



Heart of the Bay ❖ November 2004 ❖ Vol 17 No. 11 ❖ Chapter 90

Meeting information

Date: November 13, 2004
Place: Marriott Courtyard Oakland
Emeryville, 5555 Shellmound
Street, Emeryville, CA
(510) 652 8777
Directions: Take the Powell Street or
Ashby Avenue/Shellmound exits off I-
80. Free parking.
Cost: Reserve by November 10, \$17
members, \$20 non members. After
November 10, \$25 members and non
members. Please bring exact change or
pay by check.
Agenda: 8:30 Registration and conti-
nental breakfast
9:30 Business meeting
10:00 Presentation
Limit: 60 attendees. Reserve early!
To reserve, call **Carol Lynn Stewart** at
(510) 642 1699 or reserve using the
online form at www.sfarwa.com before
midnight Wednesday, November 10.

Craft Workshop

**Pam Rosenthal presents "Erotic
Writing is Just Writing...Only More So"**

**November 6 from 11 am-1 pm
Barnes & Noble, Jack London Square**

Open to writers at all skill levels and in
any genre, this is a workshop for those
who love to write explicit sex, those
looking for a little push in the right
direction, and those who'd rather die
than do it (but their editors told them
they have to).

Pam's first erotic romance, *Almost a
Gentleman*, was nominated by RT
BookClub for Best First Historical of
2003. Her erotic romance novella, "A
House East of Regent Street," will
appear in December 2004 in the Brava
anthology *Strangers in the Night*.

An Agent in Three Acts— Annelise Robey of the Jane Rotrosen Agency



What is an agent's role in the various career stages of an author's life: newbie, midlist, bestseller? How can agents strategically shape an author's career? What should authors expect from agents and what should agents expect in return from the authors they represent? Join us as Annelise Robey from the Jane Rotrosen Agency deciphers the secret ingredients to a successful author/agent relationship and gives us a peek at life behind the publishing curtain.

Annelise has been with the Jane Rotrosen Agency for nine years. The agency represents authors of both fiction and nonfiction, including many *New York Times* bestselling authors. Annelise is actively looking for writers of all genres, and is happy to hear from both published and unpublished authors. Annelise lived in upstate New York and Hawaii before moving to New York City.

Win a pitch meeting with Annelise!

Annelise has graciously agreed to take six individual author appointments after the meeting. These appointments are for attendees only, and will be offered by raffle. Tickets for the raffle may be purchased for \$10 at the meeting, not in advance. The appointments will begin at 12:15, with each lasting ten minutes. Two appointments will be reserved for attendees who pre-register for the meeting. See registration details at left.

Win a Sharp Synopsis Contest entry fee!

We will also be raffling off two chances to win the entry fee for the Sharp Synopsis Contest. A mere \$5.00 could net you the opportunity to get your synopsis in front of an acquiring agent.

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Welcome new members!

Annamaria Smitherman
Karen Mercury
Jamieson Haverkamp
Vanessa Gilfoy

Due to renew

Beth Barany
Shana Bickford
Alice Brilmayer
Clare Cavanaugh
Shelley Connors
Jean Fernandez
Elaine Graimes
Joanne Gwin
Mara Ivermee
Barbara Miller
Sueanne Snow
Carol Lynn Stewart
Liza Swift

Membership and Pub News

Annual dues are \$30. New member dues are \$30 plus a one-time installation fee of \$2, for a total of \$32. Members may renew at the meeting or send renewal checks, payable to SFA-RWA, to Ginny Vermillion, 5609 Schooner Loop, Byron, CA 94514. Please report all address, phone and e-mail corrections to Ginny. Also send her any changes in publishing status (first sales, new publishing house). Phone (925) 516-7948.

From the Editor

Deadline for the December newsletter: November 15. Please send your articles, good news, sales, cover images, and speaking engagements and booksignings for the Calendar to **Shelley Bates** at SABates@att.net.

Articles may be reprinted by RWA members if you notify the editor and credit the author and SFA-RWA's "Heart of the Bay." Romance Writers of America and RWA are registered service marks of Romance Writers of America, Incorporated.

A Note from the Prez



by **Cathy Yardley**

I was recently able to attend the Emerald City Writers' Conference in Seattle (one of my all-time favorite conferences, incidentally) and I was fortunate enough to hear some truly wonderful speakers. For the first time, something struck me, however ... something that, as writers, we tend to focus on with an almost compulsive concentration. No matter what level an author rises to in our particular industry, we often hear about the fact that she still harbors insecurities, that she often feels like a fraud and/or is convinced that the next book will reveal her to be a failure. This is true, and very valid—I know that I've felt that way.

The point is to show writers that they are not alone in their struggles. Insecurity, the pain of rejection, and the frustration of our business are very common experiences.

What I realized was, these are not the only common experiences we have. It occurred to me that we share another one: the experience of joy, pride, and complete belief that what we're doing is brilliant.

Think about it. Day after day, we sit down in a vacuum, with perhaps only our latest chapter meeting to provide the emotional momentum to get us to stare down a blank page and type it into submission. Day after day, we do face the insecurity. We do feel the pain when an editor all too quickly shoots down our work, or our critique partners think we need significant revisions, our family doesn't understand us, or reviewers think that perhaps our book might be better suited for recycling. We may, indeed, believe for a moment that we are simply deluding ourselves.

But the point is, we *continue writing*. With this huge common experience of pain and problems, why on earth would we do this?

Contrary to popular belief, we are not masochists! The fact is, we really believe that what we're doing can change lives ... whether it's big changes, like convincing a reader to quit her job and move to Tibet as a result of our novel, or small ones, simply providing a smile to someone who has put up with a morning of frowns. Not only that, but we truly believe that we are the only people on earth that can write our particular stories. We are gifted, and unique, and our stories reflect this.

Think I'm wrong? Consider your latest work-in-progress. Now, imagine that an NYT best-selling author got her hands on it, and wrote it, and published it. That knot of pure fury that you've got hovering somewhere in your ribcage? That's proof. That's evidence that you believe in your own brilliance and that your stories are just that. Yours.

There's this great quote that a friend told me, I think from Santyana, who said, "Happiness, too, is inevitable." We know it's a hard business. But it's also a wonderful one. The world's waiting for your unique story, so worry about the tough stuff later. Today, just remember that yes, you really are that good. And start writing.

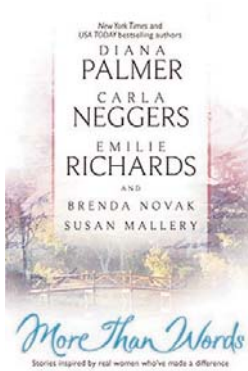
"SFA-RWA: Helping you get to the next level"

Rosemary Laurey

Paradox III

LTD Books, ISBN 1-55316-588-8

Alys is exiled from the only home she's ever known on her parents' deaths. She sets off to find her mother's kin in the far western lands. On the way, she meets the Monarch's envoy, Ranald ven Strad. The chance meeting leads to an astounding discovery.



Brenda Novak

"Small Packages" in *More Than Words*

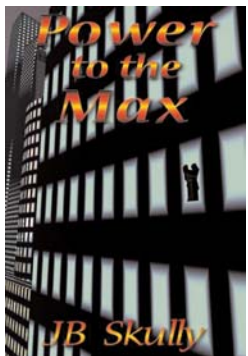
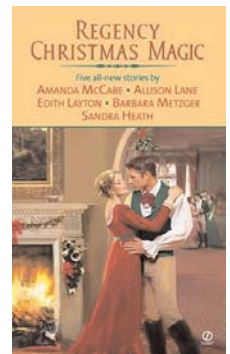
Harlequin Special Releases, ISBN 0-373-83619-8

Somewhere, at this very moment, a woman's caring and commitment is changing a life in her community...and changing the world. Five of these compassionate, dedicated women have been chosen from nominees across North America to become Harlequin's More Than Words award recipients. Now five bestselling romance authors celebrate these recipients in the *More Than Words* short-story collection—fiction inspired by the lives and efforts of these real-life heroines ... because of their dedication, handmade quilts wrap needy children in warmth and love. Hand-painted memory boxes comfort mothers grieving the loss of a newborn baby. Abused women can reach for help online, and families are brought closer through literacy. One woman even found a way to feed the needy when she was homeless herself. We hope *More Than Words* will touch your heart and inspire you to reach out in your community.

Allison Lane

"The Ultimate Magic," part 3 of the Three Beaux trilogy, in *Regency Christmas Magic*
Signet Regency, ISBN 0-451-21335-1. A top pick from *RT BookClub*.

Lord Charles Beaumont is shocked that the favor he promised his closest friend involves helping governess Edith Knolton. Edith is the bane of his existence, causing him more embarrassment than any diplomat can tolerate. But a vow is a vow, so he reluctantly puts himself in harm's way. Edith is a finishing governess whose perfect record of settling even the most intransigent girls lets her command exorbitant fees. But that record is now in danger. It will take a miracle to get this very spoiled charge to the altar without scandal. And Charles is no miracle. His very presence turns her into a stuttering, clumsy oaf. But she is desperate enough to try anything, even working with someone who revives dreams she long ago abandoned ...



J.B. Skully

Power to the Max, Book 4 of the Max series

<http://www.liquidsilverbooks.com>, ISBN 1-59578-047-5

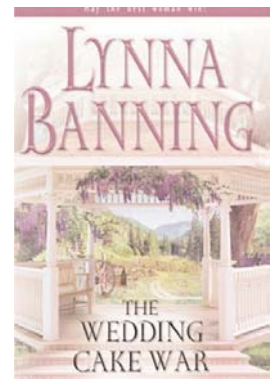
Lance La Russa had a thirst for power, exotic tastes, and the money to pay for both. Angela Rocket, the beautiful, quirky call girl willing to fulfill his every fantasy, was the last person to see him alive. And the prime suspect. To solve the crime, Max Starr must enter the world of sex for hire, much to the chagrin of her ghostly late husband, Cameron, and sort-of boyfriend, homicide detective Witt Long. She'll need all her psychic skills to save Angela from going to prison for a crime Max is sure she didn't commit. But the scariest thing of all? Witt's mom, Ladybird Long, wants to help do the detecting!

Lynna Banning

The Wedding Cake War

Harlequin Historicals, ISBN 0-373-29330-5

Spinster Leora Mayfield answers an ad for a mail-order bride, only to find she must compete with two other ladies to wed Colonel Macready. Can baking the perfect wedding cake win the contest—and the colonel?



Rae Monet

Racing Hearts

Liquidsilverbooks.com, ISBN 1-59578-053-X.

Margaret Kingsdale is a shrewd, respected businesswoman.

Unfortunately her company was losing market share. Desperate times called for drastic measures so Mrs. Kingsdale devises a plan that would rock the male dominated world of stock car racing. Cassandra Jamison captures Mrs. Kingsdale notice. With beauty like Cassandra's, she will sell more cosmetics than her highest-paid model and the stock car racing circuit is the perfect forum. Racing legend Justin Steed swore after a near fatal accident that he would never return to the track. Nonetheless, a lucrative offer, and a failing family ranch convince him to take the position training Cassandra. What Justin doesn't anticipate is the desire he experiences when their worlds collide. Unfortunately, Margaret Kingsdale will stop at nothing to ensure the future of her business and with Justin as her weapon she plays a deadly game with Cassandra's life.

Rae Monet

A Viking's Vow

Liquidsilverbooks.com, ISBN 1-59578-054-8

The year is 1311. They called him Eirik the Fierce—a Norseman bred from a long line of Viking jarls and the leader of a starving Icelandic settlement. The news from England—the King is offering a bounty equal to a year's harvest for the pelts of Scotland's wolves. What Eirik found in the highland forests of Scotland was much more valuable than he could imagine. For Sable, protecting the lives of the Solarian wolves is ingrained into the soul of every Wolf Warrior. When the battle-trained Norsemen invade the Realm territory, Sable has no choice but to fight. Taken prisoner, Sable must surrender or die. However, Eirik will find a female Wolf Warrior of the highest order does not take well to the life of a Viking slave and he begins to wonder which of them has become enslaved.

Roses and Ribbons

First sale! **Rachelle Henry** sold her novel-la "Out of Control" to Red Sage for a 2005 release. Also, Harlequin requested the full of her African-American chick lit manuscript.

Pam Britton, Kelsey Roberts and Leanne Banks sold an anthology to Ballantine called *Bad Santa*.

Pamela Heath received a request for a complete from Anna Genoese at Tor. Pam has now advanced to PRO status.

Shannon Hollis sold two more books to Harlequin's Blaze line. The first, working title *Night Moves*, will be a Fall 2005 release and the second is scheduled for late 2006.

Rae Monet sold book 2 in the FBI series to Triskelion. *Gabe's Prize* will be released in early 2005. Road to Romance has named *The Lost Wolf Warrior* a "recommended read" for October, and this book is

4 the #5 bestseller at

Fictionwise.com. Rae has appeared on the Fallen Angel Reviews Genre of the Month page as a romantic suspense author to watch for, along with 20 others, including J.D. Robb, C.J. Barry, and SFA's own **Susan Grant** and **Liz Maverick**.

Pam Rosenthal is happy to announce a two-book sale to Signet.

Patricia Simpson sold the second book in her Forbidden Tarot series to Tor. *The Dark Horse* will be a late 2005 release.

Jennifer Skullestad reports that *Desperate to the Max*, book 3 in the Max series, is the #2 highest rated erotica at Fictionwise.com, the bestseller list for e-books.

Jami Worthington is a finalist in the Finally a Bride contest with *Best Man's Bride*. Also, she placed first in the erotic/steamy category of the Golden Gateway contest with *Kiss Me Twice*. The final round judge was Kate Duffy, her target editor for this manuscript.



Upcoming programs

November 6—Craft session
11am-1pm, B&N @ Jack London Square, Oakland

Pam Rosenthal presents "Erotic Writing is Just Writing . . . Only More So." Booksigning to follow.

December 3—Craft session
11am-1pm, B&N @ Jack London Square, Oakland

Jenny Andersen, Ph.D., presents "The Surrender Arc," a character-driven guide to plotting.

December 10 meeting—Chapter party

January 8 meeting—Playing Nice with Your Dragon

Jane Porter examines learning to survive, even thrive, in the creative life. She will focus on balancing the needs of the muse with the demands of being commercially successful—a delicate but achievable balance if you understand and respect your creative process.

February 5—Craft session
11am-1pm, B&N @ Jack London Square, Oakland

Diana Dempsey presents "Make Your Book a Page Turner." Booksigning to follow.

February 12 meeting—Published Authors Appreciation Party

Don't miss the fourth annual party, where we toast those members who have successfully nurtured their muses, navigated the tricky world of publishing, and generously shared their wisdom with us.

March 5 meeting—Dennis Palumbo

Note date change for chapter meeting!

April 2—Craft session
11am-1pm, B&N @ Jack London Square, Oakland

Beth Barany presents "Creativity Techniques to Fill the Well."

November Calendar

1 Ciji Ware will participate in "The Author's Table," a literary fundraiser in its fourth year. The event puts together best-selling authors and their fans at intimate dinner gatherings around the Monterey Peninsula. FMI see the *Monterey County Herald* article at <http://www.montereyherald.com/mld/montereyherald/living/9749317.htm>.

6 Coaching Yourself as a Writer: Strategies for Focus and Follow Through, UCSC Extension Cupertino, Saturday 9:30am–4:30pm, \$125. <http://www.ucsc-extension.edu>.

The Monterey Bay chapter welcomes **Brenda Novak**, presenting "Emotion: The Heart of the Novel." FMI see <http://www.baymoon.com/~mbc/index.html>.

12 Regency dancing at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Palo Alto, 7:30–10:30 p.m. Subscription \$5. All dances taught, beginners welcome.

13 The Sacramento Chapter welcomes Phyllis Warady, who will present a synopsis workshop. FMI see <http://www.SacramentoValleyRose.com>.

20 Shelley Bates will be reading from *Grounds to Believe* and speaking at the Burlingame United Methodist Church's annual charity event, 11–2pm.

The **Silicon Valley Chapter** welcomes **Jennifer Skully**, who will present "Show, Don't Tell." Crowne Plaza San Jose, registrations begins at 8:30. Find info and directions at <http://home.earthlink.net/~svrwa/>.

December

2 Romance Readers' Group meets at Brentano's in Valley Fair Mall, San Jose, from 6:30–7:30 p.m. Authors with upcoming releases are encouraged to contact Ellen Higuchi, Waldenbooks Romance Expert, to arrange an appearance.

Market News

From Cindi Myers' market newsletter

(*Good, Bad...Better*, Blaze, January 2005, <http://www.cindimyrs.com>)

Writer's Digest is accepting submissions for its 5th Annual Short Short Story Competition. Send your best fiction of 1,500 words or less. Deadline is December 1, 2004. Winners will be announced in the June 2005 *Writer's Digest*. First prize is \$3,000, with lesser monetary prizes for 2nd through 10th place. All winners will receive a copy of the *2005 Novel and Short Story Writer's Market*. For contest rules and an entry form, go to <http://www.writersdigest.com/specialoffers.asp?DMshort091604>.

Aphrodite Unlaced, a new e-book venture featuring romantic erotica, invites authors to submit their work. Guidelines are at www.aphroditeunlaced.com/guidelines.htm.

From Publishers Lunch

The *New York Times* has a release out describing their expanded Sunday Book Review Section and broader cultural coverage. They say that TBR "will become more magazine-like." Officially announced changes include 25 percent more editorial space, with "more reviews of intellectual and historical titles and more attention to commercial fiction, mysteries and **romance novels**." In Brief reviews will be dropped entirely, in favor of the group theme essays that have been appearing already. The bestseller list will be "expanded" in ways that are not specified, and children's bestsellers will get a new listing for series books. See <http://click.email-publisher.com/maacHKEabaq7qa2wnTXcaeQxXH/> (9/30/04)

Former SFA member Danielle Girard's *The Rookie Cub*, in which a cynical female cop is forced to team up with a rookie to track a serial rapist and solve the murder of a San Francisco inspector that's linked to a fifteen-year-old case, sold to Kara Cesare at NAL in a nice deal, by Helen Breitwieser at Cornerstone Literary.

From Julie Moffett's market column

Dorchester Publishing has launched its new fantasy imprint, VORTEX. The launch book is called *The Adventures of Charley Tooth* and is written by first-time author L.B. Richards. The book is a fantasy aimed at kids aged 14 and up. For more information on the new series, including submission guidelines, see www.dorchesterpub.com.

Speaking of Dorchester, Kate Seaver is actively seeking manuscripts for the company's young adult SMOOCH line. They are only considering contemporaries and present-day paranormals. While romance plays a major role in these books, they should also focus on the many issues teens face today in dealing with family, friends and school. As their primary audience is girls ages 12–16, there should be no sex scenes. Finished manuscripts should be approximately 45,000 words and sent to Kate Seaver, Editor, Dorchester Publishing, 200 Madison Avenue, Suite 2000, New York, NY 10016. For more information on the Smooch line, visit <http://www.smoochya.com>.

Reprinted with the permission of Washington Romance Writers and Julie Moffett. Award-winning author Julie Moffett is the author of seven historical and time-travel novels and one novella. For more information on Julie's books, visit www.tlt.com/authors/jmoffett.htm.

SFA member **Liz Maverick** and her book, *The Shadow Runners*, were mentioned in a *USA Today* article at http://www.usatoday.com/life/books/news/2004-10-25-romance-novels_x.htm.



Chapter News

SFA-RWA Board Meeting Minutes—October 9, 2004

Present: Jackie Yau (VP programs), Carol Lynn Stewart (reservations), Ginny Vermillion (membership), Madelyn Bello (ways and means committee), Doreen DeSalvo (VP admin), Shannon Monroe (secretary), Julia Madden (treasurer), Lisa Frieden (website), Patricia Simpson and Shelley Bates (newsletter)

Absent: Cathy Yardley (president)

Treasurer's Update—J. Madden informed the board that the chapter is still holding strong financially and we have renewed our contract with the Marriott Courtyard for another year.

Membership/Chapter News—G. Vermillion informed the board that we had several new members join and she has not had any problems with collection of annual dues recently. G. Vermillion will confirm the total number of members and notify S. Bates. The board discussed the pros and cons of being officially involved in the "First Reader" writing group proposed on SFALink by **Tonda Fuller** since membership has expressed a need for this service. D. DeSalvo will contact T. Fuller about the board's concerns and she can submit her proposal to the board for a vote.

Elections—Elections are here! Members are encouraged to vote online through the Members Only Intranet on the chapter website or mail in the paper ballot from the October newsletter to **Candice Hern**, the Elections Officer, as soon as possible. The winners will be announced at the November 13 chapter meeting. Only 27 members have voted so far, so we need another reminder sent out on the link asap.

Programs—Don't miss out! Annelise Robey, agent, Jane Rotrosen Agency, has agreed to allow us to raffle off six 10-minute agent appointments at our November 2004 meeting. The raffle tickets will be \$10 each. Out of fairness, only one appointment will be granted per person, even if they win more than once in the drawing. The December 11, 2004 Chapter Party will include a special

6 breakfast buffet and the "white

elephant" gift exchange. Maximum value of a gift is \$10 and it must be wrapped. J. Yau will confirm the guest speaker for December and she proposed potential programs for 2005–2006: more agents and editors, promotion workshops, more local authors, etc. Stay tuned!

Contest Update—M. Bello announced that she received the first entry for the Sharp Synopsis Contest already and that she is still collecting judges. All contest details are on the chapter website and the announcement is being sent out to the appropriate publications.

Website/Newsletter—The board bid a fond but sad farewell (for now) to P. Simpson along with tremendous thanks for all her hard work on the newsletter and website. S. Bates has again taken up the charge, but volunteers are still needed to assist with production (printing, mailing). Please contact the board as soon as possible if you can help in any way! C.L. Stewart described some of the problems that occurred with the online reservations and that she has been entering members manually. She asked that the meeting information on the website be updated to include directions to the hotel and the meeting start time.

Conference Tapes

by Jenny Andersen

2004 tapes: 19 tapes were checked out at the October meeting. **Doreen DeSalvo, Shirley Schmalfluss, Tonda Fuller, and Karen Morison-Knox** checked out tapes at the September meeting—don't forget to return them.

Missing: Seven tapes.

Overdue:

Julie [illegible last name]—2 checked out 6/12/04

Shirley Schmalfluss—1 checked out 6/12/04 and 1 checked out 9/11/04

Nyree Belleville—4 checked out 3/13/04 and 1 checked out 11/08/03

Karen Morison-Knox—3 checked out 6/12/04

Rena Leith—1 checked out 10/13/03

Remember: Sign tapes in and out. Use complete numbers (9-104, 8-33). Be kind—rewind.

More Than Words

by Brenda Novak

More Than Words is Harlequin's charitable project recognizing ordinary women who make an extraordinary contribution to their communities. They're making an open call for nominations, so anyone can win. People can enter via their website at <http://www.eharlequin.com/cms/charity/moreThanWords.jhtml;jsessionid=XPN52UZBXX0VRLAUEAKCAOQ> or via snail mail.

This is the first year of the program, but they plan to continue it year after year. It works like this: Each year Harlequin chooses five recipients for the award. Then they ask five of their authors to write a short story based on the work of these women (a story, not an actual recounting of events). This year I was asked to write a story, along with Susan Mallery and *New York Times* bestselling authors Diana Palmer, Emilie Richards, and Carla Neggers. The stories are incredibly touching, and all the proceeds go back into the program. Harlequin takes no profit and the authors take no royalties.

More Than Words, the first book, was an October release. My own story, "Small Packages," was inspired by a woman named Tera Leigh who started a Memory Box Program for parents who lose a baby at birth (see image below). For information about this charity, see www.brendanovak.com/morethanwords.html.

"At Harlequin we believe that a woman's compassion can change the world."

Maybe that woman is someone you know—maybe that woman is you."



October meeting recap: Pamela Britton

by Shelley Bates

Pamela Britton discussed the joys and challenges of writing for the category and the single title markets at our October meeting. Pamela has eight books (a mixture of historicals, contemporary single titles, and category) scheduled from now through 2007. Her latest book, *Cowboy Troubles*, a Harlequin American Romance, is on shelves now.

Advantages of writing category

In category, you can actually make a living. You can release 2–3 books a year, and with most lines advancing between \$4–8,000 and royalties of \$10–20,000, you can make a respectable living. You earn out faster, because of the books' short shelf life, and you earn back your advance in about a year. With single title, it's difficult to earn enough over the year to live on. Think about the time invested: Supposedly it's easier to write shorter, but if you look at the category word counts, are the books really that much shorter than single title? At 80–85,000 words, there isn't much difference. You can cross over into other lines. If you have a talent for erotica, you can cross into Blaze. Doing this can be more difficult in single title. Category authors can move into HQN or Mira; look at SFA member **Brenda Novak**, who progressed from Superromance to Mira.

Drawbacks to writing category

With the short shelf life in series, it's more difficult to build a name, especially if you can only get one slot per year. Harlequin is now trying to "break out" one author a month with a single-title look for her cover. You have to be able to write a certain kind of book, so sometimes you have to put aside what you love and write what sells in order to make a living. Shorter can be harder for some people when they think about fitting a whole story into 200 pages. Single titles come in a variety of periods and settings, giving you freedom. You can add a subplot, suspense, or secondary romance because you have the room to do so. Your chances for stardom are greater in mass market than in category. It takes a while for a single title to get to the shelf. For instance, **Jennifer Skully** sold in November 2003, but *Sex and the Serial Killer* won't be out until January 2005. The average is two years. So, if

you get an \$8K advance and it takes two years for your book to hit the shelves, and you're paying for publicity, website, travel to conferences, the money is soon gone. If you write category romances between single titles, you can keep money coming in. Publishers today expect you to self-promote, because they choose which authors they're going to promote. In category you may have a following but Harlequin doesn't promote individuals, it promotes its lines. When you bomb in ST, you bomb big. You're not going to get many shots to succeed—maybe one or two books. If your book doesn't perform the way the publisher expects it to, they won't buy you again. Most single-title publishers really only want you to write in one genre. Pam had a following in historicals but she had a NASCAR background. She thought she could build her readership and went to her publisher with an idea for a contemporary, and was told no. So, she found a home for these books at HQN.

Writing for two markets

You need to keep track of proposal deadlines, publication deadlines, payments (especially with advances divided in 3 parts, giving you money on contract signing, on acceptance of the manuscript, and on publication). You might have two books out in one month. The sheer logistics of getting things to publication—revisions, line and copy edits, galleys—can be time consuming. Switching hats can be difficult, i.e., language creeping from your historical to your contemporary. You'll have double the proposals—they're not easy just because they're short. If you have a hard time finding the perfect opening sequence, a proposal can be difficult. If you're tightly scheduled 3 months apart, you can't take 3 weeks to write a proposal.

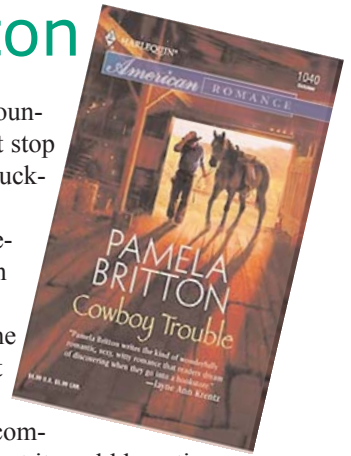
Techniques for writing quickly

Write away from home. Go offsite, to a coffee shop, library, hotel lobby. Have hubby take the kids somewhere for a weekend so you can close the door and not worry about cooking and other interruptions. Get stranded: Have hubby leave you at B&N until your pages are done, with strict instructions not to pick you up no matter how many times you call him. Even if you're a pantzer, you still need to know where your book is going. If you have tight deadlines you don't have

time to flounder. Don't stop for time suckers: the Internet, e-mail, even laundry. Beware the collage. It comes highly recommended, but it could be a time waster. We can tell ourselves it's okay because it's related to our book, but are we writing pages? Live the book. This is when you're so into the story you don't stop thinking about the book. Write every single day. It's harder to get back to the book if you leave it for a weekend. Be organized. Pam has a binder for each book containing character worksheets with details, plot points, GMC, pictures of her characters. Try Book in a Week—it's a marathon but you can do it. You're accountable to no one but yourself. It's easy to let others drag us away from the computer. This is our career but we still feel we need to accommodate other people on their schedule. You can treat it as a hobby or a career. Don't write the way someone else says to write. Voice is important; it's who you are. Your personality in your books is what's going to sell them.

How to sell to more than one market

So, should you write the book of your heart, or make a living and succeed faster? If you choose the first, you may have a harder time building a career off the get-go. Pam chose Regency-set historicals because it's an established market and it's easier to sell them. If you do a popular setting, Marketing will love to push it because they're familiar with it and know what to do. But if you send in an Egyptian romance, how will they sell it? Focus on the marketable elements. Use catch phrases and hooks they know how to sell (secret baby, kick-butt heroine, rags-to-riches) and gloss over the unusual (serial killer). In 2001, historicals were in, paranormals were out. Now, it's the opposite. Look to TV to find something marketable. With the popularity of *Joan of Arcadia* and *Touched by an Angel*, Pam predicts that inspirational will be the coming boom.



Time to Sharpen that Synopsis

Is your synopsis dull and tepid? Does it suffer from wordiness or lack of clarity? Do you want feedback on how to make it exciting and sharp?

SFA-RWA is proud to announce the first annual Sharp Synopsis Contest. We want to help authors write detailed, precise, and yet concise synopses and have them ready to submit to an editor or agent at a moment's notice. Send us your synopsis and we will help you sharpen and place it in front of an acquiring agent. Here are the details of the contest:

Eligibility: All unpublished and published authors are welcome to enter the following categories: Short Contemporary, Long Contemporary, Historical, and Paranormal. Non-RWA authors are encouraged to submit their work.

Enter: Send us four (4) copies of your short synopsis (2 pages max.) and long synopsis (5–12 pages) to be judged. Also, send us the first 10 pages of your manuscript—unjudged. If you are a finalist, your short and long synopsis and the first 10 pages of your manuscript will be sent to an agent for final judging.

Judges and Categories: Preliminary judges are aspiring authors and PRO and PAN members. All judges receive training. Every entry will be judged by at least one published author. Final judges are: Short Contemporary—Jennifer Jackson, Donald Maass Literary Agency; Long Contemporary—Elizabeth Pomada, Larsen Pomada Agency; Historical—Paige Wheeler, Creative Media Agency; and Paranormal/Fantasy—Ethan Ellenberg, Ethan Ellenberg Literary Agency.

Deadline: All entries must be received by December 31, 2004.

Fee: US\$20.00

Questions? For more information, please go to www.sfarwa.com or contact the Sharp Synopsis Contest Coordinator, Madelyn Bello, at mbello72@earthlink.net or send an SASE to 420 France Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94112-3537. Now ... meet two of our final judges!

Paige Wheeler

The final judge for the Historical category is Paige Wheeler, President of Creative Media Agency (CMA) for eight years, who has worked as an agent in both a literary and entertainment capacity over the course of her career. Prior to CMA, Paige worked as a literary and talent agent for the Artists Agency, and was an editor for Harlequin/Silhouette in NY and Euromoney Publications in London. She is also an active member of Women in Publishing, serving as the organization's president from 1996–1998.

Currently she represents commercial fiction, which includes women's fiction, romance, mystery, and thrillers, and non-fiction including self-help, how-to, lifestyle, pop culture, popular reference projects, and women's issues.

Paige loves all types of romance. Under the historical umbrella, she looks for a wide variety of historicals: Regencies, Medievals, Gothics, etc. She is less enthusiastic about ancient historicals (anything BCE), but she rarely receives queries for these types of projects.

In querying, Paige finds it helpful if a synopsis is included with a submission because it shows that an author has thought through the project from beginning to end. She uses the synopsis as a

yardstick to measure the ability of the writer to thoroughly envision

the story. With the synopsis, she can see at a glance if the author has not fully thought out the conflict or has a crazy element in the story that she didn't mention in her pitch. However, plot points are easier to correct than writing, so ultimately it comes down to whether she finds the author's writing appealing. The synopsis should include the major plot points of the novel. Many agents and editors prefer a shorter synopsis. Paige prefers one that is a bit longer so that she can spot problems within the arc of the story.

The majority of her clients are published; however, she loves to take on new writers who show a lot of promise. For a writer to get her attention, she should be able to tackle her subject from a fresh perspective. Usually it's the voice that grabs her or something in the tone of the writing. She rarely sees new plot devices or new themes in manuscripts, so it will depend on how the story is handled by the author.

Her current historical clients include Sandy Blair, Pam Crooks, Carla Dewhurst, Megan Frampton, Cheryl Howe, Yvonne Jocks, Linda O. Johnston, Pam LaBud, Kimberly Logan, Connie Lane, and Julianne MacLean.

www.thecmagency.com

Elizabeth Pomada

The final judge for the Long Contemporary category is Elizabeth Pomada, Literary Agent. After working at Holt, McKay and the Dial Press, Elizabeth moved to San Francisco with her partner, now husband, Michael Larsen, and started her agency in 1972. She is the cofounder of the San Francisco Writers' Conference. Her first book was Cynthia Freeman's *A World Full of Strangers*, a saga that made the *New York Times* bestseller list. She does like romance and romantic intrigue in her novels, whether they're literary or genre.

How important is a synopsis? Not really in comparison to the manuscript. The only thing that really counts is the words on the page. A synopsis is a tool. The book is what people want to read and, hopefully, want to buy. As a tool, a synopsis should be no more than two pages. The purpose is to help her pitch the manuscript and then use it to send to Hollywood for a potential movie sale. A synopsis should be clear, with a linear structure that shows the plot and hopefully captures some of the special charm and voice of the story. It is not an extended outline giving the story chapter-by-chapter, which can be a blueprint for finishing a story.

She is looking to acquire fresh voices and new ideas, books that will keep her

turning the pages into the night. Her agency receives hundreds of queries each week and she rejects at least 98% of them. She's delighted to find even two new writers every six months. What does it take for her to take on an unpublished author as a client? Simply a great book that she cannot live without handling. And an author who is committed to her career and her craft!

At the moment, the agency is representing perhaps 30 unpublished writers and 330 published writers, but that number can change. Some people write a book a year, others write only one book their entire lives. Two current historical favorites are **Julie Anne Long**, author of *The Runaway Duke* (Warner) and Jackie Ivie, author of *To Love a Knight* (Kensington). She also has a super chick lit book, *How to Sleep with a Movie Star*, by *People* writer Kristin Harmel (Warner). June Lund Shiplett, author of 15 historicals from NAL, has just delivered a sequel to her 12-book "Reap the Bitter Winds of Heaven" series.

www.larsenpomada.com

Next month, look for the profiles of Jennifer Jackson, Donald Maass Literary Agency; and Ethan Ellenberg, Ethan Ellenberg Literary Agency.

How to Sharpen that Synopsis

By Madelyn Bello

The synopsis—it's both a blessing and a curse. Written well, it helps an author promote her novel and could lead to that coveted sale. Written poorly, a rejection letter is received. Writers dread dealing with the synopsis, but it is a necessary—no, mandatory—step toward publication. The best way to deal with the synopsis is to learn all you can about it and practice writing it. And get feedback on it.

So, what is a synopsis? It's a high-level summary of your story. Remember, your novel is all about *showing* the story. Your synopsis is *telling* the story. **Carolyn Jewel**, author of historical romances (www.carolynjewel.com), visualizes the difference this way: "The book is the leaves of the individual trees in a forest and the synopsis is the forest."

There is no way around it: We must write a synopsis. Editors and agents demand it. To get started, we need to know what ingredients it contains.

- The story hook
- The goal and motivation of the hero and heroine
- The first meet
- The progression of the relationship
- The progression of the story by highlighting its turning points
- The conflicts, external and internal
- The dark moment
- The resolution

This isn't the only way to develop a synopsis. Here's a tip by **Patricia Simpson**, author of paranormal suspense (www.patriciasimpson.com): "It's easy to develop a synopsis if you use the screenwriter's plotting paradigm as a footprint for your book. The plotting paradigm will give you a quick overview, keep the storyline simple, and the pacing on track."

What is the difference between a long and short synopsis? Just the number of pages and the amount of information. A short synopsis is one to two pages with only the bare bones of your story. But how do you take a long synopsis and condense that down into two pages or less? **Pamela Britton**, author of contemporary and historical romances (www.pamelabritton.com), writes a short synopsis as if "it is the blurb on the back of a book with an added element—a resolution." Why write both a short and long synopsis? Because different editors and agents have different requirements. Be prepared and have both ready to send in.

Do's and Don'ts

- DO write in present tense.
- DO write in third person omniscient point of view.
- DO include all key scenes.
- DO ask and answer the important W questions (who, what, where, when, why).
- DO tell how the story will develop.
- DO describe the resolution of the story.
- DO keep the characters mentioned to the bare minimum—the hero, the heroine. Add a villain, if you have one, only if s/he is an important aspect of your story.
- Be sparing in mentioning secondary characters (even in a long synopsis). Like the villain, mention a secondary character only if s/he is an integral part of your plot.
- DO introduce the hero and heroine before any other characters.

- DO show the quality of your writing. Take as much care with writing the synopsis as you do the novel.
- DO infuse the synopsis with your style.
- DO follow industry standard in formatting the synopsis. Use quality white bond paper. Have 1" margins all around. Double-space a long synopsis. Single-space a short synopsis (maximum two pages). Use a standard 12-point font such as Courier New.

- DON'T add dialogue.
- DON'T write in your character's point of view.
- DON'T write a chapter-by-chapter recap.
- DON'T turn in an outline.
- DON'T include anything not relevant to the main storyline and the main characters.
- DON'T leave the editor/agent guessing about the resolution of the story. Reveal the cliffhanger.

Resources

- Writing the Fiction Synopsis: A Step-by-Step Approach* by Pam McCutcheon
- Goal, Motivation, and Conflict* by Debra Dixon
- RWA's Rose City Romance Writers Chapter (<http://www.rosecityromancewriters.com/>)—check out their online "Conquering the Dreaded Synopsis" workshop taught by Lisa Gardner
- "Synopsis Simplified" by Christine Eaton Jones at <http://www.desertroserswa.org/DRose60WG/jones.html>
- At SFA-RWA (www.sfarwa.com) find synopsis articles in the Article section
- Beth Anderson's Synopsis Workshop (<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Estates/9534/barebones.html>)
- Charlotte Dillon's Romance Author Resource Website (<http://www.geocities.com/charlottedillon2000/synopsis.html>) has links to many more synopsis articles
- For more information about the screenwriter's plotting paradigm, look for the *Screenwriter's Workbook* by Syd Field (<http://www.sydfield.com>).

Madelyn Bello, cross-genre romantic suspense author, has completed two paranormal-fantasy manuscripts and is working on a Regency.

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