



The Write Touch

RWA Chapter 13
Volume 100, No. 4
October 2007

Drumroll Please...

WisRWA 2007 Election Results

By Kathryn Albright, 2007 Election Chair

As with last year's election, the results this year were fairly predictable. Huge thanks to each of you for volunteering. WisRWA could not exist without the enthusiasm, spirit, and creativity that you bring.

Mary Jo Scheibl, has stepped up to take the position of President of WisRWA. She has an impressive history of helping this organization as a FAB Five judge and genre coordinator. The last two years she has been the FAB Five Contest Coordinator. Her background as an instructor at Gateway Technical College, committee chair on a number of committees, including state and regional academic committees, will be an asset in her position now with WisRWA.

Returning Vice President **Meagan Hatfield** made several changes over the past year with the WisRWA Web site, which included starting the WisRWA Class loop for chapter members, organizing the Meet-N-Greets, and sprucing up the site with links to members sites, member's only pages, a chat room and rotating cover banners. She will be giving a workshop this October at the Wisconsin Book Festival and teaching a class on the new WisRWA Class loop. Meagan—how do you make time to write?

Jamie Kersten, is returning for a second term as secretary. Last year she visited area chapter meetings and served as start up contact for the Wausau Area, along with coordinating the Romantic Suspense category for the FAB Five contest.

Returning Treasurer, **Sandra Turriff**, has been a judge for the Fab Five Contest for several years and also assisted with Deb Dixon's workshop in

2003. As a writer for professional journals and a business owner, her expertise with finances is an asset to WisRWA.


Green Bay/Fox Valley has both co-chair contacts returning--**Donna Kowalczyk** and **Stacey Netzel**. In addition to the monthly meetings, Donna will again be serving as the 2008 Write Touch Conference Chair. The 2007 conference was such a success—I don't know how she can improve on it.

Bobbi Dumas is the new Madison chapter chair. With her past membership in the Washington Romance Writers in DC, perhaps she'll have some fresh ideas for the monthly meetings. (That in no way implies the meetings have been "stale" up to this point. Anything BUT!)

Milwaukee Area Contact co-chairs are **Ilona Fridl** and **Maureen Welli**. Maureen served last year as Contact co-chair and will be joined this year by Ilona. Both women have been FAB Five judges and both write historical romance in addition to other genres.

Returning Chippewa Falls Area Contact is **Peggy Strand**. She has been a member for the past 11 years and helps WisRWA annually by judging the FAB Five Contest. She writes romantic suspense.

DeAnne Wildes-Michelson returns as the Area Contact for the Wausau Area. She writes Fantasy Romance and works part-time as Community Relations Manager for Barnes & Noble in Wausau.

Thanks to all of you who have stepped forward to help through this next year. There is such a wealth of knowledge within the organization that WisRWA keeps getting better every year and it is because of women like you. Thank you! 

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The Board of Directors meets twice a year, in spring and fall.

*Area Contacts are the liaisons between the general membership and the executive board.

The *Write Touch* Newsletter is published quarterly. For more information, or for reprints, contact Rachel Berens-VanHeest, Newsletter Editor at reberens@charter.net.

The chapter's Web site, www.wisrwa.org, is updated monthly. Submit changes and new information to the Web site coordinator, Meagan Hatfield, at meaganhatfield@charter.net

A Thank You, A Promise, A Vision

Mary Jo Schiebl

Oh-kay. You voted me into the WisRWA presidency. Thank you for putting your trust in me. As I think back to our previous presidents, I realize again they've left major shoe prints—easy to follow, tough to fill. I promise to do my best to meet the upcoming challenges WisRWA faces just as they did.


Imagine that—I completed two items in one paragraph. Now for the vision of the road ahead.

- In 2008, we need to gear up for our silver anniversary. Whoever said WisRWA wouldn't last? Not us WisRWA folks. If you have ideas for the celebration, let us know.
- We have an energetic board filled with ideas to move us into the next 25 years. One example is the online classes, one offered this past summer. We hope to see this bloom to more classes as yet an added benefit to WisRWA members and a chance to showcase their wisdom.
- We've had an explosion of newly published authors posting their news. We celebrate

with them and hope for many more announcements to come. Our loops are fantastic ways to get the good news out.

- We want to continue to celebrate all our published authors and support our striving-toward-publication ones. Having successful conferences, online classes and mini-workshops help us to achieve this. We must handle our funds appropriately so we can continue to do this.
- We're moving toward electronic entries and judging for the FAB 5.
- We must all work to broadcast the great qualities of WisRWA and its members: friendliness, supportiveness, hard work.
- Updating our bylaws and Policies & Procedures to be in line with the changes of RWA.

All the above are exciting tasks, major ones also. The Board I have to work with is fantastic. Our membership volunteers when asked. With all this in place, I look forward to adding my footprints to those who've walked the path before me.

Thank you again for placing your faith in me. 

Wondering Why You Don't See Your Name?

Have you recently won a contest? Do you have a new release coming out soon? Have you done something amazingly fabulous? And yet you don't see your name in the *Write Touch*? This is because you didn't specifically e-mail me!! I wish I had the time to keep track of all the wonderful news that comes out about all my fellow WisRWA authors, but I don't. I don't even always have time to go check our Web site. So if you don't e-mail me specifically when you have news, it won't make it into the newsletter. Please help me out by e-mailing me at reberens@charter.net. I'm waiting to hear about and help you celebrate your news! (I send out alerts 4 times a year, but feel free to e-mail me whenever it's convenient for you! I'll save it for the next issue.)

Attention Published Authors: It's Write Touch Readers' Award Time Again!

By Virginia McCullough, contest coordinator

We want your entries for the 2008 Write Touch Readers' Award Contest. (The entry form and rules, along with a sample of the score sheet is posted on WisRWA's Web site, www.wisrwa.org). Many of our members have finaled in or won this contest, so don't pass it up.

Eligibility

Novel-length romance w/2007

copyright, first printing, first North American printing date.

Eight Categories

Short and Long Series Contemporary, CST, RS, Short and Long Historical (includes Regency) Inspirational/Traditional, P/F/F/TT, Romantic Elements, Erotica/Romantica

Judges

Romance readers—this contest is a great way to make new readers aware of your work.

Fee

\$25, but WisRWA members are entitled to one free entry per year as a benefit of membership.

Deadline

The Contest Coordinator must receive your books by January 8, 2008.

Questions?

Contact Virginia McCullough, 2527 Telluride Trail, #D, Green Bay, WI 54313, vemccullough@earthlink.net.

Looking forward to a great crop of new books! 

One Step Closer to Publication...

Carrie Lofty placed second in the Hearts Through History chapter's Romance Through the Ages contest in the Ancient/Medieval/Renaissance category for her manuscript *Redeeming Will Scarlet*, which she just sold to Kensington. She also recently signed with an agent.

Anne Rigoulot w/a Marissa Scott won first place in the Passionate Ink Stroke of Midnight contest, contemporary category, with her manuscript *When Petals Fall*.

Deanne Wildes-Mickelson won first place in the Where the Magic Begins contest, paranormal category, with her manuscript *Hedda's Sword*.

New Releases

August

Laura Iding
Bride for a Single Dad
Harlequin Mills and Boon

September

Donna Marie Rogers and Stacey Joy Netzel
Welcome to Redemption
The Wild Rose Press

Liza James
Mischief in the Dark
The Wild Rose Press

October

Jeannine D. Van Eperen

No Escape from Love
Wings ePress

Lynn Cote
Blessed Assurance
Avon Inspire

November

Laura Iding
Baby: Found at Christmas
Harlequin Mills and Boon

December

Kathryn Albright
The Angel and the Outlaw
Harlequin

January 2008

Jo Schmidt (w/a Anna Schmidt)
This Side of Heaven
Harlequin Everlasting

Jo Schmidt (w/a Anna Schmidt)
Love and Remembrance
Steeple Hill Historical

March 2008

Laura Iding
The Firefighter And The Single Mom
Harlequin Mills and Boon

Creating Character Part II

by Jane Toombs

General Character Types

1. Focus or main characters: hero, heroine, villain.
2. Minor characters: There for specific purposes.
3. Important minor characters: Have impact on focus characters.
4. Walk-ons: Very minor, part of the scenery.

As writers we have to differentiate between the three types of minor characters. Those who have impact on the focus characters need to be more fully developed than other minor characters. Minor characters should never be allowed to overshadow the focus characters.

To appeal to readers, the hero and heroine must have:

1. Virtue, insofar as moral issues are concerned.
2. Competence, which may have to be learned.
3. Likability.
4. Imperfections and foibles.

Character development

1. Physical makeup—age, sex, appearance, any disability.
2. Personality—intelligence, emotional makeup.
3. Background—everything that happened to the character before the story begins and how it affected the person she or he is now.

How does a writer get the reader to identify with the hero and heroine?

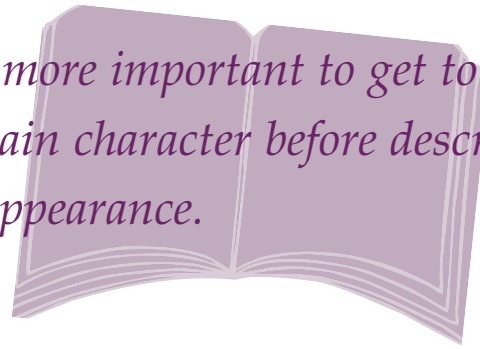
1. By creating sympathy.
2. By making them likable.
3. By placing them in jeopardy.
4. By putting them on scene as soon as possible.
5. By showing them in touch with their own powers, which can be over people; to do what needs to be done; to express feelings to others

skirts alternately revealing and concealing the small tongues of flame licking at the bottom of the huge black kettle. A small yellow and white dog trotted up, sniffed at my blanket, but scuttled off toward the creek when I reached to pet him.

"Tina."

Startled. I glanced from

It may be more important to get to know a bit about a main character before describing her physical appearance.



and themselves. This may have to be learned during the course of the story.

6. By putting them in a familiar setting, or a setting you make familiar.

Here's an excerpt from *Tower of Shadows*, an 1800s gothic (Champagne Books). After reading it, think about whether you like the heroine and, if so, why.

I opened my eyes. What had awakened me? Overhead the branches of the oaks were gray shadows in the pre-dawn. A horse tethered along the creek nickered, and the rich odor of coffee brewing wafted from the campfires.

I sat up. On one side of me Mimi stirred, on the other Marona slept soundly. I watched the ghostlike figures of two women hovering near the cauldron, their sweeping

side to side.

"Tina."

The whisper came from behind me. Looking over my shoulder, I saw my best friend, Sasha, standing just beyond the sleeping area, ground fog eddying around her green skirt.

"Tina," she whispered again, "this is the day. Your day." She spoke in Romany.

I drew in my breath. Not that I'd forgotten—how could I? But in my distress I'd pushed aside the thought of leaving. Pitar had yet to tell me where I was going and why. I only knew I must go. Today.

What have we learned about Tina by showing, not telling? As she awakens, becoming aware of her surroundings, we learn she's in a camp of some kind, and that she likes dogs. Next we learn she has a best friend who speak Romany—aha, a gypsy camp—

and that something is going to happen to Tina today. For some reason she's being forced to leave the gypsies, and she doesn't want to go.

What haven't we learned? Her age and appearance. Do you agree it's not necessary to know that yet, that you're willing to wait a bit to find out how old she is and what she looks like? That is was more important to know she likes dogs, has a best friend and is facing a problem? I chose to give a glimpse of her personality, and let the reader glimpse her distress at facing the conflict ahead of her, rather than getting into physical description and age because I felt the other things were more important.

In other words, it may be more important to get to know a bit about a main character before describing her physical appearance.

In describing the hero and heroine, don't tell the reader about them. Show who they are by revealing actions. Personalize any description.

Tell Example

Ford was broad-shouldered, muscular, had chiseled features and the sexiest brown eyes in creation.

Show Example

In another well-built man, Ford's confident stride might have been a swagger, showing off for all the gals, but when he smiled at Jenna, she knew the glint in those sexy brown eyes was for her alone.

Tell Example

While keeping her blue eyes fixed on Harold, Viki ran a hand through her shoulder length blonde hair.

Show Example

Harold watched Viki rearrange her hair. He'd read somewhere that gals did this hair thing when they were interested in a guy. She'd given him more than one glance from those big blue eyes, and she satisfied his criteria for blondes. Time to make his move.

Character motivation

1. Visible, which includes the desire to accomplish, revealing by action. This is related to plot and answers the question of what the book is about.
2. Invisible, which includes the desire for self-worth, revealed by dialogue and thoughts. This is related to growth and theme. It answers the question of why the hero or heroine wants to do whatever it is. The answer can also include the why of the villain.

All characters of any importance in a story should:

1. Be complex, not one dimensional, which means they should demonstrate more than a single characteristic. In other words, if a hero is dynamic, that's not enough. He needs other facets to his personality.
2. Grow and change during the course of a story. This needs to be shown as the outcome of ordeals and mistakes, of successes and triumphs.
3. Each have a distinctive speaking style. Don't forget men and women phrase things differently.
4. Be consistent in their behavior. For example: During the course of a story, a timid


woman needs to show how she found the courage to do a brave act.

5. Be capable. This includes the villain, who needs to be as strong in his way as the hero and heroine are in theirs, so that overcoming the villain is a difficult task, with the outcome uncertain for much of the story.
6. Not be a cliché character. Generic is another term for this. Cliché characters lack individuality—they could be in anyone's story. They are stereotypes, more often occurring in minor characterization, such as the indifferent salesclerk, the foreign cabby, the wimpy other man, the selfish and destructive, but gorgeous other woman.

Last of all, never forget, remember the reason why a writer must create strong bones for his or her major characters. Why is this so important?

Because stories arise from the characters interacting with each other, their settings and the forces around them. Yes, plot is important, but the characters must enact the plot to bring it alive. Think of a film script—it's essentially inert until actors and actresses take on the roles designated by the writer and create a movie.

Always remember that characters drive a story, it doesn't drive them.

The first part of Jane's article on Character appeared in the previous issue of The Write Touch. 

FAB 5 Stretches its Wings

By Mary Jo Scheibl

The markets and times are a-changing and so is FAB 5 for 2008.

WisRWA's writing contest for unpublished writers will still be the first 10 pages of a manuscript—polished and ready to entrance all the first round judges, and, hopefully, the perfect final judge. Our scoresheets will be the same as in the past and so will our deadline: March 1, 2008.

But...

For 2008, FAB 5 entrants will have the option to submit their entry electronically. No extra costs for postage, printing, and the suspenseful chance USPS might send your entry to Warsaw, Poland rather than Wausau, WI.


But wait...you want to enter the traditional way? You can still print out those four copies, get the

right postage on the proper return envelope and take your chances on meeting the deadline. You're a writer who lives on the edge and loves it. FAB 5 for 2008 gives you the choice.

We are also going to start electronic judging for those entries that are entered electronically. This is one reason we are capping each category at 25 entries so the coordinators can adjust to the new while perhaps dealing with the old. Hopefully we will have enough first round judges willing to try the new system if they are asked. Our judges' training session—on-line again this year—will cover the basics for judging and working with electronic entries. It will also review the scoresheets and possible judging questions.

This new system, which many

contests are using, will help WisRWA achieve a profit with FAB 5 without raising our contest fees. This new system will also diminish the hassles coordinators often have with the Post Office and its ever-changing security regulations that affect mail. No longer will our coordinators have the gut-wrenching task of tracking down lost judging packets that have taken a detour to Timbuktu.

I'm busy now finalizing final judges and updating materials to reflect these changes. The WisRWA board and I look forward to having another successful year for FAB 5. Please help us wherever you can when I call for judges. In the meantime, polish those first ten pages for your entry. We can't wait for 2008! 

Published Author News

Roxi Romano's *Taming Tess* has received a 4 star review from RT Book Reviews. Reviewer Susan Mobley called *Taming Tess* "a fast-moving story with delightful characters" and "nicely plotted."

Christine DeSmet's 20,000-word humorous romantic mystery, *When the Dead People Brought a Dish to Pass*, will be published in September 2007 in the anthology, *Shadows in the Heart*, from Whiskey Creek Press. Her humorous romantic mystery, *Stolen Pleasures*, will be the lead short story in Beacon Books' first anthology, *The Objects of Romance*, also published September 2007. She and her scriptwriting partner, Peggy Williams, finished in the top 10 percent in the Austin Film

Festival contest with their romantic comedy screenplay about the romance industry called *Anyone Can*, as in "anyone can write a romance." She recently signed a contract for the first story in her three-part series featuring the "Men of Moonstone" for Whiskey Creek Press. She also signed a contract for her own anthology collection, which will come out in Spring 2008.

Jo Schmidt (w/a Anna Schmidt) has three more historicals for Steeple Hill coming in 2009 including the sequel to *Seaside Cinderella*. She also authored the *Parkinson's for Dummies* book under her non-fiction pen name Jo Horne.

Grammar Tidbit

Here's one of my favorite grammar tips, and it comes up over and over in any kind of writing: *which* versus *that*.

Now I know there's an official rule about when to use *which* and when to use *that*, but grammar terminology tends to make my head here.

So just remember it this way: if you can take out the phrase that follows *which* or *that* and the sentence still makes sense, you need to use a comma and *which* to set it off. If removing the phrase makes the sentence lose all meaning, you need to use NO comma and *that*.

Example: "That book, which is my favorite, cost \$8." Or: "That book that you lost cost me \$8."

Let Me Help You Win a Mustang with Who vs. Whom

By Lorrie Kruse

Imagine you're taking a walk and a 2007 Ford Mustang pulls up beside you. The driver rolls down the tinted window and says, "I'll give you the keys to this car if you can correctly use who and whom in a sentence." Do you feel confident that you'll be driving home in that fiery red fully loaded Mustang?

Okay, okay. I know. You have a greater chance of getting hit by a flying airplane than what I've proposed. However, don't you want to be prepared anyhow? Just in case?

The proper usage of who and whom is easier than you might think. Simply insert "he" or "him" where "who" or "whom" belongs. If the word "he" fits, then use "who." If the word "him" fits, use "whom." (Notice, "him" and "whom" both end with "m") Simple, huh?

Example

Who/Whom drove up in the Mustang?

You would say, "He drove up in the Mustang," not "Him drove up in the Mustang." Therefore, replace "he" with "who" and correctly state, "Who drove up in the Mustang?"

You will note I had to convert the original question to a statement to determine which word to use.

Ready for a twist? How about, "Who/whom shall the Mustang keys be given to?"

You wouldn't say, "He shall the Mustang keys be given to,"

nor would you say, "Him shall the Mustang keys be given to." At least I hope you wouldn't. We need to do some rearranging so the sentence makes sense. Rearrange to say, "The Mustang keys shall be given to he/him," and you would determine "him" is proper. As such, the correct word to use is "whom" to make the sentence read, "Whom shall the Mustang keys be given to?"

Now, for the bonus round to earn the beyond cool decal pack-



age that will transform your new Mustang into a personalized one-of-a-kind car just for you. When do you use "whoever" and when do you use "whomever"?

You use the same basic concept described above. However, you need to break the sentence into two clauses and determine where "he" or "him" fit. If you end up with one "he" and one "him," you use "whoever." If you end up with "him" twice, you use "whomever."

Example

The Mustang shall be given to whoever/whomever correctly uses who and whom first.

Break the sentence into "The Mustang shall be given to he/him," and "He/him correctly uses who and whom first."

The Mustang shall be given to him. He correctly uses who and whom first.

You have one "him" and one "he." Therefore, you'll use "whoever" to make the sentence read, "The Mustang shall be given to whoever correctly uses who and whom first."

Oh no! You were with your best friend when the Mustang pulled up and Jenny read this article too. You both answered correctly at the same time. It's up to the passenger in the Mustang to decide.

Example

I will give the Mustang to whoever/whomever my passenger recommends.

Break the sentence into "I will give the Mustang to he/him," and "He/him my passenger recommends," will be rearranged to "My passenger recommends he/him."

I will give the Mustang to him. My passenger recommends him.

You have used "him" twice. Therefore, you'll use "whomever" to get, "I will give the Mustang to whomever my passenger recommends."

So, I ask, are you taking home that flashy new Mustang with the custom decals? 

Love is in the Cards 2


by Donna Kowalczyk

It's time to start planning for the 2008 WisRWA Write Touch Conference: "Love Is In The Cards 2"!

Join us again in Green Bay on May 16-18, 2008, at the beautiful Radisson Hotel & Conference Center/Oneida Casino. Headlining in 2008 are *New York Times* bestselling author Lori Foster and Kensington Brava author/RWR columnist Dianne Castell. Also joining us is Tor author Susan Kearney.

Once again, we have a great group of editors and agents. Editors Hilary Sares (Kensington), Rose Hilliard (St. Martins Press), and Rhonda Penders (The Wild Rose Press)

are confirmed to attend. All three editors will be presenting workshops: Rhonda Penders on small/electronic presses, Rose Hilliard and Hilary Sares will host our 2nd annual WisRWA's Got Talent workshop. We also have lined up agents Jennifer Schrober (Spencerhill), Laura Bradford (Bradford Literary Agency), and Elaine Spencer (The Knight Agency).

WisRWA's own Harlequin author **Anna Schmidt** will present a workshop, as will as our own **Morganne MacDonald**. Our 2007 conference was a major success—let's make 2008 even better! Hope to see you all there! 

Green Bay Psychic Available

The GGBA area hosted Regina of Regina's 7 Pillars. She answered many questions about psychics, the different ways they work, displayed 'soul cards', and gave out stones/crystals while explaining what each symbolized. Recently, GGBA members visited her store and had individual readings done. Regina does readings over the phone and on-line, and has many clients literally around the world. If you are interested in contacting her for a meeting or personal research, she can be reached at: www.reginas7pillars.com or 920-494-1337.

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