

THE LOVE LETTER



San Antonio Romance Authors
Romance Writers of America®, Chapter 41

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September 2005

SARA Authors Shine Brightly at RWA Conference

By: Lupe Gonzales,
SARA Contributor

The San Antonio Romance Authors who attended RWA's Silver Anniversary Conference in Reno in July shone brightly they shared their knowledge, insight and funny stories at the August meeting. Erotica seems to be very hot (pun intended). Chick lit has to be meatier. And historical fiction needs to be about "real" historical figures.

Betty Hanawa, who is published with Triskelion Publishing, related a funny story about stepping on Tara Gavin's foot. Betty stated, "You never know who you'll run into (at conference)." Gavin is the editor of NEXT, a new women's fiction line for women over age 35 from Harlequin. These books target the "sandwich generation" - women who have kids in college and aging parents.

Betty attended a career track *Life Insurance: Writing for More Than One Publisher* which featured award-winning author Lucy Monroe, Kate Duffy, Kensington editor, and Roberta Brown, agent. Working with different publishers is a good thing as is working with different genres. Just make sure everyone knows what you're doing was the advice.



RWA's 25th Anniversary

Linda Carroll-Bradd attended the NAL spotlight, which has 14 imprints, among them historical romances, young adult, chick lit mysteries (publish two per month). The Eclipse imprint (publishes three books/ month). Debut authors do better to submit to this one. Accent is the women's fiction imprint and eight to ten titles are published per year. The Temptress line is a new one debuting historical and romantic historical suspense - want historical fiction using real people.

Mary Jernigan went to the Harlequin party. How cool is that? Her editor is Denise Sullivan at Harlequin Intrigue. Everyone agrees that diversifying is good. However, Mary J warned: "Know your editor. Some won't consider anything else."

Madge Cluck went to the literacy signing - huge variety of books, for

example, paranormal inspirational. Madge also attended the Avon and St. Martin's Press spotlights. Both publishing houses are branching out to multiple lines. St. Martin's Press accepts western historicals. Yee-haw! Dust those babies off, writers!

What does a workshop entitled, *Poison 101* teach you? For one thing, according to Madge, did you know that it takes a series of days to poison someone with a cup of tea? This workshop dispelled the myth that a potential villain can sprinkle a teaspoon of poison in the victim's tea and they're gagging for dear life in the next sentence.

Of course, everyone loved Debbie Macomber's *High Concept - How to Define It, Write It, Sell It* at noon on Friday. High concept simply means putting your book in a sentence that everyone will recognize.

Madge attended the *Lover's Journey* presented by Kathryn Smith, who discussed archetypes and *Romancing Romance*, which detailed the history of romance, by Cheryl Sawyer and Kristin Nelson.

Continued
on Pg 8...



From Your President



As the child of a teacher, as a student, a teacher, and as the parent of a student, I have lived my entire life according to the school year. Fall is a time of new beginnings. New grade, new teachers, new school supplies, new shoes, new friends, new schedule. Even though I'm out of the school loop, I still plan my life according to the school calendar.

As Back to School days approach, great bargains in office supplies abound. A stack of new spiral notebooks with page after page waiting for notes, for research, for daydreams, beckon and make it easy to want to write every day.

Autumn can be a time of preparation. As the squirrels hoard away pecans and acorns, the writer stores up ideas, polishes manuscripts, checks guidelines, enters contests, attends conferences. Or it can be a time of fruition, when everything comes together and a new WIP is started.

As the days become cooler, energy levels rise. The first northers blow away the summer's doldrums. The natural deadline of approaching holidays gives impetus to move toward completion before life gets too hectic. Dreams are fulfilled as the writer types "The End" and readies the manuscript for submission.

Autumn is here! Celebrate the preparation, the fruition, and the harvest.



Janet

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BOOK IN A WEEK

SARA hosts a **Book in a Week** challenge monthly starting on Wednesday, one week after our general meeting. To join the BIAW loop, sign up on the SARA Web site at <http://www.sararwa.com>. BIAW runs for seven days and ends on the following Tuesday. You'll receive a starting email, which you reply to and commit to your goal for the week: 5 pages a day, 3 chapters of revisions, 10,000 words. Whatever you want to accomplish. Updates are given daily on the BIAW loop along with encouragement and support to those who participate. Put a cork in your "inner editor" and write freely for one week. It's a great way to produce pages for your current work in progress or to get going on a new project.

BIAW has now moved to a quarterly schedule. We'll be sure to keep you informed for our next writing marathon.

♥

The winner of the August SARA Award for best hard-luck story was Judith Rochelle who was rejected 3 times from the same publisher on a proposal she'd sent in only once.

**INVEST IN YOURSELF**

If you don't believe in your writing abilities, who does? Make a commitment to finish the first draft of a manuscript this year. Take that commitment to the next level by investing \$10 now toward that goal. Official commitment happens when you hand over the money to Mary Fechter as part of the **Invest in Yourself** activity during the general meeting. When you complete the rough draft, show it to her and become eligible to win the pot of money at the 2004 SARA holiday party.

♥ ♥ ♥

CRITIQUE GROUP

The critique group meets every two weeks on Saturdays at 9 a.m., and online Thursdays in alternating weeks. Saturday sessions are hosted in members' homes — the location changes with each meeting. Participants bring enough copies of the work they want help with. Pieces must be up to 10 pgs (max) in Courier New 12pt. Font. The work is read aloud; both verbal and written suggestions are offered.

Online sessions begin by participants emailing up to 15 pgs (max) of their works-in-progress to Linda Carroll-Bradd, our coordinator, on Thursdays. The format is the same, Courier New 12pt. font. The coordinator divides the submissions into smaller groups and emails them out. Critiques are completed and emailed back to the individual or coordinator within 48 hours. Alternately, if you're not currently working on a manuscript, you can still critique others' work. To attend the next critique group, please contact **Linda Carroll-Bradd** at lindakcb@yahoo.com

UPCOMING CRITIQUE SCHEDULE

In-person sessions:

Sept. 17, Oct. 1, Oct. 15, Oct. 29

Online sessions:

Sept. 8, Sept. 22, Oct. 6, Oct. 20

UPCOMING MEETING SPEAKERS

October — Geralyn Dawson, Region 5 Director will present her program.

♥ ♥ ♥

CHA CHA'S RESTAURANT POLICY

SARA meetings will be held at Cha Cha's Mexican Restaurant through the end of 2005. Don't forget if you arrive before 6:15 you'll need to sit in another location until our room is available at 6:30. Meetings must end no later than 8:30.

♥ ♥ ♥

SHOW SARA PRIDE!

T-shirts, clocks, buttons, tote bags, mugs, even Christmas ornaments! All these items are available at the SARA page at the Café Press website.

Show the whole city (and Reno!) your SARA Pride with a beautiful shirt emblazoned with our logo and a variety of sayings to include the too true, *"Writing: Applying the seat of your pants to the seat of your chair!"*

Ready for the hot San Antonio summer? Babydoll t-shirts are now available! Get on over to <http://www.cafepress.com/saromance> and get your hot hot hot SARA items today!! (Note: it's "sa" romance, not "sara" romance.)

♥ ♥ ♥

SARA CAFÉ

If you would like to be interviewed in the SARA Café article of *The Love Letter* please send an email to Mary Fechter at wordsmith@satx.rr.com. She'll send you the questions, you answer and send them with a digital photo back to her. It's painless — promise. Come on, let us get to know you better!

DID YOU KNOW?

Rhonda Penders, SARA Contributor
Send your writing announcements to
rpenders@rochester.rr.com

Mary Fechter's *Where There's Smoke* finalled in the PASIC contest and her book *Hot Shot* won the series category of the Sheila contest put on by Valley Forge Romance Writers.

Linda Carroll-Bradd's *Stagecoach Capture* finalled in the Golden Gateway in the steamy category.

In September from Triskelion Publishing, *Sex on the Beach* a collection of four hot, sexy stories by Terese Ramin, **Betty Hanawa**, Beverly Rae, and Sydney Somers. Betty's story is called *Love the Day* and takes place on South Padre Island. Betty's *Falling Star Wish* will go to print in December.

~~ PAN News ~~

Mary Jernigan, writing as Elle James, sold her second book to Harlequin Intrigue, *Dakota Meltdown* will be out in September 2006. Mary, writing as Myla Jackson, received two wonderful reviews from enchantedinromance.com for *Trouble With Harry*.

**Elda K's Angel**

JoAnn Prater won the August Elda K. Angel for selling her novel, getting a new job, and her daughter's great response to medical treatment for her condition.

**Librarian's Corner**

by Mary Fechter, SARA Librarian

Some writers want to get a look inside an editor's mind before submitting to her. In addition to the spotlight CDs, I thought I'd break up the CDs in the library by editor, just so you could get a glimpse. (I put the publishing house when I knew it, otherwise, you're on your own.)

Category Editors

Mary Theresa Hussey (Luna)– *PRO Retreat*

Melissa Jeglinski (Desire) – *No Dumping Allowed: Creating Opening Pages that Sparkle*

Wanda Ottewell (Harlequin Canada) - *No Dumping Allowed: Creating Opening Pages that Sparkle*

-*And the Fun Goes On: How Editors and Authors Talk About Romantic Comedy*

- *15 Things That Make Editors Scream*

Brenda Chin (Blaze) – *Writing Outside the Box...and Still Getting Published Isn't a Doctor, Doesn't Own a Ranch, Doesn't Require a Virgin: The New Heroes of Category Romance -Split Personalities -15 Things That Make Editors Scream*

Patience Smith (Intimate Moments) – *Writing Within the Lines*

Stacy Boyd – *Tackling Revisions with a Quarterback in the Huddle*

Ann Leslie Tuttle (Harlequin)– *Contests: A Shortcut to Publication?*

Diane Dietz (Steeple Hill)– *The Dos and Don'ts of Query Letters*

Kim Nadelson (Intrigue)– *The Same, Only Different: Not the Same Old Serial Killer*

Kathryn Lye (Harlequin Canada)– *And the Fun Goes On: How Editors and Authors Talk About Romantic Comedy*

-*15 Things That Make Editors Scream*

-*Ms. Manners Guide to Editor and Agent Etiquette*

Julie Barrett (Bombshell) – *From Bra-Burning to Bombshell*

Melissa Endlich (Historical) – *Writing and Word Count*

Natashya Wilson (Bombshell) – *Writing Silhouette Bombshell: Redefining Category Novels*

Jennifer Green (Harlequin Canada) – *But Wait, There's More: The Work You Do After the Sale*

Leslie Wainger – *Inside the Editor's Mind*

Joan Marlow Golan (Steeple Hill) – *Innovative Genres in Inspirational Fiction*

Krista Stoeber (Steeple Hill) – *Innovative Genres in Inspirational Fiction*



SARA SELLS!!! SARA SELLS!!! SARA SELLS!!!

SARA is certainly prolific this year. Another member has SOLD her book. JoAnn Prater got “the call” last month. Here’s what she had to say when *The Love Letter* caught up with her.

Where were you when you got the call?

I actually received the call through an email! Makes sense, selling to a fine epubliher like Triskelion. The odd thing is that earlier that morning, I'd had a dream in which Triskelion offered me a contract. In my dream, I signed the contract and took note of the date posted at the top. That was the same date Triskelion made me the offer. I'll always remember this as a good sign!

Who was the first person you told?

Mary Fechter, via an email! (I see a pattern emerging.) Then my husband, kids, parents, and friends.

Did this entry come from a contest entry or submission?

From a submission.

Was this an agented sale? If not, do you have an agent now? If so, who?

No, I am still unagented and at this point, plan to remain so, unless my path changes. I remain open to any possibilities.

How long have you been writing?

In practice, all my life. With serious intent toward a career, five years.

Who is your editor and what publisher do you write for?

Jaynie Ritchie is my editor, and my publisher is Triskelion Publishing.

Are you a plotter or pantster?

Mostly a pantster, but over time I've become more of a blend of both. I start off the book as a pantster. As I progress, I become more of a plotter.

What would your ideal cover for this book be?

The name of my novel is *Three Of Swords*, which refers to a tarot card. Since most tarot images are copyrighted, I'd love to see the image at end of the first chapter on the cover...a blood-red, crimson moon pierced by three swords, with my hero and heroine in the foreground, looking "stressed" yet glad to be with each other in the midst of a paranormal murder mystery!

What is coming up next for you?

I'm currently working on a new submission for Triskelion, with a vampire-shapeshifter hero who is sexy, dangerous, mysterious, and gorgeous. Not necessarily in that order. Think Gerard Butler in head-to-toe black leather, stalking quietly beneath a full moon, and you've got the picture.



Membership Report

By: Linda Carroll-Bradd, SARA Membership

SARA welcomed two returning members and two new members in August:

Margaret Batschelet writes contemporary category romance and teaches technical communication and web design at UTSA. Her publishing credits to date include technical writing in the academic milieu.

Returning member Jan Kilby is a college writing instructor, writing consultant and freelance writer. She has published technical articles in approximately 200 publications and short stories. Her interest is in writing single titles.

Melissa Schroeder is a military wife who has lived in various parts of Texas most of her life and loves history. She is multi-published by Whiskey Creek, Loose-Id, and Liquid Silver. *The Accidental Countess* will be released in trade paperback this fall by Vintage Romance.

Ellen Wulf returns to SARA after a 10-year absence and is a retail manager at Barnes & Noble, Fiesta Trails. Published in non-fiction and other fiction, she is interested in writing mystery, historical, paranormal and contemporary romance.

Welcome back to all who have renewed for the 2005-06 membership year. As of September 5th, we are 57 members strong. Also, I will have the draft roster at the September SARA meeting for members to make any updates before the twice-yearly roster is issued in October.

Happy Birthday!!!

The *Love Letter* would like to wish these SARAs a wonderful and joyous birthday!

Gimoy Louie – 4 September
Jenn Wilkins – 11 September
Pam Litton – 11 September

My list of birthdays is woefully incomplete.

Please contact me at jwilkins1974@yahoo.com so I can have a complete list and everyone can get their birthday greetings!!

Proposed Amendment to SARA Bylaws

Proposed amendment to Bylaws of The San Antonio Romance Authors

ARTICLE III, Section 6. Members' Voting Rights:

- Quorum: One third (1/3) [Delete 1/3, change to *One fourth (1/4)*] of the General Membership shall constitute a quorum.

Rationale: The increasing number of members who live farther than 30 miles from San Antonio has made it difficult to obtain a quorum in recent years. On two occasions in the last year, we've had to postpone votes at the general meeting for lack of a quorum. Even with absentee ballots and proxies accounted for, had one fewer person attended the May meeting, we would have been unable to conduct the election.

Article III, Section 6. Members' Voting Rights:

- Proxy voting is disallowed, except for the election of officers [add OR AMENDMENTS TO OUR BY-LAWS.] Absentee voting is disallowed, except for the election of officers, [add AMENDMENTS TO OUR BY-LAWS,] and the dissolution of Chapter.

Rationale: To allow greater participation to our long-distance members.

Submitted to the Board of Directors on July 20, 2005 by the undersigned general members in good standing:

Hattie Ratliff
Sammy Belisle





By: Madge Cluck, standing in for Sydney Alfrido

To Make A Long Story Short... A Summary of the SARA Board Meeting

The Board met at Judith Rochelle's home on Saturday, August 13, 2005. We officially called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m., but we'd been talking for an hour before then, mostly about the Merritt Conference. And of course we had to have snacks. Coffeecake and watermelon and chocolate and trail mix. Yum. See what you miss by not being on the SARA Board? Basically, we decided a meeting of the Conference committee chairs was needed. Lots of great ideas flowing about the conference, though.

Janet Kaderli, Gimoy Louie, Madge Cluck, Judith Rochelle, and Veronica Norman were there which made a quorum, so we could vote on the changes to the Policies and Procedures Manual (PPM). They passed unanimously. (Yeah!)

Growing SARA: We discussed at length our mission to promote and grow SARA. One tool we are using is a flyer, which can be mailed to area colleges or passed out by our membership at the various functions we all attend – and the bookstores we spend our money at, and the libraries we haunt. We poured over the draft of the flyer, but I'm sure someone will still find a mistake. Look for the flyer to be handed out for distribution by our membership at the September meeting. We are also planning to heighten awareness of SARA by using newspaper, website and radio calendars. Let Madge know if you have any information on where to submit our meeting information and publicize our group.

Then, we talked about the SARA **dues scholarship**. Did you know that SARA has a fund to help our fellow members during financial difficulties? The money is to be used to pay your SARA dues if you're having money trouble. We talked about how to make everyone aware of this service and how we should go about establishing some criteria for distributing these funds to our worthy SARA's.

More about dues: we talked about using PayPal on our website to pay our SARA membership dues and the details we needed to work out to make this work next year. We also talked about making the grace period shorter so next year's Board would know how many members we have grown to through our membership drive efforts when they take office next year. This would help in preparing next year's budget, too.

Fun Money: It's almost as much fun talking about spending it as it is spending it. We talked about what to do with money that had been budgeted but not spent – such as Golden Heart and Rita finalist Conference fees that didn't get spent this year. We know we want to enrich and educate all our SARA's but didn't come up with a specific item. Use it to bring in a Big Name for the Conference? For a workshop? Don't worry; I'm sure we'll find something to spend it on. We did decide that we needed to keep a certain amount in reserve and that keeping at least \$2,500 in the checking account at all times would be a good idea. We'll see how that works out this year.

Sad Money: We decided that our financial accounting was in enough of a mess that we have to have a professional audit. We have someone in mind to do it, if they won't charge over \$800. Bummer.

New Stuff: Gimoy raised the idea of having a fundraiser by raffling off our published authors. Really. Or at least having lunch and spending time with one. This would also promote SARA through publicity for the event. Gimoy is looking into the details, so we should hear more later.

Then we went home. And you should have seen your SARA Board lost in the wilds of the Texas Hill Country. If there was a way to turn, we picked the wrong one. All in all, we had a great time. Wish you had been there!

Shining Brightly in Reno Cont...

Janet Kaderli, SARA president, attended the chapter presidents meeting, talked with the National Board and with Gayle Wilson, president-elect. Janet also went to the PRO Retreat where agents critiqued chapters and synopses. Per Janet, agents are looking for a reason to say no to authors. The literacy signing was fun for Janet as she had authority from SARA to buy books. The next best thing to writing is reading, of course!

Megan Galloway-Winkler informed us of TOR and their search for light and dark paranormals and stories with a blend of futuristic and romance. Both Kensington and Avon are looking for erotica. Megan also attended the workshop, *Playing Nice With Your Dragon* given by Jane Porter. Writers should treat their dragon (muse) as a friend and not as if someone else's is better.

Publishers are also looking for young adult writers, from teen audience to early college. Pocket is moving more toward this.

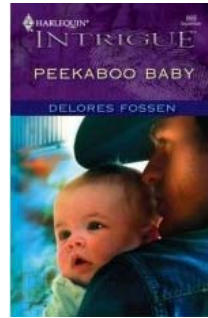
According to Megan, Bantam Dell is very selective, want wide levels of sensuality and will accept query letters from unagented writers. Warner has a line called Center Street, which is contemporary women's fiction, no sex and set in the heartland of America. (Guess living in the heart of America is stimulation enough, huh?)

St. Martin's Press wants "really" books, i.e., really sexy, really emotional, really, really. They want books with an addictive quality. The good news is that they want to build authors, will offer 2-3 book contracts for books with emotional intensity.

Megan also attended Kate Duffy's, Kensington editor, *Query Letter Critique*. Duffy wants to hear author's voice in query. She advises not to talk about every character in your book. And give her reasons to like your work.

As always, hearing the RWA panel inspires us to write and submit our work. Apparently, there's a place for every type of book and for every type of writer – from westerns to outer space; from tender romance to erotica, for teens to mature audiences. Let's get writing and submitting!

Secret Admirer— Book Review



Peekaboo Baby

by Delores Fossen
Harlequin Intrigue

Storm brewing. Lightning. Thunder. A cloned baby?

With the first sentence, the first scene, Delores Fossen catapults the reader into Delaney Nash's world. She's afraid for her miracle baby. Is he in danger and is he the son of her sworn enemy, Ryan McCall?

Peekaboo Baby is a story that could become true in today's fast-paced technology and advances in science. Delaney visits Ryan on that stormy day when her doctor won't divulge anything when she tells him New Hope Clinic is under investigation for unethical practices. After that, they are involved in several near-fatal "accidents".

Before Delaney and Ryan can even think about the sexual attraction they have for each other, they have to "race against time" to figure out where the danger is coming from: the doctor, the director of the clinic, or even, Delaney's father, who has no love for Ryan McCall.

Peekaboo Baby is another great read from an author we've come to expect the best in romantic suspense.

NOTE: PAN Members – Would you like to have your latest release reviewed by *The Love Letter* Secret Admirer? Just let us know when it's being released and send a copy to Masha Holl at mholl@aol.com or Jenn Wilkins at jwilkins1974@yahoo.com

Also, don't forget to send your signing, release, contract, or anything news to Rhonda Penders for the Did You Know? Column. Rhonda can be reached at rpenders@rochester.rr.com

THE EM DASH AND THE EN DASH & THE HYPHEN

by Wendy La Capra, Guest Contributor

First printed in June issue of *The Quizzing Glass*, the newsletter of the Beau Monde. This may be reprinted with proper credits.

Wendy La Capra, The Quizzing Glass editor 2003–2005, used this article to self-educate. She hopes you will find it useful – not-to-mention interesting.

I hate the subtleties of punctuation—so many rules, so little motivation to learn them. I could never keep the en dash, the em dash and the hyphen straight, and chose to avoid them. Did avoidance help my writing? No. With a little research, I learned a great deal. For instance, the em dash helps a reader "hear" your story with the pacing you intend—almost like you are telling the story directly to them, in your own voice. What a wonderful tool for an author to have! Interested in hearing more?

The En Dash and the Em Dash

The en dash and the em dash are named according to their lengths. The en dash is the length of an N; the em dash is the length of an M.

En Dash

The en dash means "through." It is used to indicate inclusive dates and numbers: July 9–August 17; pp. 37–59.

Em Dash

The em dash is commonly referred to as, simply, "the dash." It: Indicates sudden breaks (in thought, sentence structure or interruption in dialogue) "I will never—," Emma began. "I won't be long"—her voice lowered to a husky whisper—"stay right here."

Amplifies or Explains: The sisters—Charlotte, Emily, and Anne—all loved to write. He could not bear it. His wife—the love of his life—was missing.

Separates the Subject from the pronoun: Women—nothing scared him more.

For clarity, it is best never to use more than two em dashes per sentence.

What about the 2-em and 3-em dashes? There are other uses to the em dash. The 2-em (twice the length of the regular em dash) is used to show a missing word or part of a word, to disguise an expletive or to disguise a name. When a part of word is missing, no space appears between the part of the word and the 2-em dash, but a space follows the 2-em dash (representing the end of the word) "Lady A — — was seen in a compromising position."

The 3-em dash is used in a bibliography to show that the same author or editor in preceding entry is being referenced.

Hyphens

Guidelines for the use of hyphens is are many, with some usage coming down to a matter of personal taste. In general, hyphens break words that do not fit on a justified line of type: He promised to be with her always.

Separate compound words: Emma looked down on her middle-class neighbors.

Separate characters in number sequences: The Book's ISBN Number is 0-226-10403-6

Show spelling or pronunciation: "My name is Anne, that's A-n-n-e not A-n-n." The title is pronounced Vi-count, not Vis-count.

Spell out ages or join numbers: Penelope's three-year period of writer's block ended when she turned fifty-five.

Combine words that include a prepositional phrase: Sometimes you can be such a stick-in-the-mud.

When a hyphen is used to connect compound words or phrasal adjectives, its purpose is to avoid ambiguity. Generally, when an adjective and noun (or adjective and a participle) are used together to describe a noun, they should

The Em and En Dash Cont...

be hyphenated, unless they appear after the noun they describe. You have created a very open-hearted heroine. BUT Your heroine comes across as very open hearted. She liked to create free-form sculpture. BUT The sculpture she created was free form.

A hyphen is never used with words ending with -ly: She was one intensely excited debutante.

The most common usage of the hyphen, breaking words that do not fit on a justified line of type, is done automatically by most word processors. However, if the word is not in the dictionary of your word processor, the program will hyphenate according to mathematical rules. To be safe, you should always check the words automatically hyphenated by your word processor.

Typing

There are no individual keys that display the en dash or the em dash. *The Chicago Manual of Style* advises, unless otherwise instructed by an editor, "use a single hyphen both for a hyphen or for an en dash, two hyphens for an em dash, four hyphens for a 2 em dash and six hyphens for a 3 em dash." In Microsoft Word, en and em dashes can be created by pulling down the "Insert" menu, clicking on "Symbol," and going to the "special characters" window. The en and em dashes appear on the list.

With only two exceptions, there should be no space on either side of the em dash, the en dash or the hyphen. The first exception, stated earlier in this article, is when the 2-em dash is substituted for a missing (or partially missing) name or word. The second exception is with a hanging hyphen (for example, the word "eighteenth" in the phrase "eighteenth- and nineteenth-century reference books"). In both exceptions, the symbol used will have a space after – but not before unless otherwise instructed by their editors it.

The en dash, em dash and hyphen have become less of a mystery for me and, I hope, for you as well. Next, armed with my well-worn *Chicago Manual of Style*, I'm off to tackle colons, semi-colons. Wish me luck...

SPEAKER AGENDA

Hello SARA's,

Can't make all the General Meetings, but want to make sure you don't miss the workshop you've been waiting for? Here's the upcoming speaker agenda. Be sure to mark your calendar!!

October - GERALYN DAWSON -Region 5 Director

Author of:

The Bad Luck Wedding Dress

The Scoundrel

My Big Old Texas Heartache

My Long Tall Texas Heartthrob

November - Jane Myers Perrine

Author of:

The Mad Herringtons

Persy and the Prince

December - Holiday Party

January - Katherine Jones

Our very own SARA author of:

Undercover Lover – Oct release – final book in the Special Corruption Unit Series

Worth the Wait

February - Jean Brashear

Finalist for the RITA Award for *A Real Hero*

Author of:

What the Heart Wants

Texas Royalty

March - Jan Hudson

RITA Finalist for *The Cop: Texas Outlaws*

Author of:

Her Texan Tycoon

Call Me Sin

Water Witch

April - Samantha Saxon

Author of:

The Lady Lies

The Lady killer

The Lady's Code



RWA CHAPTER PRESIDENTS RETREAT, NATIONAL BOARD HOT-SHEET, ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Reported by: Janet Kaderli, SARA Contributor

The best part about the Chapter Presidents Retreat at the RWA National Conference was getting to meet other presidents from all over the world – including cyberspace!

We divided up into small groups several times to discuss topics such as leadership development within our chapters, making a smooth transition between old and new boards, and contests. Speakers informed the general session about issues relating to the organization of our chapters.

The National Board had a question/answer session with the Chapter Presidents and distributed the RWA National Board Hot Sheet (see below). Something to watch for in the new year is an update of the RWA website. The plans are to make it easier to navigate and more user-friendly.

RWA National Board Hot Sheet:

1. There has been great interest and concern about recent Board discussions regarding the definition of romance. The Board feels that the organization doesn't define the genre; the genre defines the organization. With that in mind, the Board agrees that any definition of romance should be broad and inclusive. We are grateful for the member feedback that we have received and welcome additional comments on this issue as the Board continues to examine the allocation of RWA's resources.
2. The Board is pleased to announce that it has adopted an updated Strategic Plan and will be distributing it to the membership as soon as possible.
3. The RITA pilot program has been renewed as an opt-in process. Judges shall opt-in to as many categories as they wish with a minimum of three categories in which they are not entered.
4. The Board has clarified that if it becomes necessary to return entries because of receiving the maximum number of RITA or Golden Heart entries, excess entries will first be returned to those entrants who did not volunteer to judge and second in reverse order of receipt.
5. The Treasurer reported that we received more money from the Authors' Coalition than anticipated. She additionally reported that the Budget to date met projections.
6. The Board established an ad hoc committee to investigate the feasibility and advisability of RWA creating a for-profit subsidiary.

7. The Board established an ad hoc committee to investigate the feasibility and advisability of RWA acquiring a headquarters building in the Houston, Texas area.
8. The Board established a task force to study streamlining RWA programs and services.
9. The Board adopted policy requiring that all legal analysis and advice shall be delivered in writing and all legal advice delivered by RWA counsel will be kept in the RWA office for future reference.
10. PAN-eligible members will be able to purchase a BookExpo America badge at the RWA reduced rate.
11. The Board voted to postpone the appointment of nominated candidate(s) for the vacant Region 5 Director position in order to allow the members to fill the slot in the upcoming election.
12. The Board unanimously awarded outgoing President Tara Taylor Quinn with a lifetime honorary RWA membership in recognition of her dedicated service to the organization.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM was a disappointment this year because there weren't enough attendees or proxies to reach a quorum. RWA has almost 9500 members, and a quorum is 1/10 of the membership. Although there weren't any issues coming before the membership requiring a vote, no other business could be conducted at the general meeting. After a few questions regarding the definition of romance survey and the graphics standards, the meeting was adjourned. My opinion: We should all make a resolution that next year, if we will not be attending the AGM in person, to mail in or give our proxies to someone we trust to vote for us. We must use the powers at our disposal in order to have a voice in RWA.

VOLUNTEERING ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL

After the National Conference, the topic of volunteering on the national level came up on Chaplink, the Chapter Presidents Link. Anyone interested should contact the Leadership Development committee. Carol Prescott is the chairperson of the committee. Her email is carol-pres@comcast.net.

By Mary Fechter
SARA Contributor

Each month *The Love Letter* gets acquainted with a SARA member through SARA Café. In September, we take a look at **Candy Calvert**.



Candy Calvert

When did you join SARA, and for what reasons?

I joined after Dallas National (my first RWA conference) last summer. Primarily because I found myself seated at a luncheon table with a very friendly and dynamic group of SARA's--just after I'd found out that we were moving to Texas. Serendipity!

What about the romance genre appeals to you?

I've always had a fascination with getting to the heart of what makes people tick and the "jigsaw puzzle" effect of two unique people fitting together in a relationship. And in today's world it does the soul a world of good to hear a story that ends happily.

What sub-genre of romance do you write?

I write contemporary romantic comedy with elements of suspense. It's a straddling sub-genre (dropping me into a heck of a lot of cracks) that can apparently morph into Chick Lit Mystery and--because my heroine's are nurses--into Medical Romance as well.

Do you consider yourself a romantic?

Sure, balanced with that wariness that comes from a long, gritty career in Emergency medicine. Its like I can relate equally to Anne of Green Gables wistfully penning stories of love and "kindred spirits," and to one of those snarky CSI gals tossing off a gallows-humor remark at a grisly crime scene. Yeah, a tad schizoid.

What is the best book you've ever read about the craft of writing?

For continuing inspiration: Ann Lamott's *Bird by Bird*. For goosebumpy "Aha's": *A Story is a Promise* by Bill Johnson--awesome.

What would happen if you didn't write?

Is it enough that this question caused pain? I hope I don't find out, but probably I'd have to talk more and faux paint everything that doesn't move.

Do you have any writing superstitions?

Does a bear . . . ? Yes, I'm a fool for Feng Shui and look for every opportunity to "enhance the fame and reputation" corner of my Bagua Map. Toward that end, I have a little tabletop fountain in my office, around which I place "props" from my current WIP's--right now a pair of cow socks and a cherry cigar. Are you sorry you asked?

What is your favorite part of the entire writing process?

I love revisions. Don't know why, except that I'm compulsive by nature and its such a process much like training a topiary--snip, tweak, fuss . . . you know.

Name one thing you absolutely cannot write about.

I'd be a total flop at Erotica. Pointless to try. See that woman with the puffy ankles and red face?

If you could have any actor cast as the hero of your latest work, who would you choose and why?

Ooh, Matthew McConaughey! Because he's got that lazy, laid back sensuality, hint of Southern drawl and underlying humor--but can easily do the hard-body danger thing. Exactly like my hero, Luke.

What do you do when you're not writing? Do you have any hidden talents?

I love cooking, country dancing, traveling and lately I'm into water aerobics--trading puffy ankles for that svelte but prune-y look.

Do you have a writing routine? What does it involve?

I'm working hard at sticking to a routine because I could (and did more than once) write eight, twelve . . . sixteen hours per day. This makes my ankles puffy and my husband cranky. A very unromantic combination, trust me. So now, with the impetus of a contract, I write about six hours a day, quitting at around two in the afternoon and taking weekends off. I've got a huge dry erase board in my office (like the old nursing station task board in ER, but with no scheduled enemas) indicating amount of writing per week to reach my goal. Of course, on the days my husband plays golf . . . watch my ankles puff!

What are your ultimate goals as a writer?

Oh, I'd love to write Single Title one day (thought I did once, but that particular book is firmly wedged in one of those cracks that I mentioned earlier). Mainstream women's fiction, something on the scale of Anne Rivers Siddons *Upland* which blows me away every time I read it. Let's just say that my ambitions in this regard are almost as fervent as my agent's!

Tess Mallory Comes To SARA

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Join SARA at our next meeting **Wednesday September 21, 05 at 6:30pm** at Cha Cha's Mexican Restaurant (2026 Babcock Rd. Outside Loop 410).

Former SARA member, Tess Mallory, author of *Highland Magic*, will present her program.

"Ms. Mallory writes for Leisure/Lovespell books. Her workshops are varied and include "How To Write A Query Letter" and "How To Shoot The Editor On Your Shoulder." Her query letter was included in the 1999 *Writers Market* as an example of a well-written query." *Excerpted from* <http://www.sff.net/people/tessmallory/bio.html>

San Antonio Romance Authors

welcomes new members. Dues are \$35 annually, payable in June. All members of SARA must be members in good standing of Romance Writers of America®.

Non-members may attend up to three SARA meetings before joining. **Meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Cha Cha's Mexican Restaurant, 2026 Babcock Rd. 615-7000**

For membership information, please contact Membership Chair Linda Carroll-Bradd at lindakcb@yahoo.com or (210) 491-0285.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER — Back To School

Compiled by Lupe M. Gonzales,
SARA Contributor

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Black Velvet Seductions

Currently seeking submissions for all romance lines: Tender Destinations (sweet line), Sensuous Journeys (sensuous line), Forbidden Experiences (erotic line), and Amorous Adventures (romantic suspense).

Royalty paying company.

Submissions may be sent to: laurie-sanders@blackvelvetseductions.com

For more info: <http://www.blackvelvetseductions.com>

Self Magazine

For women age 20-45.

Pay: \$1-\$2/ word for 1000- to 5000-word columns on health, fitness, nutrition, money, jobs, sex, happiness, and travel.

For more info: www.self.com

CONTESTS

Glimmertrain Fall Short Story Award

Word limit: 12,000.

Entry fee: \$12.

Deadline: September 30.

1st Prize: \$1200

San Antonio Writers Guild Annual Writing Contest

Submit fiction: novel excerpts, short stories, poems; non-fiction: essays, memoirs, articles; children's lit.

Entry fee: \$10

Must also be member of SAWG (\$28).

Deadline: October 6.

Cash prizes.

For more info:

www.sawritersguild.org

EVENTS

Special Workshop for Girls Only

'Beauty is... Skin Deep'

Three-hour creative writing workshop from Gemini Ink and Girl Scouts of America

Sundays, from Sept. 18 to December 11.

Free for all girls ages 11-17. (Do not have to be registered Girl Scout).

Participants' writings will be published in an anthology Spring 2006.

Best writings (poems, essays, stories) will be performed by professional actors in May 2006 at the Dramatic Reader's Theater.

For more info: www.geminiink.org.

Texas Book Festival

October 28-30, 2005

Celebrates 10th Anniversary with All-Star Authors

For more info:

www.texasbookfestival.org

