

North Louisiana Storytellers and Authors of Romance

NOLA



NEWS

Chapter 40 of Romance Writers of America

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March/April 2013

Where Do Your Ideas Come From?

By Kathy Ivan

How many times have you heard this question? I think every time somebody hears the words "writer" or "author," it seems to be the first question that springs to peoples minds.

Most of us have vivid imaginations. Try thinking back to when you were a child. As children we made up games to play with our friends. We'd go outside into the yard or onto the front porch and spend countless hours living and playing in our imaginary world. There were no limits and no boundaries to confine us. We sang songs to music only we could hear the words and melody to. We'd dance and twirl with abandon, seeing the movements and hearing the rhythms in our minds and our hearts. We even made up tall tales to tell all our friends about how we spent our summer vacation.

Stepping forward from the imaginings of childhood, our minds still form and shape the images and pictures of everyday life into cohesive (at least we hope) storytelling. We watch, we absorb, and we contemplate. We listen, we sniff, we taste. The people and places around us are an endless source of inspiration.

Let's start with the lady in line at the grocery store in front of you, a toddler seated in her cart. Her phone rings and even before she answers, her expression fills with so much hope and anticipation it nearly breaks your heart. Is it her husband or lover on the phone? Or is it a call from the doctor's office calling to tell her the biopsy was benign? Maybe it's the employment office telling her she got the job she's been desperately seeking for months. The wheels in your mind can spin the tale in any direction you want, just from watching thirty seconds in the life of a stranger.

Maybe you're in your favorite coffee shop and you see a man and a woman seated across from each other.

They're talking softly, furtive whispers of conversation, animated with gestures on his part. Yet the more he talks, the further his companion seems to shrink back into her seat. What's their story?

You're watching television and the news comes on. There's a story about a major pharmaceutical company's new breakthrough weight loss miracle drug the FDA just approved. As the reporter drones on about all the wonderful attributes of this medication, they show pictures of overweight people. If you're a suspense writer (like me LOL) imagine where this story could go. What if this new wonder drug really did help people lose weight—but there's a teeny tiny side effect they didn't mention. In a select few cases, it caused homicidal tendencies—sending the individual taking it on a killing spree. Think of all the possibilities, all the wondrous directions one simple news story can take you?

Stories and ideas are everywhere around you if you just look for them. Let your inner child come out and play, free your imagination to frolic and dance and sing and you'll begin to see where all my ideas come from.

Kathy Ivan is busy working on her next story, people watching to find inspiration. Her debut romantic suspense, *Desperate Choices*, was the 2012 Winner of the OKRWA International Digital Award for suspense. Her novella, *Second Chances*, is now available from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and other e-retailers.

The following article appeared in the November/December 2012 issue of the *DARA News*, the newsletter of the Dallas Area Romance Authors. This article may be reprinted with proper credit to the author and chapter. Please note, this article first appeared on the Not Your Usual Suspects Blog, September 2012.

March Program Written in the Stars 2013

For more information, go to Page 4

Friday, March 1
Saturday, March 2

April's Meeting TBA

Saturday, April 13

May's Meeting Robin Miller Goal, Motivation and Conflict

Saturday, May 11

Attention Nola Stars Members

If you have suggestions for future programs or speakers, please contact Winnie Griggs with your suggestions. If you have a program you wish to give at RWA National or any other conference but would like to practice first, contact Winnie at WinnieGriggs@aol.com.

The Board

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NOLA STARS meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month at 10:00 a.m. at Bossier Parish Central Library on Beckett Street, Bossier City, Louisiana, except for the months of March and December. Visitors who are not RWA® members may visit free twice per calendar year. Please visit our website at www.nolastars.com for details on membership and/or application form, or send a request to the address below. Submissions to the NOLA NEWS should be received by the 15th of the months of February, April, June, August, October, and December. Exchange copies, submissions, and notices should be sent to: P.O. Box 5418, Bossier City, Louisiana 71171-5418 or emailed to: garnara@gmail.com. If you do not receive confirmation, please resend and/or call the editor. Electronic Submissions are preferred.

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Good News

Lynn Boyett

*Don't only practice your art,
But force your way into its Secrets.
For it and knowledge can
Raise men to the Divine.*

Ludwig van Beethoven

Lyn Morgan reports that "Skookum", the movie (written by Lyn Morgan and Debi King), will be filmed in April. Lyn is sewing the Bigfoot costume and Debi is cooking and freezing meals to be taken to the set twice daily. Even after a setback or two, they aren't afraid of work, which is the backbone of the movie industry. Nothing succeeds like success. Congratulations.

Beth Cornelison shared that her workshop "No More Sagging Middles" has been picked up for the 2013 RWA National conference in Atlanta. It should be a class for consideration for all attending the conference. Recognition by one's peers is an honor.

Sarah Head had a surprise when Shreve Memorial Library sought permission to enter her book, *Look Behind You*, in the Ark-La-Tex Author Fair Contest. She didn't win the contest, but it's on their "also to be read" list. They requested that she send a copy of the book and her photograph to be displayed in their event advertising and promotion of the fair. Immortality can be gained through our work. Good job.

Not only did she gained PRO status in December, **Dianne Gibbons** signed a contract with Soul Mate Publishing. They accepted *To Love and Protect* for publication. This will be Dianne's first published novel. Dianne also states that her second book is in the final stages of completion but said it wasn't a sequel. Here's for them accepting the second one.

Steel Magnolia Press released two new boxed sets of **Jennifer Blake's** back list books in January. These are all mainstream contemporary romances, and include *Love and Smoke*, *Joy and Anger*, *Wildest Dreams*, *Shameless*, and *Tigress*. In addition, her medieval Three Graces trilogy was published in France, Russia and

Where to Find Us on the Web

NOLA STARS	www.nolastars.com
Rosalyn Alsobrook	home.earthlink.net/~ralsobrook/
Laura Marie Altom	lauramarielaltom.com
Jennifer Blake	www.jenniferblake.com
Dennis H. Clarkston	www.clark-stone.net
Beth Cornelison	www.bethcornelison.com
Connie Cox	www.conniecox.net
Keri Ford	www.keriford.com
Winnie Griggs	www.winniegriggs.com
Sarah Hamer	www.sarahhamer.com
	www.passionateforfiction.com
Cherrie Lynn	cherrielynn.com
Pepper Phillips	pepperphillips.com
Liz Talley	www.liztalleybooks.com
Joanna Wayne	www.joannawayne.com
Lenora Worth	www.lenoraworth.com
Cora Zane	www.corazane.com

Poland in 2012. She'll be honored as one of the "Legends of Romance" at the RT Book Lovers Convention 2013 in Kansas City, May 1-5.

Sarah (Sally) Hamer expresses her excitement over being asked to be a partner in and an acquiring editor for Gilded Dragonfly Books, a small press out of Atlanta. Sally states that they are accepting submissions of all genre fiction.

More good news, **Sally** will have a short story in the anthology *Deja Vu Carousel* that Gilded Dragonfly Books will publish on February 23. She said it is a time-travel to 16th Century Scotland. She plans to have copies of the book available at Nola Stars Conference in March.



Editor's Note: Be sure to send your good news to either Dennis Clarkston at garnara@gmail.com or to Lynn Boyett at AGALY@aol.com



2013 Written in the Stars Conference

Friday, March 1 & Saturday, March 2, 2013

The Holiday Inn Financial Plaza
5555 Financial Plaza.
Shreveport, Louisiana
Reservations: 318-688-1877

Ask for NOLA STARS Conference rate

SPEAKER LINEUP (TO DATE)

Allison Pittman	Jo Davis
B. A. Binns	Keri Ford
Barbara Vey	Kerri-Leigh Grady
Beth Cornelison	Laura Marie Altom
Betsy St. Amant	Lenora Worth
Christa Allan	Liliana Hart
Connie Cox	Liz Talley
Elizabeth Mazer	Lynn Cahoon
Janet Lee Barton	Lynne Gentry
Jill Marsal	Mary Sue Seymour

ATTENDING INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS AGENTS

Jill Marsal, Literary Agent, Marsal Lyon Literary
Agency

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Kerri-Leigh Grady, Editor, Entangled Publishing

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Elizabeth Mazer, Harlequin New York

Karen Reid, Harlequin Canada

Barbara Vey, Contributing Editor and Romance
blogger for Publishers Weekly

REGISTRATION FEES

Everybody

\$160

For information, go to the NOLA STARS Web Page:

<http://nolastars.com/conference/>

Questions: Contact the Conference Coordinator:

conf-chair@nolastars.com

THE NORTH LOUISIANA STORYTELLERS & AUTHORS OF ROMANCE

Announces

The 2012 Suzannah Contest Finalists:

The Soldier by Anna Richland

The Winds of Fate by Elizabeth Bysiek

Gladiator Heart by Jenifer Shimpach

Homecoming by Jo Anne Banker

Mirror Reader by Karen Duvall

His Roman Heart's Desire by Melanie
Meadors

Saving Simon Merrithew by Myretta Robens

Grand Prize Winner will be announced during the
Written in the Stars 2013 Conference luncheon on
March 2, 2012.

2013-2014 Board

Board for the year starting April 2013 through
March 2014 are

President	Erin Cole
Vice President	Winnie Griggs
Treasurer	Laura Alford
Secretary	Dennis Clarkston
Member-at-Large	Barbara Burnley
Community Out.	Amy Talley

Remember, the chapter still needs members to
volunteer for various positions. Please keep you
mind open and volunteer for various jobs that are
available. An example of chairperson positions can
be viewed on page 2.

If anyone wishes to volunteer for any chair position,
contact Erin Cole.

A Writing Schedule to Fit Your Life

By Joan Leacott

SMART goals. You know the acronym for getting a job done:

Specific
Measureable
Attainable
Relevant
Timely

Like many writers, you have the “Specific” and “Measurable”—a word count you need to achieve. You have “Relevant” and “Timely”—you’re a writer working to a deadline. You’ve done the math and calculated a daily word count.

And yet, like many writers, published or not, you struggle with “Attaining” your goals while maintaining your sanity. When things get hairy, try some Analysis. Not of your book’s plot, outline, or summary. But the way your daily life interacts with your writing life.

Go Weekly for the Count

Count the number of weeks between Now and your Target Date. Divide this by the number of words outstanding. This gives your Weekly Word Count.

A Forkful of Fudge Helps the Freak-out Go Down...

The slightest slip off target in a rigid schedule will increase stress levels. Build leeway into your schedule to allow for unforeseen events.

Three methods are:

Move your target date back by a week, e.g. instead of November 1st, use a date of October 24th and recalculate your word count

Increase your daily word count target by 10 – 15%

Use a 5-day week, or 4 days, or 3 days

Recalculate your Daily Word Count to incorporate the fudge factor.

Not All Goals Are Measured in Words

Writing has goals other than word count: editing, getting critiques, revising, writing a blurb, synopsis and query letter.

Your life has goals other than writing: family, friends, work, chores etc.

I have a goal to sit for the Grade One Piano Exam in June 2013, so I schedule an hour a day at my piano.

Whatever they are, write them ALL down. Don’t forget “You Time”.

Get Real

Get yourself a calendar, set up a spreadsheet, use an online calendar, or go primitive with a pad and pencil.

Slot all goals that are NOT WRITING into a weekly schedule. Whatever time is left is for writing.

Nothing left? Can you work while waiting? Can you get up early? Stay up late? Work at lunch? Delegate chores? Hire a teen?

Still too demanding? If you can, move the target date to give yourself some breathing room.

Tweak it

In January, I set my writing goal as 1K a Day, 5 Days a Week. The schedule worked fine until I added another goal, social media. Guess what? My word count tanked.

I went back to my weekly schedule and slotted my new goal into the two non-writing days. No, it wasn’t that simple. It took discipline and another tweak, but last week, I wrote 6,029 words.

Joan writes contemporary multi-generational novels featuring the lives, loves, and scandals of small-town Clarence Bay, Canada. Drop by Joan’s blog and website at joanleacott.com

The following article appeared in the November 2012 issue of *romANTICS*, the newsletter of the Toronto Romance Writers, Susan Haire, editor. It may be reused by RWA chapters with appropriate credit to the author and chapter.

NOLA STARs Authors' Releases

Laura Marie Altom
The SEAL's Stolen Child - Dec. '12
The SEAL's Valentine - Jan. '13
A Navy SEAL's Surprise Baby - Aug. '13
A SEAL's Bombshell Babies - TBD
A SEAL's Mystery Baby - TBD
The Cowboy SEAL - TBD
Harlequin

Jennifer Blake
The Tuscan's Revenge Wedding (Italian Billionaires Series) - Oct. '12
Steel Magnolia Press

Beth Cornelison
Colton's Ranch Refuge - Oct. '12
Colton's Wyoming Continuity - Dec. '13
Harlequin
Cowboy's Texas Rescue- Black Ops Rescues- Bk 3 - Mar. '13
Silhouette

Connie Cox
Return of the Rebel Surgeon - Oct. '12
Harlequin
 Winnie Griggs
Handpicked Husband - Sept. '12
The Bride Next Door - July '13
A Family For Christmas - Oct. '12
Harlequin

Alyssia Kirkhart
Enraptured - Oct. '12

Cherrie Lynn
Leave Me Breathless - Nov. '12
Samhain Publishing

Pepper Phillips
The Christmas Gift - Dec. '12
Lagniappe ePress

Charles Sutherland
The Lost Dragoner - The Chronicles of Susah Book Two - Dec. '12
Narrow Way Press LLC

Liz Talley
The Road to Bayou Bridge - Sept. '12
The Spirit of Christmas, - Dec. '12
His Uptown Girl - June '13
Harlequin

Joanna Wayne
Big Shot - Oct. '12
Harlequin

Lenora Worth
The Life of Riley - Nov. '12
Sweetheart Bride - Feb. '13
Lone Star Protector - June '13
Harlequin

Note: Please look through the above Author Release information to check for accuracy. If there is an adjustment or addition needed, let me know at garnara@gmail.com -- Dennis Clarkston, Editor.



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