the opportunity to have her entry critiqued by two of ORWA's published authors – Brenda Hammond and Ellen Bruce.

Due to communication problems it was decided to cancel the Emmanuelle Morgan workshop. It is being replaced by Jill Murray's social networking presentation. Check out the ORWA website for more details about Jill and the workshop she will be presenting.

Maggie Attiwell has started a Paranormal Critique Group. Contact Maggie directly at mdmontreal@yahoo.com for more information.

Following the adjournment of the business meeting, a lively, stimulating and informative panel discussion took place. Our thanks to Reece Butler, Opal Carew, Debbie Mazzuca, Annette McCleave, Sharon Page and Linda Poitevin.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Our workshop schedule has firmed up nicely. We are investigating several options available to fill the remaining slots. A tax workshop towards the end of the year has been suggested and a workshop by Brian Henry. Members asked for more detail on the workshops offered by Brian Henry. Results of our enquiries will be presented to members in April. In the meantime, members can learn more about Brian by going to <http://quick-brown-fox-canada.blogspot.com>.

We will need to discuss the Sabrina Jeffries all-day workshop in September and whether and how much we should charge for admission.

The RWA national conference is being held in New York at the end of June. It would be helpful to those attending their first national conference, to learn how to navigate through what can at times be a confusing and overwhelming experience. I will be suggesting that those members planning to attend, meet ahead of the conference to share experiences, give and receive advice and discuss travel and accommodation plans.

The annual presentation of ORWA awards will take place at the social on June 12. Information regarding these awards will be made available very soon.

Our Librarian, Aileen Latulippe, is staggering under the weight of the books she brings to the meetings and is preparing a list of books she thinks could be archived. Your input will be much appreciated.

Teresa Wilde presented a very interesting idea for generating future revenue. A compilation of synopses in ebook format that published authors used to promote and sell their stories. This could be a fantastic revenue generating project. Thanks Teresa for your imaginative idea.

Maggie Attiwell's Practice Makes Perfect workshop scheduled to follow the business meeting on April 3, is a wonderful opportunity for those members intending to pitch to an agent or editor in the near future, and for the rest of us, experienced or not, to help them in any way we can. Look forward to seeing you soon.

Malena Abel
President

“Eighty percent of success is showing up.”
Woody Allen

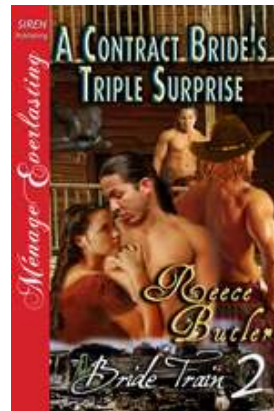
Current Releases



RIZZO ROSKO
MATE OF THE WOLF
Siren-Bookstrand
March 2011



SHARON PAGE
BLOOD WICKED
Kensington Aphrodisia
February 2011



REESE BUTLER
A CONTRACT BRIDE'S TRIPLE SURPRISE
Siren-Bookstrand
2011



ANNETTE McCLEAVE
SURRENDER TO DARKNESS
NAL/Signet Eclipse
January 2011

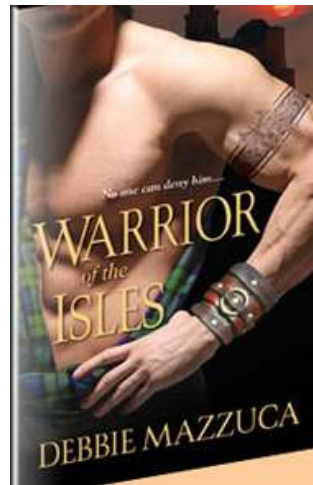
Upcoming Releases



OPAL CAREW
TOTAL ABANDON
St. Martin's Griffin
April 2011



THE KING AND I
Samhain
April 2011



DEBBIE MAZZUCA
WARRIOR OF THE ISLES
Kensington Books
May 2011

LINDA POITEVIN
SINS OF THE ANGELS
Ace Books
October 2011

Upcoming Workshops

April 3rd – Practice Makes Perfect Pitching Workshop with Maggie Jagger



Maggie Jagger will lead a *practice makes perfect* pitching workshop. Pitching to agents and editors is part of writing life, no need to hyperventilate over it. We will take turns pitching and hearing pitches. If you are so afraid that you don't want to come to this meeting, you can pretend to be an editor or agent and let us pitch to you. The brave will get the opportunity to pitch many times. Please prepare your pitches before the workshop begins.

[Maggie Jagger](#) is the author of three historical romances from New Concepts publishing. She was born in Yorkshire near Haworth, home of the Brontë sisters, whose books inspired her with a love of historical romance. The dark gothic phase didn't last long because she discovered Jane Austen and enjoyed the lively humor in her voice. Her character-driven plots have humor and lots of dialogue. She likes to surprise her readers and hopes to make them laugh.

May 1st – Cut Through the Noise! With Jill Murray



Jill Murray will help you ***Cut Through the Noise*** and build your "online platform" without losing your mind. Blogs, websites, Facebook, Twitter, forums, message boards, online tours, podcasts -- authors, illustrators and performers are being urged more than ever to build online platforms and personal brands, not just for marketing, but as the base of our careers. But how much do we need and what can we realistically expect

to achieve online?

[Jill Murray](#), a YA author with over 11 years experience building web sites and marketing plans for Canada's biggest (and smallest!) media and cultural institutions shows you how to start building the "web presence" that works for you.

Articles

Between the Lines with Kara Lennox

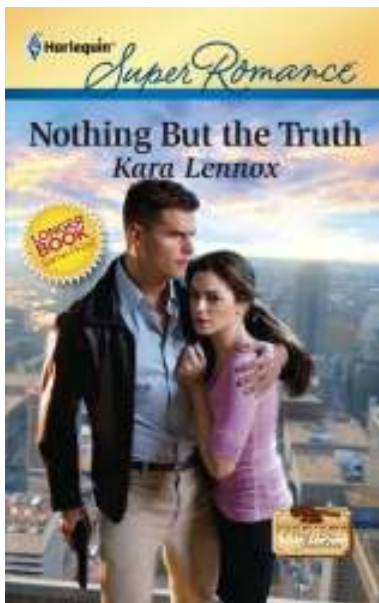
Interview by Brenda Parrish

The following article published in the March issue of the OCC/RWA Orange Blossom Newsletter.

Kara Lennox is the bestselling author of more than fifty published novels of romance and romantic suspense. She has been published by Silhouette and Bantam Books as Karen Leabo, and currently writes for the Harlequin American Romance, Silhouette Desire and Signature Select lines as Kara Lennox. Some of her more popular series for the American Romance line are How to Marry a Hardison and Blond Justice.

Prior to writing romance, Kara was a freelance writer with hundreds of magazine articles published, as well as brochures, press releases, advertisements and business plans. She has also earned a paycheck at various times as a magazine art director, a typesetter, an exercise instructor, a sales clerk for a boutique that was a front for laundering Mafia money (she found out later), a telephone survey-taker, and a blackjack dealer. But she's happiest now, living her dream as an author.

Kara's books are often cited for their groundbreaking, quirky or otherwise unusual subject matter. She has written about ostrich ranching, Mayan archeology, brain tumors, child abandonment, jewel theft, witchcraft and storm chasing—in addition to a full complement of cowboys, brides and babies.



As chief legal council for Project Justice, widow Raleigh Shinn doesn't seem the type to accept bribes. Still, Griffin Benedict has an anonymous tip that points to her guilt. And if he wants to make the move to national news anchor, he needs a sensational story.

But nothing is as it seems. Including the do-good lawyer. Underneath shapeless suits and oversize glasses hides an exceptional beauty. Now Griffin not only seeks an exclusive, he wants to uncover Raleigh's secrets for himself.

When lies turn to attempted murder, they must hunt down the truth together...to prove her innocence, protect an honest man and save both their lives.

Releases March 1, 2011

Q) You have an amazing backlist of books that spans two decades. How do you continue to generate new and fresh ideas?

A) Actually, sometimes I'll be brainstorming a book, and I'll say to myself, "This is good. This is really ... oh, wait, I already wrote that book." And certain themes appear over and over in my books. (For instance, my heroines are often struggling with independence vs. commitment--because it's a struggle I find to be endlessly rich.) But I never seem to run out of ways to spin a story. I like to be inspired by nonfiction stories, I eavesdrop everywhere I go, and everything I read or see has the potential to inspire a story. I keep notebooks full of snippets of dialogue or interesting characters, pictures, ideas for settings, interesting jobs. I don't organize it, just leave through them sometimes to see what strikes me.

Q) Your work has been primarily geared towards series romance. In your opinion, what advantages does publishing as part of a series have over single title publication?

Series romance offers lots of advantages. It's a great place for a new author because there is a built-in audience. By writing shorter books, you have the opportunity to publish more titles, which gets and keeps your name out in front of the readers. And although I wouldn't say royalties are ever "predictable," the payouts are perhaps a little less erratic and you can make some estimates as to what you'll earn on a given book. The specific requirements and guidelines for each line give the author a framework to build on, so you don't have to reinvent the whole wheel each time you write a book. Harlequin does a great job publishing foreign editions (and selling sub rights) so your book lives on in many different editions for years to come. And if you are very prolific, or you have more than one kind of books you like to write, Harlequin can accommodate you.

Q) What is your process for self-editing your manuscript before you submit it?

It varies from book to book. Some books just write cleanly from beginning to end, so I might only do one edit plus one polish. Others are just disastrous from the start and I end up ripping them up, rearranging parts, throwing out whole chapters. I usually make one pass through the rough draft and make notes on what has to be done, then work up a game plan so I can schedule my time and not miss any deadlines. My husband will read the manuscript when I'm done, and I will go through one last time to address his comments.



Q) Are you a planner or a pantsier?

I'm definitely a planner. I outline everything ad nauseum. I love structure, I love pulling apart stories to see how they work (or why they don't work).

Q) What does your writing work day/schedule look like?

I write Monday through Friday, usually in the mornings. I try to get my page count done before lunch and leave the afternoons for other writing-related activities (research, judging contests, online classes, proofreading galleys. It doesn't always work that way; sometimes it takes me all day to get those pages written. As a deadline approaches I'll put in more hours, evenings and weekends, but I try to keep a sane work schedule. I'm not one who thrives on deadline pressure.

Q) What advice would you give a new writer who is looking for a career in publication?

Just keep showing up. Selling that first book involves hitting the right editor with the right material at the right time. So your chances are increased the more you write and the more you send out. Keep trying to get better. Try different things; write in different genres to keep yourself motivated and challenged. Read writing books and take classes. Network and attend conferences. Immerse yourself in it. Just in the past couple of years I've had a lot of friends make that first sale after working at it for many years, so don't give up or think it won't happen for you. I have a stack of rejections that could choke a horse, collected both before and after I sold my first book. Keep improving your craft and keep sending stuff out.

Brenda Parrish is a member of OCC/RWA and is currently hard at work at her own fiction. She recently finished in the Jane Austen Made Me Do It Contest! You can follow her on Twitter @itsBren



Subgenre Spotlight: Regency Romance

by Clarissa Southwick

This article first appeared in the April 2011 edition of Heart of Romance, the newsletter of the Coeur de Bois Chapter (CBC-RWA) in Boise, Idaho.

RWA Definition: "Romance novels in which the majority of the story is set against the Regency period of the British Empire."

RWA Specialty Chapter: The Beau Monde

What Makes it Different: According to the Beau Monde website, "A traditional Regency focuses primarily on the social strictures of the time period and often is described as a comedy of manners. Traditional Regencies range in tone, but the sexual tension in these books is usually more muted than in other romances. A historical set during the Regency period is almost always longer, and the sexual tension is much more a focus of the story."

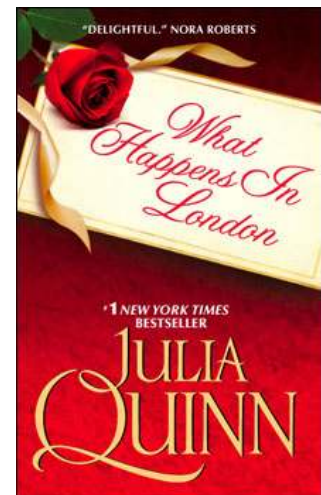
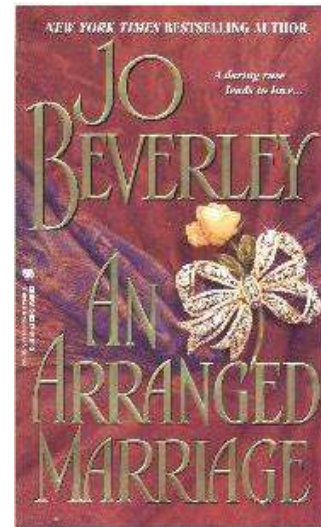
A few bestselling Regency Authors: Mary Balogh, Jo Beverly, Diane Gaston, Sabrina Jeffries, Mary Jo Putney, Amanda Quick, Julia Quinn

2010 RITA Best Regency Novel: What Happens In London by Julia Quinn HarperCollins Publishers, Avon Books, Lyssa Keusch, editor

A few agents who represent Regency authors: Barbara Poelle, Pamela Ahearn, Maria Carvainis, Steven Axelrod, The Knight Agency.

A few publishers who publish Regency romance: Avon, Berkley, Harlequin Historical, Pocket, Signet (Penguin), Sourcebooks, ImaJinn

Clarissa Southwick is the editor of Heart of Romance, the newsletter of the Coeur de Bois Chapter (CBC-RWA) in Boise, Idaho. You can find her at www.ladyscribes.blogspot.com



The Dos and Don'ts of Magical Thinking

by Angela Cavener

The following article first appeared in the March 2011 issue of DARA News, the monthly newsletter of Dallas Area Romance Authors. Vikki Wright, Editor.

As a writer of paranormal romance, I tend to ponder many whimsical and perhaps even magical lines of thought. When contemplating this article, and in my typical stream of consciousness fashion, those mental meanderings sent my mind down the path of "magical thinking."

Many years ago when I was a newlywed, I remember reading about the Peter Pan Syndrome. At that time, I was sure I was Wendy married to Peter Pan and I worried about my marriage to an "eternal boy" with his propensity to rely on "magical thinking." Magical thinking is the belief that what you wish for will come true -- magically. We have both matured in the ensuing decades and have realized that getting what we want takes having a vision (goal) and then takes planning and hard work. The same is true of our writing aspirations and career goals. We have to define the vision we want to achieve and we have to plan and work hard to accomplish our goals.

That said there are certainly many aspects of our writing that I believe are nothing less than magical so I decided to compare and contrast the magical to the not so magical concepts for your consideration. The following is my list of Magical Do's and Don'ts:



Do believe in the magic of reaching people with your writing. It is magical that our written words have the ability to reach across the world and make someone laugh or cry or even assure them

they aren't alone. We do have that seemingly magical power to connect with others through our writing.

Don't think that your first book is the newest best seller in the making. Okay, it might be, there are some lucky writers who have managed that, but chances are pretty slim. Writing takes practice, accumulating knowledge about our craft and developing our own unique voices. All of this takes time and patience.

Do believe in the magic of your own writing. It seems no less than magical to me that I can sit down to write with a specific plan for my character and she or he can take over and send my story in a different direction that is more fabulous than what I'd originally envisioned.

Don't believe that the organizations which help support and give us tools to grow and succeed as writers will somehow manage to keep magically running on its own. DARA needs volunteers to exist and each of us needs to remember the importance of giving back and lending a hand to make things happen.

Do believe in the almost magical bond we have as writers. We have the power to encourage each other in the face of countless rejections. We have the power to believe in each other and lift each other up.

Lastly, do believe in your ability to dream, to imagine, to create and to make your words come together in a way that is uniquely all your own because that is indeed magical.

Angela Cavener is an active member of RWA and serves as the 2011 President of DARA (Dallas Area Romance Authors). Website: www.angelacavener.com



Book Review: Beginnings, Middles, and Ends by Karen MacMurray

The following article was used in the February 2011 edition of "The Final Draft", for the Carolina Romance Writers.

Beginnings, Middles & Ends, How to get your stories off to a roaring start, keep them tight and crisp throughout, and end them with a wallop by Nancy Kress, Writer's Digest Books.

This book is to the point. **Part I: Beginnings** explores not only the very beginning: your opening scene but your later beginning - the second scenes. Kress talks about Character, Specificity, Conflict and Credible Prose. I like the fact that she has exercises at the end of each chapter. Also in Part I. Nancy Kress shows you how to build drama and credibility. Learn six ways to reveal your characters. Flashbacks, Controlling Conflict, Three Second Scenes, Introducing and Developing Your Characters, Bringing together: dialogue, Thoughts, Body Language and Gestures; and Appearance.

Part II: Middles addresses: Staying on Track, your characters at mid story and ways to get unstuck in the middle Subcategories here are: Three Vital Decisions, Thinking in Scenes, Planning for the Climax, Staying on Track and Choosing a Structural Design.

In chapter 5 we learn about two kinds of motivation, showing how the characters change, dealing with villains. In chapter 6 we learn how to get unstuck. Her techniques to keep you writing is a MUST read.

Part III: Endings Advises the author how to create a satisfying ending; how to deliver on the promise. The very end with its last scene, paragraph and even sentence are gone into depth with some advise on the last hurrah! We have all heard about Litmus tests but did you know there is one for knowing if you have the right ending? Also something to check out is Kress's Checklist for Successful Endings.

Chapter 8 explores the Ending of a Traditional Plotted Story and the Ending of a Contemporary Literary Short Story. There is also a chart for Scene Analysis.

I found this book to be a worth while read, meaning I learned something I can use.



**It's in the
ORWA Library!
Reserve it
from our
librarian,
Aileen
Latulippe.**

Anchoring

Writing tips from Suzanne Brockmann's Opening Speech at the Central Ohio Writer's Conference October 1, 2010

by Tracy Poole

The following article was used in the February 2011 edition of "The Final Draft", the Carolina Romance Writer's newsletter.

Have you ever found yourself sitting in front of your computer, staring at a blank screen, thinking "I have to write!" but found it's just not happening? At the Central Ohio Writer's Conference in October 2010, Suzanne Brockmann shared her tips on "Anchoring."

She suggested setting up a stimulus-response scenario to make yourself attach certain settings or stimuli to writing. And not goals or negative consequences, but positive things that make you feel good about writing. While it would be wonderful to have an office, desk, and computer used only for writing, that isn't realistic for most beginning writers. But perhaps you could have a designated computer (with no internet access) or a separate chair you only use when writing. Other suggestions included playing a certain type of music (I hear the sound of surf inspiring me) or light a candle for your writing time.

For most of us, it does take reprogramming our way of thinking to actually sit at a computer and write, just write--not check emails, play games (I'm so guilty of those two), think about doing laundry, etc. Suz encouraged us to self-consciously get into a creative writing state she called "Muse on Command." If you start thinking of other things, you have to get up and leave the writing area, turn off that special CD, blow out the candle, or get your hiney out of your comfy writing chair to maintain those stimuli as being associated only with writing.



Another tip for Anchoring she gave was to think of a time when you were very productive in your writing. How were you sitting? Leaning forward hunched over the keyboard or reclining in your chair? How were you breathing? Mimic those behaviors to get into a creative state. (I haven't mastered this yet and note to self: playing Bejeweled Blitz on Facebook was not when I was most productive!)

One more nugget she shared that some of you may love as much as I did. She referred to Writer's Block as a myth and suggested we instead think of it as "severe procrastination."

Now I encourage you to quit procrastinating and find an anchor to keep you from being swept away by the tide of laundry or those other distractions that keep you from spending time with that sexy, romantic character you don't have to cook dinner for.



Nibbles & Bytes of History: Character Occupations

by Jody Allen

This article was first published in HHRW's March/April 2011 Edition of the Bard's Scroll. Megan Applegate Editor.

So you are starting your next historical and you have your period and location, and your characters names but what are they going to do to survive? No not fall in love, that is a given. How are they going to live? This month we are looking at historic occupations from the earliest time-periods to the modern era. Though many historicals today have characters of the noble class who often to appear to do nothing more than have a good time, the reality is they couldn't run those manors and castles without a plethora of people to meet their needs. So what did they do?

We know that surnames were an early modern invention but they often occurred because of the type of occupation the individual did for their livelihood. The following is a listing of sites that will help you to find a job just right for your period, location and character. The sites are listed alphabetically but those interested in warfare and the different occupations of warriors, I have included a long list of reenactment groups to contact for further information and suggest you contact them direct. Reenactors love to talk about their role. If you have other sites you've found useful please contact me at fraochmist@... subject "occupations".

And remember- even those rogues in the Highlands of Scotland had jobs within the clan besides keeping all their lassies satisfied.

America 1860's

<http://teacherlink.org/content/social/instructional/jobs/joblist.html>

American Colonial occupations

<http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~sam/occupation.html>

Ancient Jobs

http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~goudied/ancient_occupations.html

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~dav4is/Sources/Occupations.html>

Child Labor <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/IRchild.main.htm>

Circuit Riders <http://ohauglaize.ancestralsites.com/index1.htm>

England <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/hitch/gendocs/trades.html>

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guide-listing.htm>

London Merchants in 1677

<http://freepages.history.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~frpayments/LM1677/>

Mercers London <http://www.mercers.co.uk/>

England 18th century <http://www.mathon.org.uk/mathons-history/ralph-spencers-histories/the-old-community/18th-century>

UK/Ireland Occupations <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/Occupations.html>

Historical Directories

<http://www.historicaldirectories.org/hd/ud/usingdir4.asp>

Historic Occupations

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~usgwkidz/oldjobs.htm>

<http://rmhh.co.uk> <http://www.continentalline.org/en/k/occup/index.html>

Historic Occupations to Surnames <http://www.scatoday.net/node/17533>

Irish Historic Occupations

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~donaghmore1/occupations.html>

https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/Ireland_Occupations

Knights/Squires <http://www.middle-ages.org.uk/middle-ages-knights.htm>

<http://www.middle-ages.org.uk/squires.htm>

Military (list of reenactment groups for historic periods)

<http://www.durolitum.co.uk/> (Ancient Britain)

<http://www.hfypes.co.uk/> (Queen Victoria) <http://www.medieval-siege-society.co.uk/> (Medieval)

<http://www.secondinfantryreenacted.com/> (WWII)

<http://9thmassbattery.home.comcast.net/~9thmassbattery/> (Civil War Union)

<http://www.demi-brigade.org/indexen.htm> (Napoleonic) <http://www.1186-583.org/> <<http://www.1186-583.org/>> (early Medieval France- in French)

<http://www.aaf.org.au/whatwedo> (Ancient Britain)

<http://www.azrs.org/> (Regency)

<http://www.ask-alamannen.de/> (Medieval Germany in German)

<http://www.pedes-inflati.de/index2.htm> (high Middle Ages German)

<http://www.beaufort-companye.org.uk/> (War of Roses)

<http://www.britishplate.org.uk/index.shtml> (British Plate Armour)

<http://www.caent.org.uk/aboutus.html> (Dark Ages)

<http://www.continentalline.org/en/> (Revolutionary War US)

<http://english-civil-war-society.org.uk/www/cms/> (English Civil War)

<http://www.marquisofwinchesters.co.uk/> (English Civil War)

<http://www.frob.net/forces/> (American French/Indian War)

<http://www.gemina.nl/nl/index.htm> (Ancient Roman)

<http://www.historyreenactment.org.uk/> (Tudor/Stuart)

<http://www.lothene.org/> (Combat School)

<http://www.plankhousecrew.com/> (Pirates)

<http://www.vikingsonline.org.uk/> (Vikings)

<http://www.vikingsna.com/> < (Vikings)

<http://www.concentric.net/~rowenna/woodland/> (Native American)

<http://www.yecompanyeofcheualrye.com/cc/> (100 yr War)

<http://www.malleusfvg.com/> (Italy- Italian)

<http://www.historicaltimekeepers.org/> (US Civil War)

Medieval Occupations'

<http://hkcarms.tripod.com/occ.html> <http://www.castles-of-britain.com/castle32.htm>

<http://www.castles.me.uk/medieval-occupations.htm>

<http://www.badgersden.com/MT/MdvlOccupation.htm>

http://mail.ab.mec.edu/~hs_library/docs/MEDIEVAL%20OCCUPATIONS.htm?FCite\ mID=S02A75803

Officer and Gentlemen http://officerandgentleman.net/education_page.htm

Prostitution

<http://www.jasa.net.au/london/prostitution.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prostitution_in_the_United_Kingdom

http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~ulrich/femhist/sex_work.shtml

Renaissance Occupations <http://www.sirclisto.com/66.html>

Scottish Occupations

<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/content/help/index.aspx?430>

<http://scotsfamily.com/occupations.htm>

<http://www.scotlandsfamily.com/occupations.htm>

Schoolmarms in the American Frontier

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1552&context=g\reatplainsquarterly>

Jody Allen has been a romance reader for 45 years, has a BA in History from UW-Milwaukee, is a freelance researcher and historical copy editor, and genealogist, and is currently researching the life of Joanne Stewart, the deaf daughter of James I and Queen Joan of Scotland for a historical novel.



How to use Twitter to Connect with Your Readers

by Beth Barany

The following article first appeared in the Promotion Posse column in the April 2011 issue of Heart of the Bay, the San Francisco RWA newsletter, Karin Ohlson, Editor. A version of this article first appeared at WritersFunZone.com/blog.

Recently, I've been inspired by Kristen Lamb's book *We Are Not Alone: The Writer's Guide to Social Media*. (She's going to think I'm a stalker! I can't say enough nice and gushing things about her book!)

In her book, she talks about thinking like your reader. I interpret that to mean thinking about all the other things they like in addition to the type of book you write.

For example, if you write young adult fantasy, like I do, and your books are sparked by fairy tales, informed by hero stories, and feature a strong heroine (yes, okay, like mine!), chances are you'd attract readers who like Xena, Bones (the TV show), La Femme Nikita (movies and TV shows), all kinds of fairy tales, and other young adult fantasy tales set in fantasy worlds, like Kate Constable's books, Sharon Shinn's tales, and the Golden Compass series.

So what does all of this have to do with Twitter?! Glad you asked.

A lot of authors only blog and tweet about their writing life. And while that's interesting to other writers—and we do inhale a lot of books—you're not reaching out to your readers who aren't writers. While they may really like you, they may honestly not care about how your querying is going, or about your struggles with your plot and character development. That's just not their life.

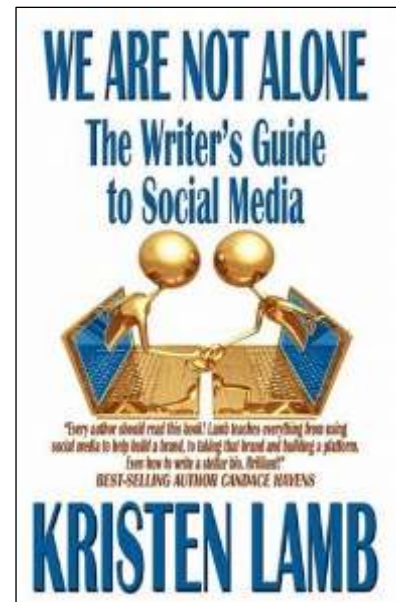
Don't get me wrong! If you like to write about those things, there's a place. But your readers probably can't relate and therefore don't really care. (How to make them care is the subject of a later article.)

As readers, what we do care about are other stories that consume our lives, like the ones I mentioned above.

So, here's what I suggest: go to Twitter and type in your favorite TV show. Check out how many other people are chatting about that show, too! When you type in your show, add the hashtag # (also called the pound sign) before the word. So it would look like this: #Bones for the TV show.

What are hashtags?

Hashtags "are simply a way of categorizing particular tweets by including within them a keyword prefixed with the hash or "pound" (#) symbol. So, for



example, tweets containing writing advice will often contain the "#writetip" tag. The point of this is to make it easier to find all tweets containing writing advice: you just search for "#writetip." Similarly, you could find a stream of publication tips by keeping an eye on tweets with "#pubtip" in them. Using relevant hashtags in your own tweets also increases the likelihood of others seeing your post and becoming a follower. They're a great way to engage with a particular community of Twitter users." (Thanks to Daily Writing Tips for this definition <http://www.dailywritingtips.com/40-Twitter-hashtags-for-writers/>. Emphasis my own.)

The other day I put this to the test and typed in #Firefly. Remember the TV show? Browncoats unite! Okay, I'm back. This show has been off the air for years, but has developed a cult following. (Yes!) And yes, people are still chatting about it on Twitter. I joined in! Fun!

Another show I chatted about with fans was Dr. Who. I typed in #DrWho and found out the trailer for the new season has been released. Cool! (Sigh! Yes, I'm a huge fan of the current series.)

What's the point? You may be asking. Well, I connected with new people who may become my followers on Twitter. And most importantly, I connected in a real way, with all my enthusiasm, with other like-minded people. These people could be my potential readers because we like the same things, they consume media and because they "met" an author on Twitter.

Social media, as any social media expert will tell you, is all about being social. Making connections. Ironically, we're spending more time apart, isolated, tapping away at our computers, tablets and phones. And what we really want, what we've always wanted, and need more than ever, is to be connected, to be a part of the human tribe.

Because of my chatting about favorite YA books, I learned of a new series to check out, *The Queen's Thief*, and gained some fans in the prospect, other people who love reading YA as much as I do. And it just so happens that I write YA fantasy too. I don't know if my new friends will check out my new book, but at least we'll have something to talk about! (@Attack of the Book and @ChaChic—you guys rock!)

So, writers! Go forth and connect with your buddies, other readers who are fans of the types of shows and books and movies you like. And maybe you'll gain followers and even better, raving fans!

How?

Glad you asked. Here are some tips how to make hashtag connecting fun and related to your ultimate goal of selling books. (That is your ultimate goal, right?!)

1. Choose shows, books, authors, and movies that you love! (Easy, right?)
2. Make sure your choices are related to what you write. If you write steamy romance set in contemporary United States, chatting up your love of Star Trek probably has no real relevance to the kinds of books you write.

3. As a follow-up from #2, stay away from controversial topics that don't serve your author career. In the United States, that would be religion, politics and sex. Unless, like I said, these topics and related shows are directly related to the themes in your books.

4. When you tweet, post as a reader not a writer. Post as the raving fan that you are.

That's it!

Let us know how it goes! And feel free to follow me on Twitter. Or just stalk me. Kidding.

Resources Mentioned in This Article

Daily Writing Tips: <http://www.dailywritingtips.com/40-Twitter-hashtags-for-writers/>

We Are Not Alone: The Writer's Guide to Social Media by Kristen Lamb
<http://www.amazon.com/We-Are-Not-Along-Writers/dp/1935712187>

YA fantasy author, book coach and consultant Beth Barany raves about books, authors, and the ever-changing publishing and book marketing world at her blog:

www.writersfunzone.com/blog. And of course on Twitter at

http://www.Twitter.com/beth_barany.



Editor's Message

Write a Love Knot Article

I am actively seeking article submissions from ORWA members. Since the Love Knot is electronic, there are no specific word count requirements. An article can be as long or as short as the topic requires. **Our articles are shared with all RWA chapter newsletter editors so writing an article is a good way to get free publicity.** Be sure to include a short signature line with the address for your website or blog.

If you have any articles or announcements you'd like included in our newsletter please forward them to me at ykarenes@yahoo.ca by the 20th of the month.

Thank you!

Karen Smock, Editor



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