



The Write Touch

RWA Chapter 13
Volume 102, No. 4
October 2009

Drumroll Please...

WisRWA 2009 Election Results

By Kathryn Albright

WisRWA 2009 Election Chair

For as long as I can remember with WisRWA, there has never been a knock-down, drag-out, nail-biting finish to our elections. Each candidate has run unopposed and with the gratitude of the rest of us, that they are willing to step forward and lead. A huge thanks to each of you for volunteering. WisRWA could not exist without the enthusiasm, spirit, and creativity that you bring.

Laurel Bradley is our incoming president. In her bio, she mentioned that she likes to be actively involved in the groups she joins. I don't think she can get more involved than as president of WisRWA. Her previous experience as Fab Five judge, Wausau Area Contact, and president of the Antigo library board will be an asset in her new position.

Rachel Berens-VanHeest resides in Oregon, WI and has been the WisRWA newsletter editor for two and a half years. She continues into her second year as Vice President and webmistress for the past year. Her sharp wit and unstoppable amount of energy, along with her expertise in the communication field will keep the board moving forward into the next year.

Lily Silver, WisRWA secretary, is an enthusiastic member of WisRWA in Oconto Wi. She recently graduated from UW Green Bay with a degree in History & Humanities. She has had several articles published as a staff writer and editor for her college newspaper.

Susie Just volunteered for WisRWA Treasurer when she learned the position had not been filled. Susie has been a member since 1986, serving as the Milwaukee Area Contact in 2003 and 2004. She has coordinated the annual Write Touch, served as Silent Auction Coordinator several times (and is co-coordinator with Jody Allen this year!) and organized retreats in 2000 and 2001. In her other life, Susie is Director of the Library Council of Southeastern

Wisconsin, Inc., and Coordinator of the PARC (Preventing Alcohol Related Crashes) Task Force in Waukesha County. She brings financial expertise and experience to this increasingly complex position and we are fortunate she stepped forward once again to help WisRWA.

Stacey Netzel and **Donna Kowalczyk** are returning co-chairs for the Green Bay Area Contact. They've taken on this position since 2006, providing leadership and support to the romance writers in their area and getting published along the way. Donna has served as the Write Touch Conference Chair for the past three years.

This will be **Peg Strand's** third year as area contact for the Chippewa Falls Area. She is a former women's editor who enjoys free-lancing for area newspapers along with her full-time job with an engineering company.

Eddie Ramer and **Liz Lincoln Steiner** are taking on the position of co-chairs for the Milwaukee Area Contact for the first time together. Eddie has been an area contact in the past and Liz has extensive experience as a board member of the Virginia and Washington DC chapters. They organized the 2008 Margie Lawson Milwaukee Workshop and constantly give back to WisRWA. Together—they are dynamos.

Lyn Cote, Wausau Area Contact, has been an active member of RWA and a published author for years. She helped found two RWA chapters: Heart of Iowa Fiction Authors in 1994 and Faith, Hope & Love Inspirational Chapter in 1997 and served as president of both. She is Pan Liaison of FHL now.

This list of talented women, their backgrounds and publishing records accentuates the wealth of knowledge within WisRWA. It is because of women like this, willing to share their expertise, that the organization moves forward and keeps getting better. Thank you!



Board of Directors

President

Laurel Bradley
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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 regularly. Submit changes and new information to the Web site coordinator, Rachel Berens-VanHeest.

President's Report—Changes

By Laurel Bradley

Allow me to introduce myself. I am your new president. My name, as you can see by the byline, is **Laurel Bradley**. I live in Antigo with my husband and the two youngest of our five children. I am published by two small publishers and am striving for publication with a larger mainstream publisher. As I dropped number three son off at college, I was struck by the number of changes happening in my personal life, my professional life, and the world at large. Many of the changes affecting my professional life are probably affecting yours as well. As WisRWA president, I believe my role is to identify the industry changes that impact our group and help our group adapt to them. My goal is to leave WisRWA better for my having been a part of it.

There have been a lot of personnel changes in WisRWA. If you see any of the present or former Board members and committee chairs, please say thank you. We are only as strong as our volunteers. Luckily, we have wonderful volunteers. Thank you to our WisRWA officers, Area Contacts and committee chairs who have stepped down: President **Mary Jo Scheibl**, Treasurer **Sandra Turriff**, Secretary **Jamie Kersten**, Madison Contact **Bobbi Dumas**, Milwaukee Contacts **Iлона Fridl** and **Maureen**

Welli, Wausau Contact **Laurel Bradley**, 2009 Conference Chair **Donna Kowalczyk**, Write Touch Chair **Virginia McCullough**, and past president **Maureen Welch**. Your dedication and hard work has helped make WisRWA what it is today.

Thank you also to the new and returning volunteers: Vice President **Rachel Berens-VanHeest**, Secretary **Lily Silver**, Treasurer **Susie Just**, Milwaukee Contacts **Edie Ramer** and **Liz Lincoln Steiner**, Green Bay Contacts **Stacey Netzel** and **Donna Kowalczyk**, Chippewa Falls Contact **Peg Strand**, Wausau Contact **Lyn Cote**, 2010 Conference Chair **Betsy Norman**, Write Touch Chair **Lori Kreischer**, Website/Newsletter Coordinator **Rachel Berens-VanHeest**, PRO Liaison **Kristina Diesen**, and FAB 5 Chair **Karen Miller**. WisRWA couldn't continue without your work and commitment.

By now, your Area Contact has probably informed you that the Madison Area decided to leave WisRWA and form a new RWA chapter. We wish them all the best. We are happy many of the Madison members continue to remain WisRWA members. WisRWA is stronger for your involvement. The Board has put the Madison Area on hiatus for a year in case someone wants to step up and reactivate the area by becoming Area Contact and reestablishing

Send in your News!

Do you have something to include in the newsletter or add to the Web site? You don't have to wait for the Alert e-mail. Just e-mail Rachel Berens-VanHeest at reberens@charter.net whenever you have news to share! Wondering about proper format? Just follow the example of what's already up on the site or in this copy of *The Write Touch*! Or contact Rachel with any questions. Send in your news—we want to help you celebrate!


President's Report (continued)

WisRWA meetings. Regardless, the change in number of areas requires a change in the WisRWA Bylaws to accurately reflect our membership. Watch the AlertWisRWA loop for specific voting instructions.

The Policy and Procedures Manual has also been updated. The latest version, along with financial reports and other important information, is available in the files section of the AlertWisRWA loop.

Another change you'll notice is the WisRWA/RWA educational items that will be a part of each area meeting from now on. It's important each of us has a good idea of what is going on both on the local and national level. Knowing the reasons behind the changes make the changes easier to live with. For example: WisRWA author book covers were removed from the front page of the Web site because the IRS has cracked down on nonprofits like RWA. The

purpose of the Web site is to promote the group and not individual members. Therefore having our published author's cover art was determined (at the national level) to be promoting individual members and not the group as a whole. It's the same reason we can't sell books at a meetings. The group as a whole needs to benefit from the group's actions rather than individuals benefiting from the group's actions.

Each change required by National spawns a school of issues on the local level. The Board needs individual membership input and understanding as we face the changes. Each of you has ideas that can benefit the group and possibly solve an issue we are facing. That is why specific issues will be raised for discussion at each area meeting. The Area Contacts will bring your ideas for presentation to the Board. I look forward to hearing your ideas. Together, we'll make the necessary changes. 

In Memorium

Melanie Connolly, a member from the Green Bay area, lost her battle with cancer and passed away at home the evening of Wednesday, September 30, at the age of 49. She leaves behind her husband, Pat, her parents and siblings, and of course, family and friends. If anyone would like to send a word or card, her home address is 11232 Fogeltanz Rd. Reedsville WI 54230

New Releases

September

Debi Wilder
Heartbeat
Red Rose Publishing

October

Mary Jo Scheibl, writing as Casey Clifford
Black Ribbon Affair
The Wild Rose Press

Mary Hughes
Bite My Fire
Samhain Publishing

Laura Iding
Marrying the Playboy Doctor
Harlequin Medical

Amber Polo
Flying Free
Treble Heart Books

Pamela Ford
Her Best Bet
Harlequin Superromance

Laura Breck
Secret Vegas Lives
Red Rose Publishing

Anne Stratton
Buried Heart
The Wild Rose Press

Anna Schmidt
An Unexpected Suitor
Love Inspired Historical

Renee Wildes
Marek's New World
The Wild Rose Press

November

Mary Hughes
Biting Nixie
Samhain Publishing

Sandra K. Marshall
Addiction
Eirelander Publishing

Helen Brenna
Next Comes Love
Harlequin SuperRomance

Stacey Joy Netzel
Mistletoe Rules
The Wild Rose Press

Renee Wildes
Hedda's Sword
Samhain

Laura Iding
Expecting A Christmas Miracle
Harlequin Medical

December

Helen Brenna
Then Comes Baby
Harlequin Superromance

Carrie Lofty, Loretta C. Rogers, Michelle Chambers, Leanne Tyler
Through the Garden Gate
The Wild Rose Press
(Print anthology)

Kathryn Springer
Jingle Bell Babies
Steeple Hill Love Inspired

Laura Iding
The Surgeon's New Year Wedding Wish
Harlequin Medical

Sight

By Renee Wildes

It was a dark and stormy night . . .
She had blonde hair and blue eyes.
He was big and hunky.
He walked toward her.
They rode horses to the beach.
They saw a bird.

What's wrong with this picture?

What picture?!?

Exactly. Whether hopelessly clichéd, hopelessly ho-hum, or hopelessly vague, these are NOT exactly the stuff of legends. Once you get past wondering what the heck they're DOING on a beach on a dark and stormy night, you can't see a thing. Even if he was a Navy SEAL and she was a bioweapons expert, and they were on that beach to intercept an illegal, deadly virus shipment that would destroy the world, with description like that, would you stick around to find out what happened? Me neither.

Is it a rocky beach in Maine in November, with howling winds and snow blowing sideways or a black sand beach in Hawaii in the middle of a thunderstorm, with lightning and thunder, in May?

Are her eyes blue or are they cornflower blue or turquoise?

Is her hair blonde or gold or platinum? Long, short, straight, curly? Blowing sideways so you can't see her eyes? (Remember the dark and stormy night!)

Does "big" mean tall and broad-shouldered, or really rotund? Does "hunky" imply "tall dark and handsome" or a tawny Viking god?

Are they riding a horse or a red mare or a sorrel Arabian mare with a white star?

Is that a bird or an eagle or a juvenile bald eagle?

The whole trick to description is to be specific and use correct terminology. Really, it's that simple. Try to

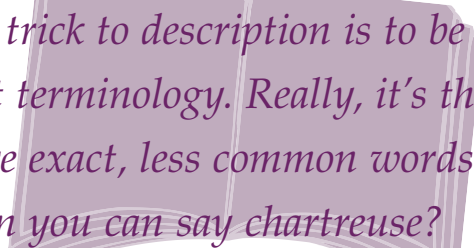
use more exact, less common words. Why say green when you can say chartreuse? Why say black when you can use obsidian or sable?

What do you SEE? What does your POV character see when they look around? What do they notice? What do they know?

An ornithologist or forest ranger might be able to identify a juvenile bald eagle, but a city girl on her

her castle. Now think about how boring "Loren searched the swamp for Queen Moira" would be. Here's the scene in Chapter 9:

Hani`ena tossed her head. Insects crawled into her ears, her eyes, her nostrils, but a full body shake would send Loren headfirst into the muck. She snapped her tail. Green slime clung to the long hairs and splattered against her sides.



The whole trick to description is to be specific and use correct terminology. Really, it's that simple. Try to use more exact, less common words. Why say green when you can say chartreuse?

first camping trip might just see a big brown bird and that would be okay. She might be able to differentiate Marburg from Ebola, but she's never seen an eagle before. She might be able to spot an adult bald eagle and identify the white head and tail, unless she's been living under a rock or never left the lab, but a still-brown juvenile?

Would your Navy SEAL have a machine gun and a handgun or a Heckler & Koch MP5 and a Heckler & Koch P9S? Would he have a knife or a dive knife or an Aqualung Master Dive Knife? Where would it be strapped? How does he hold it in a fight?

I write fantasy romance. In my first novel, *Duality*, my hero, an empathic elven prince named Loren, and his white war mare Hani`ena, are riding through a swamp looking for Queen Moira, who managed to escape when the villains took over

As Hani`ena approached the monolithic half-circle of fallen stones, Loren straightened with caution and reverence. The sun was nearly gone, and this was the fourth ruin they'd explored in half as many days.

The swamp made it impossible to track their quarry. The stench of decaying plants and swamp gas hung in the air, the maddening whine of insects a constant distraction. Reduced to prudent sensing, he saw no sign of Moira at the first two Circles. He was impressed she had managed to elude him so far.

To her credit, Hani`ena never put a foot wrong even though there was no way to see what the knee-deep pools of murky water hid. As to her mood, however, her snapping tail and pinned-back ears were all the clues he needed. Necessary the trip might be, but

Author News

Jennifer Ramirez tied for 3rd in the Sweet/Sensual category of the Ohio Valley Summer Sizzle with *Promises*. She also finaled in the Historical category of the Emerald City Opener with *Deception*.

Christine DeSmet, Madison, is the author of a new humorous, romantic mystery short story, "The Big Love & Murder Shilly-Shally in Moonstone," in *Tales from the Treasure Trove*, Vol. V, A Jewels of the Quill Anthology, published September 2009 by Whiskey Creek Press.

A play called "CLIMAX!" by **Christine DeSmet**, Madison, and co-authored by Peggy Williams, has reached the second stage of consideration by Barestage Theatre in Red Bluff, CA. The play is about a famous writer who can't find his climax...in his second book.

Anne Stratton, writing romantic suspense as A. Y. Stratton, will visit Next Chapter Bookshop, 10976 N. Port Washington Road, Mequon (in the Pavillions Shopping Center), on Tuesday, October 20, at 7 p.m. A longtime Mequon resident,

Stratton will read from her newly-published book, *Buried Heart*, from The Wild Rose Press.

Kathryn Springer won the 2009 ACFW (American Christian Fiction Writers) Book of the Year award for *Family Treasures* in the short contemporary category. The award's ceremony was held at the annual ACFW conference in Denver.

Pam Ford's *The Wedding Heiress* won the Long Contemporary category of the Booksellers Best. 

Sight (continued)

she was out of her element and not enjoying the experience. All that soft, sucking wetness was not good for her hooves. They needed dry country as soon as possible.

Loren eyed the lengthening shadows and drew his sword. Layers of moss hung like a shroud from a twisted cypress tree. The stone circle loomed ahead in the deepening twilight as Hani`ena splashed forward.

Note the mixture of body motion and posture, descriptive words, and specificity. Normally I absolutely abhor "description in a mirror" scenes to describe characters; I would rather have characters describe each other, but I broke my own rule in Chapter 8 of *Hedda's Sword*, after Maleta is punished by her goddess Hedda for giving in to her human emotions. I think it works. See what you think:

Cianan was the first through the door; he froze. Worried cobalt eyes widened with palpable shock. "Lord and Lady, what has She

done to you?"

Mother Kitta shoved him aside to take a look for herself. "Hedda's will be done," she whispered. Her voice trembled.


Her face expressionless, Sister Reva just stared, horror in her eyes.

"What's wrong with you people?" Maleta asked, irritation giving way to trepidation. She was so cold! All she wanted to do was lie down under a dozen blankets afore a roaring fire. She reached up with icy hands to feel her face, her hair. "I've still but one head," she reported.

"There is a mirror out here in the hall." Cianan held the door open. "You had best take a look at what your Goddess considers 'fair punishment'." There was a harshness to his voice, a bitter twist to his mouth.

Maleta stepped out into the well-lit hallway. She stared with growing horror at the reflection in the mirror. A stranger with

her eyes stared back at her. A pale stranger, pale as death, with colorless eyes and silver-frosted hair. Her entire body appeared to shimmer with winter frost. Fear gripped her; an icy fist closed around her heart until it stuttered, leaving her gasping. Then the ice took hold, and the fear receded. All she felt was a distant cold. No warmth at all. There was no fear after the shock, no sorrow. As if the lock on her body extended to her heart, to her very soul.

Now for the fun part – homework! Picture a scene from your own book as a movie with no sound, all you have are the images. Whether an outdoor café in Paris, a camping trip in a mountain forest, on a beach at sunset, entering a creepy old (haunted?) house, a day at the Kentucky Derby, or a trip to the doctor's office. What's the weather, time of year, lighting? What kind of animal, vegetable, or mineral? With or without people? Remember to BE SPECIFIC. This is entirely visual, people. 

Write Touch Readers' Award Contest

By Lori Ann Kriescher, Contest
Coordinator

The 2010 Write Touch Readers' Award Contest, our chapter's contest for published authors, is now underway.

An entry includes three copies of your novel-length romances with 2009 copyright, first printing, and first North American printing date.

You can enter one of eight categories:

- Short & Long Series
Contemporary
- Contemporary Single Title
- Romantic Suspense
- Historical (includes Regency)
- Inspirational/Traditional
- Paranormal (includes fantasy, time-travel, futuristic, and so forth)

- Strong Romantic Elements
- Erotic/Romantica.

Our 90+ judges are enthusiastic romance and women's fiction readers located all over the country.

Many of the readers comment that they are always looking for new authors—and they tell us they like to spread the word about books they enjoy! This is a great opportunity to get your books out in front of some new readers!

For more information, entry form and rules, go to www.wisrwa.org or contact Lori Ann Kriescher, loriannkriescher@aol.com.

The fee is \$25, but remember that WisRWA members are entitled to one free entry as a benefit of membership.

The deadline for submissions is January 12, 2010.

Want to go paperless?

Interested in going green? Do you find it easier to keep up with chapter news online? Or are you just trying to reduce the amount of clutter in your office? Whatever the reason, if you'd prefer to have this newsletter e-mailed to you as a pdf, just let us know! Contact Lily Silver at darklily60@gmail.com and, starting with the January issue, you'll get *The Write Touch* e-mailed right to your in-box.

The Write Touch Newsletter
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