

# North Louisiana Storytellers and Authors of Romance

## NOLA



## NEWS

Chapter 40 of Romance Writers of America

Issue 3/13

May/June 2013

## 10 Ways Not To Write A Book

by Joan Reeves

I like to be different so I'm not going to tell you how to write a book.

There are plenty of talented authors out there who can do this. Instead, I'm going to tell you how to NOT write a book. True, this is a time-intensive process. It usually takes a year or two, but I guarantee this works. Just follow this step-by-step guide, and you will never, ever, finish a manuscript to the point where you can or indie publish it or submit it and have it result in a sale.

1. Wait until everything in your life is perfect before starting.

2. Tell everyone you meet every detail about the book, discussing it endlessly before you ever put a word on paper, until you're so bored with the idea that you'd rather wash windows than write the story.

3. Write whenever you feel like it rather than establishing a weekly quota of pages or words produced.

4. Write and rewrite the first chapter, not moving ahead until you have it absolutely perfect.

5. Get to chapter 2, start thinking about the marketability of your book and realize you're writing a courtship romance but erotica is the hot genre so you haven't got a chance so you might as well wallow in depression for as long as it takes before you resign yourself to writing the book that is in you.

6. Realize you haven't yet become a Zen master of the writing craft and decide to read a baker's dozen of how to books before proceeding to chapter 3.

7. When you get to chapter 4, start obsessing about what your mom, dad, spouse, children, minister, friends, and neighbors will think about you when they read this published book because they will surely think you are crazy, perverted, a safety risk, or just plain weird with no redeeming character at all.

8. When you get to chapter 5, start changing character names, hair colors, eye colors, occupations, emotional baggage or any of the other thousand details so that you must go back and change it all the way through, tinkering with the manuscript every time you used the now obsolete word or phrase.

9. When you get to chapter 6, start sending it out to agents in a query/first chapter package so you will be crushed when they don't express interest in your unfinished project, and you have to go back to the beginning and rewrite the whole thing before proceeding.

10. When you get to chapter 7, decide to join a critique group, jump into the first one you stumble across without any knowledge of the individuals and/or group dynamics and level of expertise so that you'll realize you're writing crap when they pick it apart.

Depressed? Laughing wryly because you see yourself above? How about some rational words now? A novel is characterized by forward motion. So is the process of writing. Move forward until you reach THE END. Then, and only then, is it the time to look backward.

Joan Reeves writes funny, sexy Contemporary Romance. Her books are available at all major ebook sellers; audio editions available at Amazon, Audible, and iTunes. Joan publishes Writing Hacks, a free newsletter for writers, and Wordplay, a free newsletter for readers. For information, please visit [JoanReeves.com](http://JoanReeves.com) or her blog <http://SlingWords.blogspot.com>.

The following article first appeared in the February 2013 issue of *In Print!*, the monthly newsletter of Houston Bay Area RWA. Permission granted to reprint or forward to sister RWA chapters with proper credit to author and chapter.

# May's Speaker

Laura Alford

*Budgeting*

Saturday, May 11

# June's Meeting

Pamela Kopfler

Saturday, June 8

# July's Meeting

Elizabeth Hadwin  
From Barnes & Noble

Saturday, July 13

## 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](mailto: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](http://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 15<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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

*Learn the rules like a pro, so you can break them like an artist.*

~ Pablo Picasso

**Sheila Jackson** has bravely sent in her twenty-five page submission to Jill Marsal; her novel is complete and ready to be snapped up. Here's hoping that Ms. Marsal will recognize the masterpiece, too.

Also, **Sheila** mailed her completed novel and synopsis to Mary Sue Seymour.

**Lyn Morgan** sent three complete manuscripts to two editors and an agent who requested them at the NOLA STARS conference in March 2013 and is hopeful for more Good News to come from this. Also, it's not enough that she has another partial manuscript to send to an editor but production work on her co-authored movie *Skookum* is underway. Obviously, Lyn has hit her stride! Well done.

And with more striding, **Lyn** will have a workshop for the Script scene mini-conference at RWA National on July 17th. It's entitled *The Making Of A Film* and it will detail the things that went into the filming of *Skookum* as they progressed from the initial script to the final cut. The future release of the horror movie will be October 2013.

**Winnie Griggs** has good news, too. This week, *Romantic Times* announced that her Sept 2012 book *Handpicked Husband* had received the 2012 RT Reviewers Choice Award for its category. Good writing will continue to be recognized.

**Cora Zane** reported good news about her 21st contract. The story will appear in a print/ebook anthology for Cleis Press this fall. She has to wait to share the title. In the meantime, we'll play the song "Anticipation is making me wait."

**Ophelia Sellers** reports having finished her manuscript and is sending query letters to agents; one agent has asked for more! Who wouldn't be excited? Everyone is hopeful. Great going and good luck.

**Teresa Lynn** won the 2013 American Literary Merit Award for her short story "Faded Around the Edges." Short Story or Novel, a great story will always be recognized!!

**Jennifer Blake** has an new independently published e-book out titled *The Venetian's Daring Seduction*. This is Book 2

## Where to Find Us on the Web

NOLA STARS	<a href="http://www.nolastars.com">www.nolastars.com</a>
Rosalyn Alsobrook	<a href="http://home.earthlink.net/~ralsobrook/">home.earthlink.net/~ralsobrook/</a>
Laura Marie Altom	<a href="http://lauramariealtom.com">lauramariealtom.com</a>
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	<a href="http://www.passionateforfiction.com">www.passionateforfiction.com</a>
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Joanna Wayne	<a href="http://www.joannawayne.com">www.joannawayne.com</a>
Lenora Worth	<a href="http://www.lenoraworth.com">www.lenoraworth.com</a>
Cora Zane	<a href="http://www.corazane.com">www.corazane.com</a>

of Jennifer's Italian Billionaires series from Steel Magnolia Press. In addition, she'll be presented as a "Legend of the Romance Genre" at the Romantic Times Book Lovers Convention in Kansas City, MO, May 1 - 5. Alright!!



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

**If no one sends us their good news, we can not put it in the newsletter. So, if you have any news you wish to share, please send it to the above email address. We are not allowed to pull it off of the Nolarom loop.**



THE NORTH LOUISIANA  
STORYTELLERS & AUTHORS  
OF ROMANCE

Announces

The 2012 Suzannah  
Contest Results:

Winner

*The Soldier* by Anna Richland

Thank you to the remaining  
five finalists

*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

Nola Stars also thanks all of those who participated  
in the Suzannah this year.

## Awards

Acknowledging Membership Accomplishments

### The Rising Star Award

For unpubbed members who has made his/her first  
sale in the previous year.

**Alyssia Kirkhart**

**Donna Caubarreaux**

**writing as Pepper Phillips**

### Reach for the Stars Award

For unpubbed members who reached milestones in  
their writing.

**Ann Bond**

**Laura Alford**

**Lynn Boyett**

**Dianne (Dee) Gibbens**

**Rowena Scott**

### The Shooting Star Award

Recognizes published members who have made great  
strides in their career

**Laura Marie Altom**

**Beth Cornelison**

**Connie Cox**

**Keri Ford**

**Winnie Griggs**

**Shelia Jackson**

**Lyn Morgan**

**Teresa Lynn**

**Cherrie Lynn**

**Joanna Wayne**

**Lenora Worth**

**Liz Talley**

**Cora Zane**

See pages 1 & 2 of March/April 2013 *Nola News  
Extra* for photo and detailed accomplishments - Ed.

# What's in a Name?

## And All Those Other Confusing Newbie Issues

by Yvonne (Kochanowski) Kohano, SVR Chapter Member

Yes, the use of both my pen name and my real name in the byline is deliberate! It was one of the many things I needed to think about when my first book was about to be published. And believe me, I struggled with this. Learn from my rough patches, my friends, such as leaving that decision so late in the process I almost made a big mistake.

A note I'm not going to talk about how it's all about the book we all know that. The quality of your writing is most important to your success in satisfying readers. Take every opportunity to learn more about the craft and our genre. 'Nuf said.

### Name Yourself

I was at the RWA National Conference in 2012 just before my first book was going into production, when Madeline Olson looked at my name badge and asked in the kindest voice possible, "And what is your pen name?" Unfortunately, she wasn't the first one to ask me that. With a last name that defies pronunciation for most people, how could I expect my eventual readers to find me?

That was a big wake-up call for me. A pen name, one that readers could spell or at least sound out phonetically, is an important tool is book discoverability. Look for something that fits your subgenre/theme, and make sure you have differentiated yourself. If you're writing sweet inspirational and the name you select is the same as someone writing erotica, your potential readers should be forgiven if they're somewhat confused.

### Protect Your Brand

What is your brand? It's you "in every form. It's your pen name (your anchor), your social media presence and website (your sails), the message your books deliver (superstructure of your writing ship) and honestly, what you look like when you go into town and you don't expect to see a soul you know (ballast). Image matters and you'll always be trying to reach that next reader of your work.

Once you have a pen name, protect it like gold! That means buying the rights to use it anywhere you can think of. Get a business Facebook page in that name. Ditto

Twitter, Google +, and any other social media site you can think of. And spend that \$10.95 a year and buy the web address too. Even if you don't believe you'll use it right now, you don't want to be three books into your publishing journey and decide that you need that website, only to find that someone else owns it already.

A comment about this there are companies that do nothing but monitor what names are getting hits names that no one owns right now. They buy the rights (let's be real it's a cheap investment) and then, when you want to use your name, you have to buy it back. And then, it ain't cheap! Think along the lines of \$500 or more!

Back to your book(s). Even if you are writing a standalone book, you can come up with a catchy tagline that helps your reader remember it. This applies even more so with a series. If you have a tagline that is unique (Brenda Novak's Whiskey Creek, for example), protect that as well. Again, buying the website address and capturing the social media tags mean you have the rights to them in the future.

### Find and Maintain Your Balance

Okay, none of us has found the magic bullet for balance or figured out how to shoot it to hit the target consistently. And this isn't about doing what works for someone else. It's finding what works best for you.

I always thought I wrote best in the morning. My brain was fresh, my creativity was uninhibited by the multitasking of my day, and I could more easily block morning time. Oh yeah did I fool myself on this one!

In reality, I don't always have time to write the first thing in my day.

Life happens and I have to deal with it. I needed to find a way to reboot my brain later in the day, to jettison all of the busy-brain stuff accumulated and find that creative kernel I wanted to crack open. What seems to work the best to refocus me later in the day are doing a smaller standalone writing project (like this article), taking a gardening break, or playing online brain games.

Try different methods. Experiment with different things on different days.

And find what works for you. None of us has figured out the formula. (But if you find it, we expect you to share!)

### Take Tips with a Grain of Salt and Sugar!

My final newbie word of advice is to listen to every tip from the perspective that it's one person's view my tips included! While it's all about the readers when it comes to our books, it's all about us as writers when it comes to the storytelling and craft of our work. Particularly at this sea-change time in our industry, things are changing rapidly. What was gospel a year ago now may be obsolete. What is peaking over the horizon, none of us can say for sure.

Be flexible, be willing to try new things, and be open to changing what you've tried when it isn't working for you any longer. Most of all enjoy your writer's journey. As storytellers, we may have the very best job on the planet!

After nonfiction publishing during her careers as a management consultant and university professor, Yvonne Kohano returned to one of her first loves, storytelling in the fiction realm. Her Flynn's Crossing contemporary romance series is set in a fictional northern California foothills town not unlike her own. It follows the developing love interests of a group of successful women and men who overcome their real world conflicts and challenges to find acceptance and love.

In real life, Yvonne and her husband John live on a ranch where they used to raise llamas. Now livestock-free, they spend their time taking cruises, gardening, creating yummy dinners, and keeping their dog kids happy. Yvonne blogs at [www.YvonneKohano.com](http://www.YvonneKohano.com). Learn more about the Flynn's Crossing series at [www.facebook.com/FlynnCrossingSeries](http://www.facebook.com/FlynnCrossingSeries).

This article was originally published in the Mar/Apr 2013 issue of the Sacramento Valley Rose chapter newsletter. Permission to reprint is granted, as long as proper credit to the author and chapter is given.

## 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  
*The Venetian's Daring Seduction (Italian Billionaires Series)* - Apr. '13

**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  
*The Devil Has Dimples* - Oct. '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](mailto:garnara@gmail.com) -- Dennis Clarkston, Editor.



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