

The Love Knot

Newsletter of the Ottawa Romance Writers' Association



SEPTEMBER 2011

In this month's issue:

- ♥ President's Message
- ♥ Current Releases
- ♥ Upcoming Workshops
- ♥ Articles
 - Fall Calls for Submissions
 - Best Management Practices for Writers
 - The Deadly Sins of Romance Writing
 - Digital Self-Publishing Pros and Cons
 - Revise and Resubmit
 - How to Bring "Flow to Your Writing"
- ♥ Editor's Message

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*By all these lovely tokens
September days are here
With summer's best of weather
And autumn's best of cheer*

Helen Hunt Jackson 1830-1885

I hope you have all had a wonderful summer and are looking forward to the beauty of the fall (and for school to start again!). We have an exciting meeting coming up with the all-day workshop presented by Sabrina Jeffries. Registration will close at midnight on Thursday, September 8, so those of you who have still to register, your only payment option now is PayPal. Please remember we cannot take new registrations at the door on the day. Doors will open at 9:30am and the workshop will start promptly at 10:00am

Sabrina will be holding a book signing at the South Keys Mall from 2:00pm-4:00pm on Saturday along with ORWA members Sharon Page, Opal Carew and Debbie Mazzuca. Details are on the News and Events section of the ORWA website. I hope as many of you as possible will be able to stop by and support them. I am also organizing a dinner on Saturday evening for those ORWA members who would like to join Sabrina for dinner. Details as to time and place will be posted on the loop shortly.

REPORT ON OUR AUGUST MEETING

I was unable to attend the August meeting but I heard rave reports on Teresa's workshop and how interesting and useful you found it. Many thanks Teresa and good luck to those who take the plunge and self-publish.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

We will not be holding a business meeting this month, so be prepared in October for a full agenda. The committee formed to determine how best to approach the issue of self-publishing will have presented their report to the Executive, which we in turn, will want to discuss with you. If any member has an issue they would like to bring forward to the October meeting, please contact me ahead of time at mjabel@sympatico.ca.

Malena Abel
President

*There comes a time when Autumn asks "What have you been doing all summer?"
Anon.*



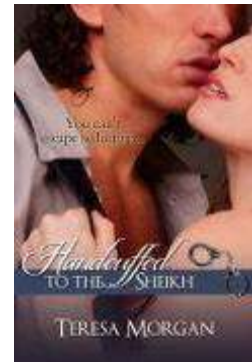
Current Releases

ANNETTE MCCLEAVE
DARK DECEIVER
 May 2011



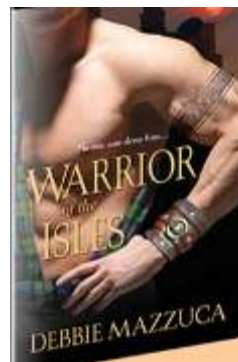
ANNETTE MCCLEAVE
TEMPTING THE KNIGHT: A NOVELLA
 May 2011

MAGGIE JAGGER
VAMPIRE MORGUE
 May 2011



TERESA MORGAN
HANDCUFFED TO THE SHEIKH
 May 2011

DEBBIE MAZZUCA
WARRIOR OF THE ISLES
 Kensington Books
 May 2011



TERESA MORGAN
CINDERELLA AND THE SHEIKH
 May 2011

Upcoming Releases

LINDA POITEVIN
SINS OF THE ANGELS
 Ace Books
 October 2011

DEBBIE MAZZUCA
KING OF THE ISLES
 Kensington Books
 January 2012

Upcoming Workshops



September 11th, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Toning Up a Sagging Middle & The Movie Eye: Choosing the Right Scenes with Sabrina Jeffries

ORWA presents a special day of workshops with *New York Times* bestselling author [Sabrina Jeffries](#). Starting at 10 am, two workshops will be given:

*** Toning Up a Sagging Middle** and

*** The Movie Eye: Choosing the Right Scenes**

Please note: a special fee will be implemented for this workshop only. ORWA members \$10; guests \$30. We suggest you bring a bag lunch. Tea and coffee will be provided. Pre-register on www.ottawaromancewriters.com.

PLEASE NOTE: WE ARE UNABLE TO ACCEPT REGISTRATION AT THE DOOR ON THE DAY OF THE WORKSHOPS

+++++



October 2nd, 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Using POV to Create Emotionally Powerful Scenes with Opal Carew

As writers, we know all about POV, right? We know the difference between first person, third person, omniscient, camera eye view, etc. We know how to climb into a character's head and immerse the reader in the story through that person's perspective. Make the reader see what that character sees, feel what that character feels. In fact, to provide the whole gambit of sensual experience.

But do we really understand how we're doing that? Because if we do, we can do it more effectively.

As an analytical, computer programmer type, when I was learning to write, I wanted to really understand how to write effectively. I tend to look for methodologies I can apply to a task, especially when I'm learning something new, and adding emotional intensity to my stories was something I felt strongly about. Thus, I came up with a technique to evaluate how to thoroughly get into a character's head and convey to the reader a deeper insight into that character, and thus provide a deeper emotional journey.

How do I do this? I look at the actions in a scene and evaluate how the character will react based on those actions. This involves looking at different levels of consciousness, from basic physiological reactions to stimuli, emotional repercussions to those actions, and so on to more cognitive responses.

Come to the workshop prepared to roll up your sleeves and do some work. I believe we learn by doing, so I'll take you through some examples, then give you a starting point so you can use the techniques and share your results with the others in the workshop. If you have a basic scene, or part of a scene (about a page) you'd like to bring along, please feel free to do so.

[Opal Carew](#) is an award winning author who writes erotic romance for St. Martin's Press, as well as Samhain Publishing, Red Sage Publishing, and Sinful Moments Press. She writes in several subgenres of romance, but all hot.

Articles

Fall Calls for Submissions

By Louisa Bacio

The following article was first printed in the August 2011 Orange Blossom, newsletter for Orange County Romance Writers.

Seems like there continues to be a craving for things that go bump-in-the-night. This month also sees a number of holiday calls for submissions; expect this trend to keep up as our year gets closer to ending.

Harlequin Nocturne Cravings

Let's start out with an exciting call for Harlequin Nocturne. Harlequin Nocturne is looking to acquire bold, exciting, erotic paranormal romance short stories for its eBook program, Nocturne Cravings. These stories should be fast-paced paranormals with strong erotic fantasy and danger elements. Authors should feel comfortable exploring any and all sexual scenarios and shouldn't shy away from graphically sensual situations. In fact, the short stories should contain many erotic scenes that compel and bind the characters together. Strong, emotional characters that grab the reader's imagination are also essential.

We are looking for stories of vampires, shape-shifters, werewolves, psychic powers, etc. set in contemporary times. Stories should deliver a dark, highly sensual read that will entertain readers and take them from everyday life into an atmospheric, complex world filled with characters struggling with life-and-death issues.

All stories should be capable of standing alone; all loose ends need to be tied up, and the relationship between hero and heroine should resolve itself in a satisfying manner.

Length is 15,000–25,000 words; Only complete manuscripts submitted electronically will be considered from unpublished authors; no partials or queries, please. Submissions should be sent as a Word-compatible attachment. Submissions should also follow standard formatting guidelines and should be

double-spaced and typed in a clear, legible font on numbered pages. Author name and title should appear as a header or footer on each page. Visit the Harlequin submission guidelines page for more information. Nocturne Cravings e-mail address: nocturnebites@...

Weekend Getaways

Secret Cravings Publishing is taking submissions of short stories of up to 10,000 words for a one-time payment of \$50-\$100, depending on the length of the manuscript. Any genre; steamy to burn-the-page erotic stories wanted.

These stories will be released individually with their own cover. One each Saturday of the week. Submissions will be ongoing, so no deadline.

Holiday Submissions

Dancing with Bear Publishing is seeking submissions for a variety of holiday-themed stories: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hanukkah.

The Halloween Anthology is for a children's book, think Casper the Friendly Ghost - nothing scary, just fun for ages 5-10.

Thanksgiving Anthology these stories don't have to be set at Thanksgiving or even about Thanksgiving, but rather about an incident, accident, etc. with a positive outcome that gives the characters a reason to be thankful.

December Anthology DWB is looking for Christian Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, or any Christmastime non-religious celebration except Pagan rituals.

Suggested length is 2,000 to 5,000 words, and the deadline is September 30, 2011. These stories can be any sub-genre that falls within the regular submission guidelines.

For more information, visit

<http://dancingwithbearpublishing.webs.com/specialsubmissionscall.htm>

Christmas Warmth

XoXo Publishing, an e-publisher will publish an anthology in November of Christmas-themed short stories. Edited by Cynthia MacGregor, the anthology's working title is Christmas Warmth.

To submit stories (specs follow), please do NOT use the regular XoXo submissions address but send directly to: Cynthia@.... IMPORTANT: In the subject line, put Christmas Warmth.

Specs specific to Christmas Warmth: 1) Must take place around the Holiday Season; 2) These are not romances. There may be an element of romance involved, but the stories should not be romances per se. Paranormal themes OK. Stories about kids--great. Stories to do with Christmas in the manner of O. Henry's classic "Gift of the Magi" are encouraged. Mysteries are another good choice. Non-classifiable general fiction? Bring it on!; 3) Nothing "Adult" (i.e. sexually explicit); 4) Heartwarming stories are especially encouraged; 5) True stories as well as fiction will be accepted; 6) We also welcome recipes for Holiday foods for this antho but will not make any payments for recipes.

"Payment: will be that we will print your name and website, which should generate traffic to your site, so if you submit recipes, be sure to include your website if you want it in the book; 7) If submitting a recipe, the same requirement applies that you be sure to put "Christmas Warmth" in the subject line. The editor has other projects in progress that include recipes and does not want to mis-direct your contributions!

General Specs:

1 -- Word count 1000-6000 words per story. 2 -- You may submit multiple stories for consideration, but please know only one story per author per book will be selected. (That is, you can have one story in each antho, but no more than one per each.) 3 -- Previously published material OK if you have regained full rights to your material. 4 -- Simultaneous submissions acceptable if so noted. 5 - Include a brief author bio. 6 -- Submit as attachment in either doc or docx format. Use rtf as a last resort. 7 - Payment as follows: Ultimate cover price of each book will depend on number of stories therein. Total royalties paid out to authors will be calculated on 45% of cover price times number of books sold. Total royalties will be divided by number of participating authors, with equal shares to each. (That is, if there are 15 stories in the book, for example, each author gets 1/15 of the total author royalties paid. Payment is

NOT based on the word count of your submission.) 8 -- Deadline for submissions: October 1. GET YOUR STORY IN ASAP!

Ravenous Shadows

Literary Partners Group, Inc., owner of Ravenous Romance, announced the hire of John Skipp to spearhead a new horror/thriller e-publishing imprint. Skipp's tastes are broad yet demanding, and his requirements unusually specific. "I'm looking for 200-250 page genre novels, wildly entertaining, with no fat or filler. We'll be specializing in smart, fun, compulsive page-turners that can be read in the amount of time it takes to watch a feature film." For more information, visit <http://ravenousromance.blogspot.com/>

Compiled by Louisa Bacio Now available: Sex University: All-Girls Academy



Best Management Practices for Writers

By Dorothy St. James

The following article first appeared in the August 2011 issue of The Jasmine Newsletter for the Lowcountry Romance Writers of South Carolina.

It was this writer's dream come true and a first for me-I sold the first three books in the White House Gardener Mysteries based only on a proposal! I couldn't believe it. I'd never sold more than one book at a time and those books had always been completely finished long before the offer of a sale.

This was wonderful. Wasn't it?

I sat down to write the first book, FLOWERBED OF STATE, my fingers poised at the keyboard, my mind ready to compost a mystery that will tease and tantalize the reader.

And I froze.

Instead of the dialogue and prose for the book, other thoughts streamed through my head. "The editor hadn't actually bought this book. She bought an idea. An idea. What is that?"

"Oh goodness, there is no book. I still have to write it. What if my idea of what the book should be and her idea of what the book should be are two very different things? What if she doesn't like what I write? What if she decides my writing is boring and trite?"

What if...

What if...

Writers often play the "what if" game, but that's with our plots. If I kept spinning my wheels like this I knew I'd soon find myself at the end of my deadline with no book to hand over to my editor.

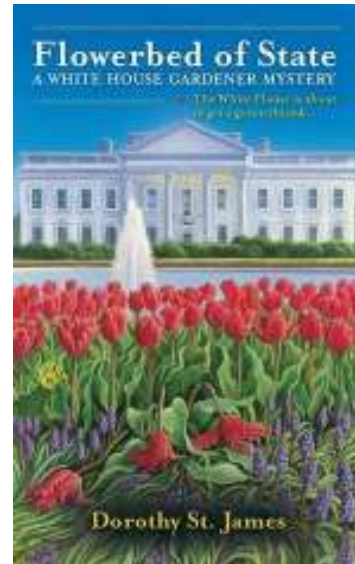
Since getting the contract before actually having to write the book really was a dream-come-true for me, I needed to shake myself out of that destructive rut and GET TO WORK.

What I needed was a little outside help. With the assistance of the brilliant writing coach, Margie Lawson, I came up with fifteen "best practices" for keeping my head in the game, my writing fresh, and my body healthy.

I'm happy to report that I not only finished FLOWERBED OF STATE before my contracted deadline, my editor was so pleased with the book that she required very few revisions (another dream realized.)

If you find yourself struggling to get your thoughts down on the page, I invite you to give these "best practices" a try for yourself, or better yet: create a list of fifteen of your own.

"Best Practices" for successfully and happily writing every day (and to move the story forward).



1. Exercise for 30 minutes before beginning work in the morning.
2. Update to-do list every morning.
3. Free write one page as a warm up exercise.
4. Use the 15-minute timer when getting started as a warm up exercise.
5. Email: Check and respond only in the morning before beginning work, lunch, and when finished for the day.
6. Internet Research: Limit time spent researching online and in research books to before writing and after writing times. If I need to look something up while writing, be sure to limit it to a time limit (5 minutes). Set the timer.
7. Set daily page goals and keep track of them in my project notebook.
8. Set weekly page goals and write up the goals for the month on my white board.
9. Plan to work at least 2 hours in the morning (Writing, not research, not playing online, not answering emails.)

10. Plan to work at least 2 hours in the afternoon (Writing, not research, not playing online, not answering emails.)
11. Get up and stretch for 5 minutes every hour.
12. When stumped, set the timer for 15 minutes and practice writing without worrying about quality or whether or not I'm going to keep it. Just get the words on the page.
13. At the end of the day, brainstorm. Jot down ideas for what might come next and about the characters.
14. Plan at least 2 fun outings a week to counteract hermit tendencies.
15. Reward myself with fun reading.

Dorothy St. James (wildlife biologist and paper pusher) is the author of the White House Gardener Mysteries with Berkley Prime Crime. The first book in the series, FLOWERBED OF STATE, has been called "spunky" (Library Journal), "fast-paced" (Publishers Weekly), and "it quite simply blew me away" (Criminal Element). <http://www.dorothystjames.com>



The Deadly Sins of Romance Writing

According to Michelle Rowen

The following article appeared in the September 2011 issue of romANTICS, the newsletter of the Toronto Romance Writers, Susan Haire, editor.

Despite selling twenty-two books since 2005, I know I still have tons to learn about writing, and romance writing in particular. But I also feel as if I've managed to get a decent grasp over what editors and agents are looking for. I want to share some of the lessons I've learned.

I have judged quite a few RWA-related contests over the years and have observed the same issues over and over again in pre-published authors. Issues that I believe will prevent the writer from finding an agent or editor, which, of course, is the ultimate goal of entering these contests.

These are just my opinion, really...and your mileage may vary... if it helps, then groovy. If it doesn't — it's your book and you should write it however you think it should be written!

That said, let's begin with some of the things that have made me dock points for the contest entries I've judged.....

THE UNSYMPATHETIC HEROINE

She's a shrew, a bitch, sometimes an actual unapologetic whore who exudes greed and deception. Um...why should I care about her, again? Oh, because she's going to have an amazing character arc that leads her to see that her behaviour and actions have been wrong in the past? No thanks. I won't be reading that far unless you show me something about her from the very first page that I can connect with.

THE BORING HEROINE

My favourite type of heroine to write is what I call the "everygal." She has a normal job and a normal life (at the beginning, anyway). The heroines I'm seeing in contest entries are very normal. But they're not particularly witty, or have dreams, or flaws that set them apart from anyone else. They're just

there. Not terribly attractive. A bit plump. With a job they like. Friends they like. And it all leads me to a big fat...so what?

I like that the everygal heroine will inevitably land the deliciously hot alpha hero, but it really isn't all that believable unless you showed me some sort of spark in that average-girl heroine that sets her apart from the pack.

THE INSTANT ATTRACTION

They've never met before but omg he's so hot, she's so hot, their loins are on fire before they've even uttered a word and they must have sex. Soon!! The sooner the better!!! OMG!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

No. Just no. Let's delve a little deeper or have a bit more of a thought process when it comes to dealing with this "lust at first sight." It's definitely not enough to build an entire plot upon. This can work, and does work in romance writing, but there needs to be more to it than simple lust.

THE INSTANT ATTRACTION LEADING TO TSTL BEHAVIOUR

An example: The heroine has gone down into a dark, scary basement and the hero, whom she's never met before, is waiting there. With a knife. And he's an accused serial killer and/or shapeshifting monster. But you know what? He's really, *really* attractive. He'd never hurt her. He's so handsome...I mean, his eyes are so dreamy, how could he be evil?

Why is this particular writing error so prevalent? Because the author knows the hero isn't evil, so that magically transfers to the heroine's knowledge. Umm.... NO.

BORING BEGINNINGS

A book should start with some sort of hook, some sort of action, or dialogue, or really anything other than: 1) a character waking up and thinking about the day ahead of them, 2) a character driving and thinking about their life and problems, 3) a character alone and thinking. See a theme here? It's boring and passive and it's to make things easier for the author to set up the plot coming up by ladling on the info. But by the time that plot actually starts, the reader has fallen asleep. Zzzzzzzzz.

MIRROR, MIRROR

I've seen the "looking in a mirror and describing one's looks" done two ways — the right way and the wrong way. The wrong way includes observations of eye color, height, hair, beauty-level. No. It's not realistic. I mean, think about it. If you look in the mirror you don't casually observe your looks (Do you?). You might think that you're having a bad hair day. Or, oh, look at



that zit. The kind of person who looks in the mirror and thinks — wow, my ocean green eyes are truly as stunning as everyone says they are — is not someone I want to read about. Or meet. For the most part, character description is overrated. With just a few casual mentions, the reader will fill in the blanks.

Another no-no for character description is comparing them to a Hollywood actor, e.g., "People had always told her she could be Angelina Jolie's twin." Or, "he was so good looking, he reminded her of Brad Pitt." This is LAZY WRITING, pure and simple. Unless, of course, there's a valid reason for the character to look like a known celebrity.

INAPPROPRIATE EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

This, quite possibly, is my biggest challenge in my own writing. I even coined a term for it with one of my friends. It's the "La la la, I like cheese" syndrome.

The world is ending, the heroine's life is in dire jeopardy, fire could be literally raining from the sky, and her response is something like "Hey, I'm kinda hungry. I feel like some cheese." Because we, as the writers, have never (or rarely) experienced true life or death situations, it's difficult to imagine what it would be like. But let me tell you...we wouldn't be thinking about our appetites.

THE PERFECT HERO

Well, he's tall, gorgeous, and alpha, and über-powerful, and uh...that's about it. He's a big, good-looking machine with no interesting flaws. Flaws rock. Flaws make the character interesting. He might be gorgeous, but he's a control freak. Or he has daddy issues. Or...there are so many different ways to give your hero some layers that will make him more than just a chiselled hunk and have the reader (or judge or agent or editor) wishing there were more sample pages available.

Okay, so that's it for now. If I think of more I will certainly share them.... :)

Happy writing! ?

National bestselling author Michelle Rowen writes paranormal romance, urban fantasy, and young adult fantasy, both light and dark, sexy and sweet, long and short — it all depends on the story! A past president of Toronto Romance Writers, Michelle's won a Holt Medallion for Best First Book and a Romantic Times Reviewers Choice award for Best Vampire Romance. Her hobbies include writing, writing, and...well, that's about it. For more information, please visit her website at www.michellerowen.com.



Digital Self-Publishing – Pros & Cons

By Deborah Cooke

The following article appeared in the September 2011 issue of romANTICS, the newsletter of the Toronto Romance Writers, Susan Haire, editor.

There's a huge trend in publishing, that of authors digitally self-publishing their own work.

What this means is that the author makes an electronic edition of his or her work available, directly to readers, without involving a publisher at all. Once upon a time, an author who wanted to self-publish a work would have to have it printed. Invariably this meant a garage, basement or spare room full of books, as well as a considerable financial investment. It was very hard to get distribution to bookstores for these self-published books, so, before the internet made direct-to-consumer sales much easier, authors who pursued this path spent a lot of weekends selling books out of the trunks of their cars. Ten years ago, self-publishing was a good way to spend \$20,000 and a year or two trying to earn it back.

But the internet and digital e-readers have changed all of that. It's now comparatively easy to self-publish a book digitally, and it certainly isn't expensive. Amazon offers an interface to authors to create Kindle editions of their works. This doesn't just create the digital edition of the book in the appropriate format — it instantly provides distribution of that book, throughout the Amazon network of companies. Smashwords offers a similar interface, then with their premium distribution program converts files to additional formats and distributes those digital books to Sony, Apple, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, Scrollmotion and Diesel. There is no upfront charge to using these services — they simply take a percentage of each sale made. And in fact, the percentage that they pay to the author is quite high compared to traditional publishing royalty rates, even traditional publishing royalty rates on digital sales.

I have self-published a number of books this year myself and have more in prep. By and large, the works I've published have been my Claire Delacroix

backlist, primarily historical romance titles and time travels. These are books previously published in print but the rights to which have reverted to me. Since I've been doing this for a few months, and I know lots of other authors who are, as well, I thought it would be good to look at the upside and the downside.

Advantages of Digital Self-Publishing:

1. It's easy and comparatively cheap for authors to distribute their work directly to readers. As mentioned above, this is a recent development.
2. The reporting is excellent and far better than that offered by traditional publishers. Amazon, for example, allows authors to see their sales on a real time basis. Smashwords shows sales made from their own site on a real time basis, and updates quarterly from those booksellers to whom they distribute. This is still faster than the semi-annual reporting from traditional publishers, which is usually delayed for several months after the end of the reporting period.
3. Payment is quick. Amazon pays monthly with roughly a 45 day delay for processing. Smashwords pays quarterly, with some lag for payments from the distribution chain. This is far far more rapid and more reliable than payments from traditional publishers, which can be stretched over years. The timing of payments from traditional publishers is also hard to predict. For example, a contract might pay on Delivery & Acceptance — although the author delivers on (for example) February 1, the payment will follow the acceptance. It is hard to predict when one's editor will get to the delivered book, whether there will be revisions, when those revisions will be reviewed and accepted — and how long it will take after that for the cheque to be received by the author.
4. Royalties are high. 70% royalty rates are standard at Amazon for US sales, and Smashwords rates are similar. Traditional publishers currently are paying lower royalty rates on digital sales, sometimes calculated on gross sales, sometimes calculated on net sales. The prices of digital books from traditional publishers have remained close to the mass market price, but there's still a disparity in terms of earnings per unit.

5. The author has a lot more control, both over the work and over its marketing. This includes complete control over the cover design, distribution and pricing. The author can even remove the work from sale at any point.
6. There is no need for the author to have an agent. I hear this most often from unpublished or recently published authors, because it is very hard for an author without an established reader base and publishing contract to get good representation. But it's also hard for authors to have good representation throughout their careers — at different points in time, we might need different skills from our agent or a different suite of contacts. Agents also retire or leave the business, so their clients (no matter how happy they might be) need to find new agents. I only need to spend five minutes among writers to realize how lucky I am — not only to have such a good agent, but that we've been working together since 1998.
7. There are also options available to make self-published digital works available in print editions, in Print On Demand copies. POD means that each book is created when it is sold — by copying instead of by printing. This diminishes the upfront cost of printing a lot of books and storing them, but does increase the per-unit price. POD editions are usually taken out in trade paperback format to diminish that cost difference, as they tend to be marketed at between \$10 and \$15. Still, POD makes it possible for authors to make print editions available with far less investment than was traditionally the case. (And you don't have to store them in your garage.)
8. Digital self-publishing allows for long-tail marketing. This means that the book can find its audience over time. There is no cost in stocking it, and titles don't need to be removed to make room for new books coming in. The digital edition can sit and wait to be discovered. Print titles, in contrast, tend to need to find their audience within two weeks of the onsale date. The book market is very crowded and it's hard to get visibility in that narrow window of opportunity for any title that isn't expected to hit the NYT list of bestselling books.
9. On a related note, there is room for experimentation in digital publishing. Because of the lack of investment in creating physical books, digital publishing

can work very well for books that are perceived to have too small of an audience to make it worth publishing them in print editions. Backlist is a perfect example of this: my backlist titles do exist in print in the world, but only in used copies. It is unclear to anyone how many additional readers are interested in my Claire Delacroix backlist titles — digitally self-publishing them IMO is the ideal way to find out. I know authors, too, who have published new work — i.e. books that have not been previously published — and in many cases, these are works that traditional publishers perceived to have an appeal to only a niche market. They were clearly afraid that demand would be so low that they wouldn't break even on producing the book. They might be right or they might be wrong. Digital self-publishing is a good way to find out. Digital publishing is also good for works that are of different lengths than common in traditional publishing — if an author writes long or short, compared to what is sought in print publishing, it doesn't matter in digital publishing.

10. Finally, digital publishing allows for second chances. A traditionally published book essentially has one kick at the can — one release date, one cover and one chance to make it. After that, publishers are ready to move on to the next title. (There are exceptions, but they are rare.) This makes sense for traditional publishers, as they have large publishing lists and can afford to have some percentage of them "under-perform". It's also expensive to repackage and re-release a print book. Authors, though, are often less happy to walk away from their own books. Individual authors have very small publishing lists, maybe only one or two titles released per year, so we would like to see them all succeed. Digital publishing makes it easy to give a work a second chance. You can upload a new cover, change the price, change the copy, even change the work itself in a new edition, without very much expense. Sometimes the tweak makes all the difference.

Disadvantages of Digital Self-Publishing:

1. Having complete responsibility for the release of the work is daunting to some writers. There is no one else on the team, and this can feel isolating to those people who like the camaraderie of working with others and sharing ideas. My own sense is that this tends to be felt more by authors who have not been traditionally published — they believe that traditional publishing houses do far more than they actually tend to do for the majority of their authors.

2. The promotion of the work is also the author's complete responsibility. For a new work, the author may choose to send review copies, plus there are (at a minimum) blog tours and Facebook pages and websites to keep updated. Again, this tends to be seen as a burden more by authors who have not been traditionally published. All traditionally published authors have taken responsibility for all or some of these promotional tasks over the course of their careers. For backlist titles, like mine, there aren't so many promotional options available other than blogging, which I do anyway.

3. Editorial responsibility for the work is entirely in the author's hands. This is not an issue for previously published books, as they have been revised, line edited and copy edited. For new work, however, it may be necessary (or wise) for the author to hire a freelance editor to review the work, and possibly also a freelance copy editor. This is money out of pocket in advance of publication. On the other side of the coin, it can be argued that many authors are already taking on this expense and obligation — at least of critique partners and beta readers, if not editors and copy editors — regardless of how they are published. There are editors and houses who do not have a strong editorial process for the works they publish, and much of this responsibility in a number of cases has already shifted to the author's shoulders. I have a very intense editorial process with my editor, and I do rely upon her input, but I'm coming to see how rare that situation is.

4. Cover design is another cost to come out of the author's pocket, unless he or she is talented with graphic design. Even then, there may be stock images to acquire for the cover image. Cover design is a very interesting process, and there are many ideas about what individual elements convey about story

details to readers. I'm personally fascinated with cover art and cover design, so being even more involved in this phase of production is exciting for me. Some authors are less thrilled with it.

5. In the case of a lawsuit, the self-published author will be on his or her own. I didn't think of this until it was discussed on a loop, but it is true. Most publishing contracts include some clauses concerning who will do what in the case of a lawsuit and who will pay what, and it is also possible that the publishing house will provide insurance. In fiction, the most common suits are plagiarism and/or copyright violation – they're not that common, but when they occur, they can be expensive.

6. Many digitally published works are only available digitally. This means that those readers who do not like digital editions and/or those who prefer paper books will not be the audience for these works. Readers who buy digital books but like to have physical copies of their "keepers" may also be disappointed. To my thinking, it probably makes sense for authors to offer POD editions of those previously unpublished works that they choose to publish digitally. There is set-up required for POD and there are associated costs, as well.

7. One of the big disadvantages with digital publishing done by anyone – which is also an issue with print publishing – is visibility. How do readers find new works to read? Once upon a time, they saw books displayed in bookstores and on newsstands. Now many do not visit bookstores and newsstands are more likely to stock magazines. Most of the online booksellers have been steadily improving their "recommended reads", trying to digitally replicate the act of browsing and that of bookstore employees making referrals – "if you love Author A, you'll also love Author B". This technology will steadily improve, but in the meantime, there are millions of digital books in the databases of big online bookstores. Getting your book noticed, no matter who publishes it, remains a challenge.

8. Some people and/or writing organizations do not believe this is "real" publishing. If membership in groups for published authors is important to you – or being eligible to enter contests for certain book awards – recognize that

you and your self-published book may not be considered to be published by those who make the rules.

9. It is not yet clear (to me, at least) how traditional publishers will respond to the notion of "their" authors (i.e. the ones that they are actively publishing) also pursuing digital self-publishing. It is possible that there will be a perception of the author having conflicting alliances. Most of the authors I know who are doing very well with digital self-publishing are no longer being traditionally published, or they have no interest in being traditionally published. There have been several high-profile incidents of authors "choosing" one avenue over the other. Is it going to be a case of either-or?

In conclusion, I see digital self-publishing as an exciting opportunity for authors. We all have stories that traditional publishers believed were too risky, and often they are stories that we particularly loved. Maybe our readers will love them too. Many of us have backlist titles, which may not have a demand high enough to justify another print run — on the other hand, if the digitally published edition sells really well, that could provide the evidence necessary to generate enthusiasm in that print run. Many of us also have linked stories which were never sold, and digital publishing offers us the opportunity to continue or complete those series as we had originally intended. As someone who writes a lot of linked series, but contracts for the books in smaller groups, I find it very reassuring that I have this option available for finishing those tales, should the need and the desire arise.

I hope traditional publishers don't decide that authors need to choose between digital self-publishing and traditional publishing, because it seems to me that the combination is the best way to build visibility for an author in the marketplace. Digital novellas, for example, could be a good way to keep a brand or series visible to readers in between the releases of print titles, or secondary characters could have their stories told in spin-off digital works. An author could also try different kinds of stories — vampires or werewolves, for example — to broaden the appeal of his or her brand. To me, this seems to be win-win. ?

Deborah Cooke sold her first romance in 1992, a medieval entitled THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE which was published under the pseudonym Claire Delacroix. Since then, she has published over forty romance novels and novellas, under the names Claire Delacroix, Claire Cross and Deborah Cooke, and won numerous awards. THE BEAUTY, part of her successful Bride Quest series, was her first book to land on the New York Times' list of bestselling books. In 2009, she was the Writer in Residence at the Toronto Public Library, the first time the library has hosted a residency focused on the romance genre. Deborah currently writes the Dragonfire series of paranormal romances, as well as The Dragon Diaries paranormal YA spin-off series, both for NAL under her own name. She is also digitally republishing many of her Delacroix historical romances. To learn more about her books, visit Deborah's websites: <http://www.deborahcooke.com> <http://www.thedragondiaries.com> <http://www.delacroix.net> Or visit her blog, Alive & Knitting, at <http://www.delacroix.net/blog> Deborah lives in Canada with her family and a lot of unfinished knitting projects.



Revise and Resubmit

By Nancy Holland

The following article first appeared in the September 2011 edition of The Midwest Muse, the newsletter of the Midwest Fiction Writers.

In April I sent off for the second time a full manuscript that had been requested by an editor last fall after she judged it in a contest. Two months earlier, I had received the coveted and dreaded "revise and resubmit" letter. While I don't know yet whether I "nailed" the revisions, I thought the process of revising under these circumstances might be of interest to other writers for two reasons. First, some people might wonder exactly what such a letter means and how to go about responding to it. And, second, one thing I learned from the process was that if I had done some of the same things before I sent off the manuscript the first time, my "revise and resubmit" might well have been a sale.

Let me start, however, by saying that I am unpublished and have no special insights, just lots and lots of experience at revising. And what worked for me might not work for others. (Not to mention that how well it worked for me is still up in the air - can you tell I'm just a tad anxious about that?) So, take what works for you from what follows, adapt where necessary, and always respect your own process.

Stage One: The Big Stuff

I said above that "r&r" letters are both coveted and dreaded. Coveted not only because they're way better than a flat-out rejection, but also because of all the great advice they contain, advice that is specifically about your story and how to sell it to specifically this editor. "Golden" is the most common word used to describe them. Most of the dread comes from this stage - the need to make major or at least large-scale changes in your story. My opinion is that you have to make these changes first because they'll have an effect all of the other changes that you need to make.

Unfortunately, most of those changes are story-specific and/or vague ("pace is too slow"), so there's not much I can say about them that will be useful to anyone else. None of the ones that were suggested for my story were really big, but at least one of them was "sneaky big". That is, it was a fairly small change that reverberated through the whole story and kept me dancing the whole rest of the way through the revision process to make sure I'd made all the dozens of necessary wording shifts. Necessary, but not fun.

The real surprise for me was that some of the larger changes that were suggested were changes I'd known all along needed to be made. I just hadn't been ready to do it yet. That lovely page and a half of description and reverie in the first chapter I loved so much and my critique partners chopped down to a page? Now a paragraph. A short paragraph. Of two added scenes, one had actually been in my original notes for the story, but it took a suggestion that I add a few scenes for me to see clearly how it revealed a lot about the hero's character and backstory that could be shown through action, rather than "told".

Stage Two: Layering

My writing voice tends to be understated (which is itself probably an understatement). This is an advantage in my non-fiction writing. In writing romance, not so much. My critique partners are always telling me to say more about my character's motive and show more of their emotional reactions. The editor didn't put it in exactly those terms, but she did want to see more intensity, which I took to be a reference to the same problem in my writing.

So, once the big cuts were made, I went through the story very slowly to layer in the missing motives and reactions. That didn't always mean I added stuff. Sometimes it was just as important to make small cuts to emphasize the impact of an action or an event. I also tried to deepen the point of view in each scene, to color it through the eyes of the POV character, so everything about it would tell the reader something about her/his emotional responses.

This was the hardest, and slowest, part of the revision process for me. For others, it might be unnecessary or even involve showing less emotion if you

tend to an over-dramatic style (and depending on the sub-genre - this was series contemporary). The important thing is to be certain you've achieved the intensity of emotion the editor is looking for.

Stage Three: The Important Small Stuff

This part of my revision process had three sub-parts. First, I used the "search" function on my word processing program to find and eliminate (as much as possible) unnecessary and over-used words. You can find a standard list of unnecessary words ("that", "just", "really") in a number of places. I've adapted my list over several years to reflect the words I'm most prone to use. Of course, what counts as an over-used word (or phrase) will vary wildly among writers, so you'll have to develop your own list of those. When you find an offending word, sometimes you can cut it. Other time you can't, so you have to leave it as is. Still other times you have to rewrite a whole sentence, or even a whole paragraph, to make it work. The reworked version is almost always better, often much better, than the original. That's what makes the tedium of this process worthwhile.

The next sub-part was to read the whole thing aloud. You'll be amazed at what you've missed. Another trick I've used with shorter pieces is to read it aloud backwards, one paragraph at a time, but that was frankly too daunting with a 60,000 word novel. Some writers use their computers ability to read text to have it read the story to them, but that's beyond my technical skills. Others use different fonts to make errors jump out; many print a hard copy to read aloud, and some of those print it in different colors to make sure they're reading exactly what's on the paper instead of what they meant to write but didn't. I learned about these tricks too late for this revision process, but some of them sound worth trying next time.

Finally, I went through one more time trying to follow Donald Maass' advice to make one thing better on every page. (Thanks to Elise Beatty for this one.) Slow, tedious (again), but so, so worth it in the long run. And sometimes kind of fun in the short run, too.

Stage Four: Take a Break

This is the easiest stage. When you reach the point where you can't stand the thought of going through the manuscript one more time, don't. Don't even think about it for at least a week, preferably two or three. Write something else. Read. Refill the well. This is the time to send the story to a knowledgeable beta reader, if you have one. I was lucky -- one of my critique partners joined the group late and hadn't read this particular story before, so I was able to send her the editor's letter and the fully revised (I thought) ms. Of course, as she immediately made clear, it still needed more revision. Her suggestions about how to do that were as invaluable at this stage as the comments of my other critique partners had been in getting me this far.

Stage Five: Push "Send"

When you're responded as fully as you can to your beta reader's comment, or at least have read through your story one more time with fresh (or at least not glazed-over) eyes, it's time for the sealer on the polish you've put on your story. Just before you print or collate the separate chapter files into one document, read every word of it one last time, very carefully. Resolve everything the spell checker and grammar wizard/demon have underlined. Remind yourself why you love this story. Then box it up and ship it or, if you're lucky enough, just push "send". Your work here is done. It's time to start writing something new.

Nancy Holland is a long-time member of Midwest Fiction Writers. A 2010 Golden Heart finalists, she writes short contemporary, fantasy, and paranormal romance. She's still waiting to hear the outcome of her own "revise and resubmit" while she tries to focus on the next story.



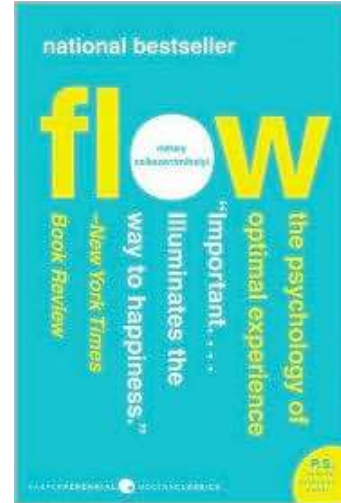
How to Bring "Flow" to Your Writing

By Daphne Gray-Grant

I first heard about Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi about 15 years ago. The Hungarian psychology professor -- now at Claremont, formerly at University of Chicago -- is famous for more than his ridiculously unpronounceable name (phoenetically it's: Mee-hy Cheek-sent-mə-hy-ee).

An expert in what's called "positive psychology,"

Professor C is also frequently cited in books and articles about creativity. He is renowned for coining the term "flow" -- a state of concentration and complete absorption -- and for writing a book about it: [*Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*](#). This work had been on my must-read list for more than a decade but somehow I'd always resisted it. I think I pictured it as an academic book, laden with complicated footnotes, filled with graphs and, if not written in Hungarian, at least poorly translated.



Oh, how wrong I was! In his preface Professor C writes, "I have avoided footnotes, references, and other tools scholars usually employ in their technical writing. I have tried to present the results of psychological research, and the ideas derived from the interpretation of such research, in a way that any educated reader can evaluate and apply to his or her own life."

The result is a highly readable book written in plain English and with such captivating ideas that I think most of my readers will find it thoroughly engaging. A friend of mine who read it describes it as "life-changing."

Flow seldom refers to the act of writing (and, regrettably, the book lacks an index), but I think that many of the principles outlined do apply directly to writing.

Says Professor C: "Outside forces do not determine whether adversity will be able to be turned into enjoyment. A person who is healthy, rich, strong, and

powerful has no greater odds of being in control of his consciousness than one who is sickly, poor, weak and oppressed."

According to *Flow*, an "autotelic self" is a person who turns potential threats into enjoyable challenges, is never bored, is seldom anxious and has self-contained goals.

How does this apply to writing? *Flow* outlines four principles for the autotelic self and I relate them here to writing:

1. **Setting clear goals.** For the writer this includes both micro and macro objectives. For example, what is the piece you have to write right now? How many words is it? Who is your audience? How long do you expect it to take you write? (And, by the way, have you set a timer?) From a macro perspective, the questions are different. What type of a writer do you want to become? Is writing a sideline, designed to polish your credentials (say, by writing a book?), or do you aspire to become a fulltime writer on a variety of subjects? Fiction or non? Oh, and did you choose these goals for yourself? Warning: it's much harder for you to succeed if your goals have been imposed upon you by a boss or a parent.
2. **Becoming immersed in the activity.** Do you spend some time each day writing? Are you able to persist even when writing becomes difficult? When you become bored? Next, what are the challenges that you face? Is your writing too long-winded? Too dull? Too painful to do regularly? What plan have you developed for addressing these challenges?
3. **Paying attention to what is happening.** Self-consciousness is the most common source of distraction for writers, but if you are able to write -- to turn off the internal editor until you produce a first draft at least -- then you are more likely to enjoy the benefits of flow. Work to separate writing from publication. While you write, you should attend only to the task of writing (leaving worrying about editing and publishing for a separate occasion!)

4. **Learning to enjoy immediate experience.** Says Professor C: "Being in control of the mind means that literally anything that happens can be a source of joy." While you write, be sure to enjoy the small achievements: finding exactly the right word, producing a stellar sentence, having thoughts move quickly from your fingers onto the page. Recognize that none of these things is likely to happen for ALL of your writing time, but if you can enjoy them when they do occur, then writing is more likely to become a cherished experience rather than a dreaded chore.

I find it invigorating to read books like *Flow*, but if video is more to your taste, you can also see Professor C on a [Ted Talk](#). Read or listen to what he has to say -- it's invaluable.

*Daphne Gray-Grant is a writing and editing coach and the author of the popular book *8½ Steps to Writing Faster, Better*. She offers a brief and free weekly newsletter on her website. Subscribe by going to the [Publication Coach](#).*



Editor's Message

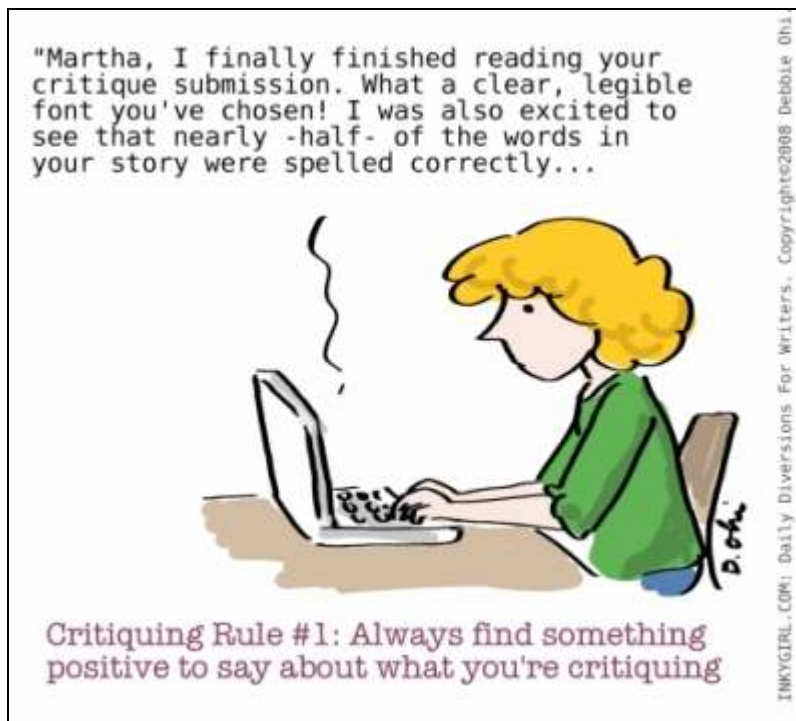
Write a Love Knot Article

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



Used with permission from
Debbie Ridpath Ohi at Inkygirl.com.