

# Romance of the Desert

## The Newsletter of the Saguaro Romance Writers

### Writing for the Roses in 2008

www.tucsonrwa.org

June 2008

#### In this issue

President's Memo	2
Thanks	2
About RWA-Tucson	3
Chapter News	4
Upcoming Meeting News	5
May P&L Statement	5
Write for the Roses	6
Market News	7
Next Month's Issue	7
Beyond RWA-Tucson	8
2008 Discovering Story Magic Schedule	8
May Meeting Recaps:	
Jill Knowles: Editing in Color	9
Vicki Lewis Thompson: Dwight Swain, Motivation-Reaction Unit	10
Writing Exercise:	
Kellie Hazell: Process Examination: Pre-writing	11
Article:	
Frances Marie Colley: Writing for the Directionally Challenged	11
Calendar of Events	13
Meeting Reservations	15

#### Meeting Dates 2008

28 June  
26 July  
23 August  
25 September  
25 October  
22 November

#### June 28 meeting, 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

### Laurie Schnebly Campbell: Learn to Be Pitch Perfect - and Survive!



Let's say you've written the world's greatest novel, and now here's your chance to sit down with an agent or editor, face to face, and convince 'em that THIS is the book Readers Everywhere have been waiting for. How do you do it? Part of your job is overcoming the fear that most writers feel when it comes to selling themselves and their work. "Surviving The Pitch" begins with a look at seven fear-fighting techniques. Next comes a chance to practice presenting a pitch if you've already brought one to rehearse - don't worry, you'll only do this if you WANT to. But since this offers you a chance to pitch among friends, why not? Your payoff will be great feedback, something you'll never get from editors and agents during those crucial eight minutes! In the afternoon, you'll be drafting the pitch itself, with hands-on work to prepare what you'll tell the agent or editor during a formal appointment or an elevator meeting. Finally, Laurie will explain tricks for improving your presentation and following up for the best chances of success.

Laurie Schnebly Campbell loves speaking to writers about issues that draw on her background in two unrelated areas. She worked as a therapist for 11 years after getting her masters degree in counseling from ASU. She's also an award-winning romance novelist who beat out Nora Roberts for "Best Special Edition Of The Year." Besides her non-fiction "how-to" on creating characters, Laurie also enjoys writing for an ad agency, teaching psychology and synopsis classes, narrating for Talking Books, playing with her husband and son, and vacationing near Schnebly Hill Road in Sedona, the red-rock town named for her great-grandmother. ☺

## President's Memo: State of the Heart

---

### Celebrating Barbara

This June marks the third anniversary of the founding of the Tucson Saguaro Chapter #58 of Romance Writers of America. We are 78 members strong and financially solvent. Nearly one-third of us are published authors. We have wonderful, focused programs, great attendance at our meetings, and a supportive sense of community any organization would envy. This is certainly cause to celebrate.

My desire to celebrate our success is overwhelmed by my sadness at the loss of our founder, Barbara Lantz, just before midnight on Thursday night, June 5, 2008. The Sunday prior, Caroline, Frances, Marilyn and I visited Barbara in hospice, as many of us did in the days leading up to her passing. We took a bouquet of flowers and a "Thank You" card. Our purposes were individual and several: To say goodbye, to let her know we care, to do the right thing, and to thank her for her contribution to our lives for founding our chapter. She was in her usual optimistic spirits and delighted by our appreciation, especially in front of her family. (Who among us does not want our loved ones to know other people have valued our contributions?)

As Caroline says, Barbara views the chapter as her "baby" and during their visits she was eager to hear about how we were doing. Barbara had thoroughly enjoyed her participation in the San Diego RWA chapter. When she and Rex moved to Tucson, she felt so deprived, she regrouped our organization, which had gone the by the wayside

years ago. I realize many others helped and participated, but nothing gets done without the initiative of a leader, someone who says, "This is where I want to go. Does anyone want to go with me?" Leadership styles are different, the path may be bumpy or smooth, results vary for a variety of reasons, but the founding leader almost always sets an organization's tone.

Barbara and her founding board set the tone and created a model for our organization that I enjoy. I look forward to our Saturdays together. Our national ethics statement declares that RWA is "designed to assist and require RWA members to exhibit integrity, honesty, professionalism, and other good professional practices, thereby enhancing the romance writing profession." Barbara epitomized all of those qualities and wanted the Tucson RWA chapter to demonstrate the same. I believe we do. Thank you Barbara, we will miss you.

Elsewhere in this newsletter, we request your stories and memories of working with Barbara, joining our burgeoning chapter, and sharing in our three years as a writing community. In addition to using your anecdotes and remembrances and good wishes for inclusion in next month's newsletter, we will combine them into a booklet for Barbara's family. Please join in the spirit of recollection and help us celebrate the life of Barbara Lantz and the chapter she helped establish. ✍

*Linda Reed*

### Thanks

---

Many thanks to our May speakers, Jill Knowles and Vicki Lewis Thompson. Jill showed us a colorful revision technique, and Vicki took us through Dwight Swain's motivation-reaction unit. Thank you, Jill and Vicki! Visit our website, [www.tucsonrwa.org](http://www.tucsonrwa.org), for more photos from our May meeting.



## About RWA–Tucson

---

### Romance Writers of America®

Romance Writers of America is a national organization to encourage mutual support among writers of romance. You must be a member of National to be a member of RWA–Tucson. Contact RWA through the official RWA website [www.rwanational.org](http://www.rwanational.org) or call (832) 717-5200. Email: [info@rwanational.org](mailto:info@rwanational.org)

### RWA-Tucson Dues

New member dues: \$25 per year. No refunds.

### Newsletter

*Romance of the Desert* is a monthly publication of the Tucson Chapter of Romance Writers of America. RWA chapters reprinting articles must give credit to the chapter and the author, and we will reciprocate with any articles we reprint. Please submit your articles, new release information, news and events to Kellie Hazell at [kellie.hazell@gmail.com](mailto:kellie.hazell@gmail.com). Deadline for submissions is the end of the month for the following month's newsletter. Submissions will be edited and published at the discretion of the editor. All advertising for *Romance of the Desert* is accepted at the discretion of RWA-Tucson. The cost of advertising for a business card size, electronic-file ad is \$25 per month.

### How to reach us

#### *Board of Directors:*

☞ **President:** Linda Reed  
[lindareed@netscape.com](mailto:lindareed@netscape.com)

☞ **VP Programs:** Marilyn Johnson  
[mm-wordplay@comcast.net](mailto:mm-wordplay@comcast.net)

☞ **VP Membership:** Suzanne Moore  
[suz72350@hotmail.com](mailto:suz72350@hotmail.com)

☞ **Treasurer:** Vicky Loebel  
[vloebel@hotmail.com](mailto:vloebel@hotmail.com)

☞ **Secretary:** Caroline Mickelson  
[carolinemickelson@yahoo.com](mailto:carolinemickelson@yahoo.com)

☞ **Newsletter Editor:** Kellie Hazell  
[kellie.hazell@gmail.com](mailto:kellie.hazell@gmail.com)

☞ **PAN Liaison:** Roz Fox [rdfox@cox.net](mailto:rdfox@cox.net)

☞ **Publicity:** Eve Crook [mythmaid@aol.com](mailto:mythmaid@aol.com)  
and Kellie Hazell [kellie.hazell@gmail.com](mailto:kellie.hazell@gmail.com)

☞ **Special Events:** Jill Knowles  
[jillytucson@yahoo.com](mailto:jillytucson@yahoo.com)

☞ **Technology:** Sara Creasy  
[sarausa@cox.net](mailto:sarausa@cox.net)

☞ **Ways and Means:** Frances Gross  
[frgross@earthlink.net](mailto:frgross@earthlink.net)

#### *Volunteer Positions:*

☞ **Chapter Advisor:** Cindy Somerville  
[csom221@yahoo.com](mailto:csom221@yahoo.com)

☞ **Chapter Liaison:** Christy Gridley  
[gridley@theriver.com](mailto:gridley@theriver.com)

☞ **Critique Group Coordinator:** Jill Knowles  
[jillytucson@yahoo.com](mailto:jillytucson@yahoo.com)

☞ **Historian:** Elaine Charton  
[echartonwrites@gmail.com](mailto:echartonwrites@gmail.com)

☞ **Hospitality:** Christy Gridley  
[gridley@theriver.com](mailto:gridley@theriver.com)

☞ **Librarian:** Caroline Mickelson  
[carolinemickelson@yahoo.com](mailto:carolinemickelson@yahoo.com)

☞ **PRO Liaison:** Jill Knowles  
[jillytucson@yahoo.com](mailto:jillytucson@yahoo.com)

☞ **Social Events:** Alison Hentges  
[AHentges@aol.com](mailto:AHentges@aol.com)

☞ **Thinking of You:** Christi Gridley  
[gridley@theriver.com](mailto:gridley@theriver.com)

### News & events

#### Congratulations

- ≈ **Alison Hentges**, writing as Georgina Devon, shares two pieces of good news. One of her novels was published as the 500<sup>th</sup> book in Germany publisher Cora's Regency line and was selected as an editor's pick for the month of May. Also, her novel *The Rake's Redemption* is a finalist in the Regency category of the Golden Quill awards.
- ≈ **Anne Hall** is a finalist in the contemporary category of the Charter Oak 2008 Golden Acorn Excellence in Writing Award. Her manuscript will be sent to Esi Sogah of Avon for the final round of judging.
- ≈ **Mary Galusha** is also a finalist in the Charter Oak 2008 Golden Acorn Excellence in Writing Award. Her manuscript, *Sapphire Skies*, scored high points in the inspirational category.
- ≈ **Denise A. Agnew** sold the first book in her Heart of Justice series, *In Her Defense*, to Liquid Silver Publishing. There will be two more books in her romantic suspense series, which features three brothers (by adoption) that serve on a SWAT team.
- ≈ **Suzanne Moore** received her author copies from Scholastic of *Nonfiction Literacy-Building Booklets and Activities*, a collection of easy-to-make mini-books and manipulatives for teaching social studies topics.
- ≈ **Anita Gordon**, writing as Kathleen Kirkwood, has sold to Czech Publisher OLDAG the Czech rights to her novel, *His Fair Lady*.
- ≈ **Mary Keith** reports that Harlequin has requested a partial of her manuscript, *Pleasures Past*.

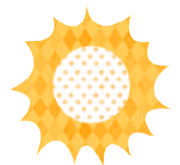
#### Events

- ≈ **Alison Hentges** is dissecting her publishing contracts for discussion on the email loop. Be sure to watch for her messages. Not a member of the loop? To join the RWA-Tucson members-only email loop, please contact our VP Membership, Suzanne Moore (suz72350@hotmail.com).
- ≈ Our **BIAW** (Book-in-a-Week) online group runs during the week preceding each monthly meeting. Join the group and report your daily totals. The most prolific writers get kudos at the meeting, and all who participate move closer to achieving their writing goals. To participate in this month's BIAW, contact **Alison Hentges** (AHentges@aol.com).
- ≈ Critique groups are an excellent way to meet fellow writers and improve your writing and critiquing skills. If you'd like to join a critique group at Saguro Romance Writers, contact our critique group coordinator **Jill Knowles** (jillytucson@yahoo.com). Please be sure to indicate whether you would prefer an online or live critique group, the genres you write, what you're looking for in a critique group, and if you are willing or unwilling to read erotic romance.

#### Welcome New Members

The following have joined RWA-Tucson since our April Meeting. We are pleased to welcome:

- ≈ Beverly Malnar
- ≈ Penny Nickel



## Upcoming Meeting News

---

### Saturday, June 28<sup>th</sup>

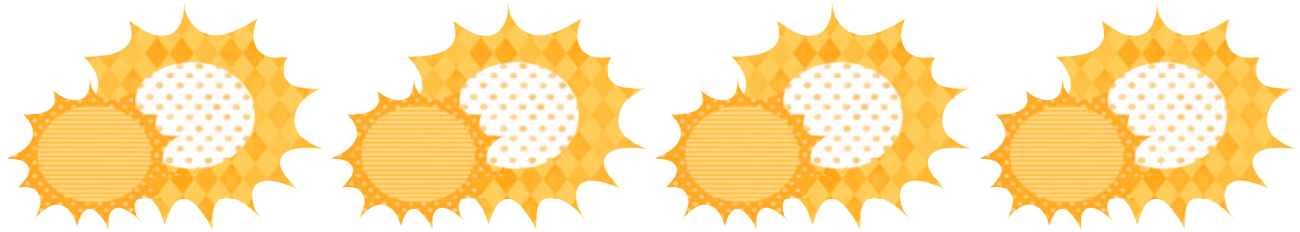
Bring an eight-minute pitch to practice the fear-conquering techniques Laurie will talk us through.

### Saturday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>

Our illustrious Vice President, Marilyn Johnson, has booked New York Times bestselling author Christina Skye for our August meeting. She'll be discussing "The Sensual Hero's Journey." Mark your calendars!

### Thursday, September 25<sup>th</sup>

With gracious assistance from Roz Denny-Fox (THANK YOU, Roz!), we have an exciting speaker scheduled for September: **Harlequin Senior Editor Paula Eykelhof**. To accommodate Paula's appearance at the Society of Southwestern Authors' conference the weekend of September 27<sup>th</sup>, we're adjusting our date and time. Instead of Saturday, September 27, mark your calendars for Thursday, September 25, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., with doors opening at 5:30 p.m. Our location remains the same: El Parador Tropical Restaurant.



## May Profit and Loss Statement

---

In an effort to maintain transparency and promote informed, active discourse regarding the chapter's finances and financial decisions, the Board of Directors resolved to publish the chapter's profit and loss statement in the newsletter each month.

As of May 31, 2008, RWA-Tucson's Profit and Loss statement (cash basis) is as follows. If you have any questions about these numbers, please email our Treasurer, Vicky Loebel ([vloebel@hotmail.com](mailto:vloebel@hotmail.com)).



<b>Income:</b>	
Meeting Fee - Member	475.00
Meeting Fee - Nonmember	120.00
Membership Contributions/Support	0.00
Membership Donations/Raffle	105.00
Membership Donations/Used Books	8.00
Programs: Donations/WFTR	140.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>848.00</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>	
Monthly Meeting Expense	511.95
Newsletter	21.69
Paypal fee	8.55
Programs - Roses	27.72
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>569.91</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>278.09</b>

## Write for the Roses

The chapter has embarked on a new effort in 2008 to get more of us published. It's called Write for the Roses because whenever a member gets published, he or she gets a rose.

Red roses are given to members when they sell a full-length romance novel. White roses are given to members when they sell a full-length non-romance novel. Pink roses are given to members when they sell non-full-length romantic fiction.

We are ending our year-long endeavor to award more red and white roses by bringing in an editor and agents who will hear pitches and do critiques. But since the purpose of WFTR is to get our books done, only participants who have finished their books will be eligible to pitch to these agents.

Learn more and sign up for Write for the Roses at a meeting or by clicking on Write for the Roses on our website, [www.tucsonrwa.org](http://www.tucsonrwa.org).

Date	Name	First draft (% complete)										Revision (%)				Subm.	Acc.	Eligible	
		10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	25	50	75	100				
1/26	Linda Reed	█	█	█															
1/26	Marilyn Johnson	█	█	█															
1/26	Betty Barry	█																	
1/26	Alison Hentges																		
1/26	Vicky Loebel	█	█	█															
1/26	Suzanne Moore #1				█	█													
1/26	Bonnie Rogers	█	█	█															
1/26	Jayne Shelton																		
1/26	Sam Turner	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	2/29	
1/26	Kathleen Wells	█	█																
1/26	Mikaela Quinn			█															
1/26	Judith Horner	█	█																
2/23	Kellie Hazell	█	█	█	█	█													
2/23	Caroline Mickelson																		
2/23	Cindy Somerville	█	█	█															
2/23	Robin Colburn #1	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█			
2/23	Robin Colburn #2	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█			
2/23	Elaine Charton #1	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█			
2/23	Jill Knowles #1	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	4/20	
2/23	Christy Gridley	█																	
3/22	Sam Turner	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█			
3/22	Shauna Carr																		
3/22	Adrienne O'Hare																		
3/22	Frances Gross	█	█	█	█	█													
4/26	Jill Knowles #2	█	█																
4/26	Mary M. Mercado																		
5/24	Anne Hall	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█			
5/24	Eve Crook	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█			
5/24	Bev Malnar																		
5/24	Elaine Charton #2	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█			
5/24	Christine Kisthardt																		
5/24	Michael Charton																		
5/24	Suzanne Moore #2																		

## Market News

---

Compiled from the Cynthia Sterling Yahoo News Group, by Cindi Myers. Subscribe to this loop by emailing Cindi at [cynthiasterlingsubscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:cynthiasterlingsubscribe@yahoo.com). [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

- A new market has emerged for authors looking to resell previously published books whose rights have reverted to them. Amazon.com has made it amazingly easy to publish works for their Kindle ebook reader. You must own the electronic rights to the book. The author receives 35 percent of the price, which the author sets for the work. For more information, go to [forums.digitaltextplatform.com/dtpforums/index.jspa](http://forums.digitaltextplatform.com/dtpforums/index.jspa).

### BelleBooks

- Bell Bridge Books ([www.bellebooks.com/bellbridge](http://www.bellebooks.com/bellbridge)) is a new imprint of successful small press BelleBooks. In the words of the founders, Bell Bridge will feature "general list fiction with a strong emphasis on fantasy and fresh new voices." The editors of Bell Bridge are currently open to submissions of fantasy, dark fantasy, urban fantasy and general Southern fiction. Titles will be released as ebooks and print-on-demand. Some will also be released as audio books. Bell Bridge pays a small advance against royalties. You may send a query about completed manuscripts of 100,000 words or less to [debbsmith@aol.com](mailto:debbsmith@aol.com).

### On the Premises

- Stories published in *On the Premises* ([www.onthepremises.com/index.html](http://www.onthepremises.com/index.html))

## Next Month's Issue of Romance of the Desert

---

To celebrate Barbara Lantz and three years of the Saguaro Romance Writers chapter, Caroline Mickelson is collecting reflections, anecdotes, and

are winning entries in contests that are held every four months. Each contest challenges writers to produce a great story based on a broad premise that editors supply as part of the contest. There is no fee to enter the contests and the first prize winner of each contest is paid \$140. Stories should be between 1,000 and 5,000 words. As long as a story uses the premise creatively and is well written, they will consider mainstream/literary stories, historical romances, science fiction, horror, westerns, mysteries, and fantasy. Submission guidelines, tips and information about the current contests are available at the website.

### Real Simple Magazine

- *Real Simple* magazine is sponsoring a Life Lessons essay contest. Write about the most important day of your life in 1,500 words or less. First prize is \$3,000 and publication in *Real Simple* magazine. Entry deadline is September 9, 2008. For contest rules and submission details, go to [www.realsimple.com/lifelessons](http://www.realsimple.com/lifelessons).

### Samhain Publishing

- Samhain announces a call for submissions for the Samhain Cowboy Roundup. This anthology will consist of three novellas to be released individually as eBooks in June 2009 and combined into one print title in 2010. To submit, please include the full manuscript of 24,000 to 30,000 words with a two- to five-page synopsis by December 1, 2008, to [editor@samhainpublishing.com](mailto:editor@samhainpublishing.com). For more information, go to [www.samhainpublishing.com/submissions](http://www.samhainpublishing.com/submissions)

memories of the chapter and its founder. Please submit your vignettes to Caroline by June 22 at [carolinemickelson@yahoo.com](mailto:carolinemickelson@yahoo.com).

## Beyond RWA-Tucson

---

For more meetings and events beyond RWA-Tucson, go to [www.tucsonrwa.org/groups.html](http://www.tucsonrwa.org/groups.html).

### *Cochise County Sisters in Crime*

- ☞ **June 14:** In her “Plotting: The ‘Right’ Way, the ‘Wrong’ Way, and What Works for You” workshop, author Tina Gerow will demystify the myriad ways there are to get to THE END and help you choose what’s right for you. The workshop runs from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Sierra Vista Police Department Pubic room. Fee is \$5.
- ☞ **July 3:** In her “Writing the Page Turner” presentation, multi-published author Connie Flynn will cover how to control timing and prose to heighten conflict, tension, and suspense. The free meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. at the Cochise College Library, Horace Steele Room, SierraVista.

### *Fall Writers Workshop*

- ☞ Free event at the Scottsdale Civic Center Library (3839 N Drinkwater Blvd, Scottsdale, AZ 85251) featuring our own Vicki Lewis Thompson. Other speakers include: Vijaya Schartz, Laurie Schnebly Campbell, Linda Style, Roz Denny Fox, Kerrie Droban, C.C. Harrison, and more. Workshop topics include: Blogging 101, Dynamic Websites for Writers, Villains Have Feelings Too, and other workshops on writing craft and the writer’s life, as well as Q&A panels. No registration necessary.

### *Oro Valley Book Festival*

- ☞ Coming in January 2009. Meet local authors, enjoy programs and activities,

have books appraised and much more. Check back regularly for more information. Watch [www.ci.oro-valley.az.us/Library](http://www.ci.oro-valley.az.us/Library) for a *Call to Authors* (local authors only).

### *Society of Southwestern Authors*

- ☞ **June 15:** Richard DiRusso from the Pima County Public Library presents “Banned! What They Don’t Want You to Read or See,” at the Four Points Sheraton Conference Center, 1900 E. Speedway, 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. \$20 paid at the door includes lunch and speaker.
- ☞ **June 28:** Harvey Stanbrough’s “Writing Effective Dialogue” and “Writing Electric Narrative” workshops at the Huachuca City Senior Center, 504 Gonzales Blvd from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Cost for either workshop is \$35 for SSA members, \$45 for non-members; for both workshops: \$60 for SSA members, \$80 for non-members. Space is limited so please pre-register via email ([h\\_stanbrough@yahoo.com](mailto:h_stanbrough@yahoo.com)).

### *Tucson Festival of Books*

- ☞ **March 13-15, 2009:** The Festival would like authors of all genres to participate. Over 200 authors, including Elmore Leonard and J.A. Jance, have already confirmed. If you are a published author (e-books included) and would like to participate, contact Nancy Ledeboer at [nancy.ledeboer@pima.gov](mailto:nancy.ledeboer@pima.gov). For more info about the Festival, go to: [www.tucsonfestivalofbooks.org](http://www.tucsonfestivalofbooks.org).

## 2008 Discovering Story Magic Schedule

---

### *Advanced DSM, Sept. 1-30, \$60*

Receive a quick review of the DSM process; get in-depth, month-long brainstorming; observe Laura Baker and Robin Perini assist others. Learn how to build a firm foundation under your characters

using the **Character Grid**, how to give your story a backbone by defining its **Turning Points**, how to use the **Storyboard** to organize scenes and control pacing, and how to realize your **Vision** of your story. [discoveringstorymagic.com](http://discoveringstorymagic.com).

### Editing in Color by Jill Knowles

---

As a pantsler, Jill's process for getting a workable rough draft actually takes two drafts, but once she has that functional draft done, then the colorful fun begins. Jill prints out her manuscript and reads it through once with only a highlighter to mark areas that need some work. There is no writing allowed in this stage. After the initial read-through, she goes back through the manuscript with ten different colored pens – a separate read-through each time – to focus on specific story elements. Jill provided examples of what she looks for in each pass:

#### **Story – Dark Blue**

Is the plot coherent? Have any threads been dropped? Is the promise to the reader fulfilled?

#### **Mystery – Light Blue**

Jill says “mystery” can be replaced with whatever specific story element dominates your story's subgenre. Because she writes erotic romantic suspense she looks specifically at the mystery elements and then at all elements in order to see the pacing of the mystery.

#### **Hero/Heroine – Dark Purple**

Characters are Jill's favorite story element, so she uses her favorite color to mark any necessary character-related revisions. Does each main character have a solid character arc? Does the hero have a distinctive personality?

#### **Villain – Orange**

Conversely, orange is Jill's least favorite color, and it clashes with purple so it seems a perfect color to analyze whether or not she has portrayed her villains as worthy opponents. Do the villain's actions drive the plot?

#### **Supporting Characters – Light Purple**

Complementary to the Hero/Heroine color analysis, Jill uses this read-through to make sure

each supporting character serves a distinct, memorable, and necessary purpose in the story.

#### **Romance & Sex Scenes – Pink**

Jill calls the pen she uses for this read-through the Hot Pink Pen of Love. She makes any changes necessary to make the romance believable and to demonstrate that her characters' emotions have grown and changed over the course of the story.

#### **Setting – Dark Green**

Jill considers the setting to be a character in its own right in her stories. She wields her dark green pen to mark areas in which the setting is inconsistent or fails to deliver a unique and vivid background to the characters and their story.

#### **World Building & Magic – Light Green**

Using a color that reinforces the connection with setting, Jill drills down to the specific rules for her characters' society and culture. Are these rules explained clearly and followed consistently?

#### **Pacing – Brown**

On this second-to-last read-through of her now very colorful manuscript, Jill marks the boring spots in brown. She looks specifically at the end of each chapter to make sure the reader would want to turn that page.

Jill then types in the changes and pays attention to the color coding as she goes. For example, a segment with a lot of green and some blue and purple might suggest that she should establish a stronger sense of place as filtered through her heroine's perceptions in that area. Once the story is as good as she can get it from this process, Jill prints it out and sits down with a red pen to tighten it up in one last read-through. She axes passive voice; cuts away as many adverbs and “nothing” words as possible; and hunts down extraneous words and phrases for deletion.

## May Meeting Recaps (continued)

---

Jill says she may be a panster when it comes to creating a rough draft, but her editing process more than balances any “loosey-goosey” tendencies there. This layering of specific editorial passes increases her understanding of each aspect of her story and allows her to increase the

complexity of her work while she creates a unique and consistent voice. But Jill also encouraged us to pick and choose whatever we find most useful from her method to apply to our own unique needs as we make revisions. ✍

Kellie Hazell

---

## Dwight Swain’s Motivation-Reaction Unit by Vicki Lewis Thompson

---

Our first in a series on Dwight Swain’s *Techniques of the Selling Writer* began with a disclaimer. According to Vicki, if writers can afford only one how-to, this is the book to buy; however, she wanted to make it clear that analyzing each sentence as you write against Swain’s guidelines is not the best idea. Instead, she recommended that we use his techniques once we have a draft of a story to work with. Otherwise, the process can cramp the creative process. That being said, what Swain calls the “motivation-reaction unit” or a stimulus-response unit, is one of his most basic and fundamental approaches to writing at the sentence level because stories are a succession of these units. The chain they form as they link together creates the pattern of emotion. Thus, external events aid story development only as someone has feelings about them and reacts to them.

The motivation or stimulus half of the unit is an *external development* that leads our POV character to feel – and therefore behave – in a constructive manner where our story’s central problem is concerned. Change must occur both in the external world, our POV character’s state of affairs, and his internal world, his state of mind. Only as they interact, meshing like finely tooled gears, do our stories move forward.

The reaction or response half of the unit is what your character does as a result of the motivating stimulus. It starts with a feeling, a private, subjective interpretation of data that reveals itself to the outside world in overt behavior, as a

reaction. Then comes speech. Vicki emphasized that while the response need not go through all three of these steps every time, the response must follow this order: feeling, then reaction, then speech. This is simply how our brains operate.

A reaction or response should be significant, pertinent, active, consistent for the character, and reasonable/proportionate to the stimulus. We achieve a greater sense of reality whenever we fragment any of our motivations or reactions into the smallest bits.

Vicki warned that Swain details several common mistakes writers make when employing these units, including putting reaction before motivation; simultaneous events that interrupt the logical flow of the M-R units; writing insignificant motivation and reaction; and inappropriate reaction to the motivation.

How do you write a motivation-reaction unit? Write a sentence *without* your character; and then follow it with a sentence *about* your character (i.e., his or her feeling, which leads to action, which then stimulates speech or thought).

Vicki concluded with a quote from the book that resonated for her. In the last chapter, she said, Swain wrote that “a true writer seeks a larger world.” Vicki agreed wholeheartedly. Money is fine, as is acclaim, she said – but creating a larger world and sharing it with others is her reward. ✍

Marilyn Johnson & Kellie Hazell

---

## Writing Exercise

---

### **Process Examination: Pre-writing** by Kellie Hazell

*This is the second unit in a series designed to help writers find or better employ the tools they use to write best.*

---

Last month, I introduced the concept of process examination: an active analysis of how you write with an eye toward enhancing what works and removing what doesn't. This month, I focus on two ways to examine the pre-writing process for techniques that are working well and those that might need adjustment.

Whether you outline, write a scene or two of back story, sketch out a couple of turning points, or simply ponder-ponder-contemplate an idea, chances are good that you do *something* before you sit down to compose your first draft. In the journal (or notebook or word processor document) that you are using for these exercises, jot down the steps you take before you draft a novel. Also write the techniques you are interested in trying. Then think about ways to document your progress in those steps in a writing session: chapters outlined, words of back story written, characters biographed, hours thinking, and so on. Decide on a metric that best examines the performance of the writing process you prefer or want to develop for pre-writing. At the end of each writing session, note what you accomplished in those terms. You won't have to plot your progress in a graph (though you can) to

see whether or not a given technique is generating the desired output. Also journal how each writing session went. You may have written three pages of an outline, but did it take you five hours instead of your anticipated two? Did any of the techniques feel like a perfect fit or an ugly stepsister wearing Cinderella's glass slipper? List both the rough and smooth spots of each session.

The point is to figure out exactly what generates the best information in the best way possible for you to dive into your draft. You might find that a detailed outline is impossible for you, but a one-sentence story idea and a character arc essential. Don't be afraid to try new pre-writing methods if something doesn't seem to be working, but be sure to generate an appropriate metric as described above for the new technique. Remember, process examination is active engagement with your writing process, not a strict attempt at someone else's methodology.

Next month I'll discuss how to examine your progress as you write the beginning of your novel. This is when spreadsheets come in very handy. ✍

## Article

---

### **Writing for the Directionally Challenged** by Francis Marie Colley

*The following first appeared in the April 2008 issue of Rumples Sheets, the newsletter of the Missouri Romance Writers of America, Kimberly Killion, Editor*

---

'Ello me hearty mates and crew.

Today we're going to do a little elementary compass navigation and orientation. That is to say, Writing Orientation. How to get your bearings in your book to head off in the right

direction (i.e. start writing again) and arrive at your destination (i.e. HEA) sometime before your supplies (i.e. the rum) run out. This is a neat trick all pirates (i.e. writers) need if they find themselves marooned or possibly in a hurricane in which they think their ship is going to sink.

## Article (continued)

---

First and most important, find true NORTH. You won't get your bearings or headings or anything until you've got your center. Your true NORTH is two things: characters and goals. So if you're ever stuck, flailing about, sitting in Doldrums and wondering if a brisk wind will come again, find NORTH. Remember where you are going and put it in contrast with where you are now. Just like NORTH is the most important of the four directions, your main characters and their goals are the most important part of your story. They are the story.

Are your hero and heroine still behaving true to themselves? Are they pursuing their goals for all they're worth? Are they bigger and bolder than everything else (i.e. plot, secondary characters)? Are you keeping your scenes (like your sails) trim? If the scenes you're putting on the page aren't necessary to the characters or the goals, then they're most likely dross that's weighing down your ship and catching you in some coral reef. Toss the albatrosses overboard and cut line, sailor. Write down the important stuff.

Once you've got NORTH, glance behind you to the SOUTH. What do you find? There is no North without South, no love without hate, no peace without war, no romance without heartbreak. In the SOUTH lies conflict and irony. While your NORTH is focusing on character and goals, the SOUTH should be raising hell, screaming the rebel battle cry, making everyone wonder which side is going to win. Conflict keeps your characters and their goals in sharp desire; the more we're kept from what we want, the more we want it.

While you're at it, make sure some of your conflict is of the ironic variety. If your heroine hates class reunions and hell would freeze over before she attended one, make her go to accomplish something that is very important to her, more important than confronting the demons at the Class of XXXX-and the boy she used to love. Irony is conflict inflicted by method of laughing

gas; and lessons are always better learned with a hearty laugh than a beating with the 'Nines.

So we've got the NORTH and SOUTH opposing each other. Take a look over your right shoulder to the EAST. Venus the Morningstar is your guide, introducing the next important bearing: Love. Love is important since you need conflict for your Conflict, and nothing conflicts Conflict more than Love. (One of those ironic things again.) Clearly if you're writing a romance, Love is a main bearing. Make it big, make it count, and make it believable. Humans all need the Big Three for True Happiness: Faith, Hope, and Love, but most of all Love. We all need something to believe in; something to hope for; someone to love who also loves us. Notice, though, Love is not the sole focus of your story, nor the biggest focus-but it does shine the brightest.

Now look WEST, young man, look WEST. What good is the WEST? Why the ending, of course. We all admire the perfect sunset, and though it may be the same sun every day, no two are alike. The same is true of your happily ever after. Yes, it's romance; yes, it's a happy ending; yes, there are a hundred Regencies published a year-but your Happily Ever After is just as beautiful, just as unique as the thousand other sunsets across the world. Someone will enjoy seeing it; someone will be moved by it; someone will even remember it forever. And the thing about sunsets is, you never get tired of seeing them or marveling at their beauty or how at peace with the world they make us feel. Write your happy ending. Do it to make the world a little sweeter.







All right. Got your bearings now? Have you found true NORTH where your main characters are pursuing their goals, all the while being bedeviled by the conflict of the SOUTH, fighting the Love attraction of the EAST? If so, you're ready to bear WEST, into that beautiful sunset of HEA. Happy writing, Mates! ✍

*Frances Marie blogs with her fellow writer pirates at A Writer's Life for Me ([yohowriterslifeforme.blogspot.com](http://yohowriterslifeforme.blogspot.com)).*

## Calendar of Events








---

June 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5 Sisters in Crime Cochise County Chapter 	6	7
8	9	10 Valley of the Sun 	11	12	13	14 Arizona Mystery Writers  Sisters in Crime Cochise County Chapter
15 <i>Father's Day</i> Society of Southwestern Authors 	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 SSA Reader's Theater 	23	24 Desert Rose RWA 	25	26	27	28 Saguaro Romance Writers 
29	30					

## Calendar of Events (continued)

July 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 Sisters in Crime Cochise County Chapter 	4 <i>Independence Day</i>	5
6	7	8 Valley of the Sun 	9	10	11	12 Arizona Mystery Writers 
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 Society of Southwestern Authors 	21	22	23	24	25	26 Saguaro Romance Writers 
27 SSA Reader's Theater 	28	29 Desert Rose RWA 	30	31		

## Meeting Reservations

---

Reservations are due by 10 p.m. on the Wednesday before the meeting. The meeting fee is \$15 for RWA-Tucson members and \$20 for non-members. Meetings start at 10 a.m. Lunch is included.

Location: El Parador Tropical Restaurant (rear room) at 2744 East Broadway, Tucson.

### To make a reservation:

Email Suzanne Moore ([suz72350@hotmail.com](mailto:suz72350@hotmail.com)) to reserve your place, and pay at the meeting or via PayPal from our website ([www.tucsonrwa.org](http://www.tucsonrwa.org))

or

Mail a completed meeting reservation coupon, together with a check payable to RWA-Tucson (or pay at the meeting).

### Send coupon to:

RWA-Tucson c/o Dr. Suzanne Moore 1272 North Dorado Blvd. Tucson, AZ 85715 (520) 722-7779

### Pay online

Our website [www.tucsonrwa.org](http://www.tucsonrwa.org) takes payments online. To pay your meeting fee, click the *Pay Online* button. To learn about and pay for our workshops, click the *Workshops* button. Add items to your cart and checkout via PayPal using your PayPal account or a credit card.



### Meeting Reservation: June 28, 2008

Saguaro Romance Writers

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_



### Meeting Reservation: July 26, 2008

Saguaro Romance Writers

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_