

Northeast Ohio RWA ®

# Communique

## President's Message:

Hi everyone,

This is a busy month for news from both the national and local levels, so here goes:

First, and in my mind, most important is the Board has voted in a new RITA/GH category for Best Novel With Strong Romantic Elements. For those of us who write women's fiction, this is wonderful news.

Speaking of the GH, the Board has also approved members to provide their full GH manuscript on CD disk or by the standard hardcopy. Also approved is the broadening of the time frame for Regency novels to include the range 1795-1840.

And for our Inspirational writers, the Board will be consulting the membership regarding possible language changes in the Inspirational category definitions.

One last thing from National: the Top Ten Favorite Books of the Year will be discontinued after the 2003 competition.

Locally, we're busier than ever. Many thanks to Jean Willett and her family for opening their home to us for our picnic. Everyone had wonderful ideas for everything from growing our membership, to a chapter retreat at Lake Chautauqua, to future workshops/speakers. There were so many ideas, we'll need to hold a board meeting in the near future to work it all out. So, look for more information in the near future...

I can't resist this one last reminder: November is election month for our chapter...think about running for office....

Take care, and I'll see everyone in a few weeks!  
Nancy Plisko

Michelle Levigne, editor  
16210 Academy Drive  
Strongsville, Ohio 44149

**Chapter #16**  
**Volume 17**  
**Number 9**  
**September 2003**



## Meetings:

**Saturday, September 6**  
**10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**  
**Brecksville Library**

**Speaker: Dr. Joseph Felo**  
**Forensic Pathologist**

**Refreshments: Jane Sabo & Patti Fleishman**

## Upcoming Meetings

**October (tentative):**  
**Search and Rescue Dog and Handler**  
**Discussion of 2004 Agenda**

**Refreshments: Please Volunteer!!!**

**November:**  
**Buckeye Book Fair**  
**Louann Williams in charge of arrangements.**

**December:**  
**Holiday Luncheon at Punderson Lodge**



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## Meeting Minutes:

The Northeast Ohio chapter of RWA held a picnic on Saturday, August 2, 2003 in place of an organized meeting.

NEORWA chapter member Jean Willett was kind enough to hold the picnic at her beautiful home in Cortland, Ohio. Members who attended were treated to good food and more importantly great company. Talk ranged from what brand of hot dogs were being served to enthusiastic support for a fall writing retreat at Punderson. If you missed this year's picnic, you missed a wonderful get-together.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cheryl Fedorcio  
NEORWA Secretary

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### **NEORWA Membership -- Annual dues: \$20.00**

*Any member in good standing with National RWA can join Northeast Ohio RWA*

### Communique

A publication of the Northeast Ohio Romance Writers of America.

**Deadline:** Please turn in all articles, member news, news releases or any other pertinent information no later than the 14th of each month to: Michelle Levigne

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## RWA® Websites

*NEORWA Website:*

**<http://members.aol.com/hfur/NEORWA.html>**

*National RWA website:*

**<http://www.rwanational.com/>**

For members only:  
Find it in the table of contents.  
Fill in your name and RWA membership number.  
Choose a password.

## Dead Bodies, etc....

by Holly Jacobs

I was talking to a writing friend last week and she confessed she was having a problem with her work-in-progress. It was stalling. Not going anywhere.

"Drop a dead body in the story," I said.

Okay, so I just sold my Weekend at Bernie's meets Arsenic and Old Lace book and sort of have dead bodies on the brain (and on my heroine's front porch), but I didn't mean for my friend to actually drop a dead body. What I was saying was, that a good way to unstick a story is to do something unexpected. Sometimes a book might not be moving forward, might be stuck and slogging because there's nothing exciting going on, everything's predictable. By "dropping a dead body," you can force the characters to react. Find something that will shock them, will surprise them, something that will draw your reader back in and keep them turning the pages.

Okay, so you don't have any dead bodies that will work in your story and your characters are still stuck, or maybe you dropped the body and they're still slogging through the muck and mire? Another suggestion...think left. Rather than surprising your characters with something unexpected—your dead body—surprise them and your readers by taking the characters off the beaten path. Let them move in an entirely unexpected direction. The cool thing about moving off the path is you tend take your characters through some rocky terrain. Watching them deal with those rocks is half the fun of reading a story. Your left hand turn doesn't have to be way off the beaten path. In *How To Hunt a Husband*, I needed my heroine to go to dinner at the hero's. Problem was, she'd already done that, and I couldn't make it fun a second time around. So I took them out on the town, a slight lefthand turn. Took my heroine dressed like a stripper to...Perkins. Suddenly the fun was back. So think left...sometimes you don't have to go very far to find the fun.

Okay, still stuck? One more de-stalling idea...Murphy's Law. I love Murphy's Law, whatever can go wrong will—actually I meant to say I love it for my characters, not for me. So toss some Murphy at them. Up the ante. Everyone has had a day from hell...your readers can identify. That's what we want to give our readers, a chance to identify with our character.

Continued on pg. 8

## Putting Your Best Foot Forward

### How to Appear Professional with Macaroni and Cheese in Your Hair.

By Kathleen Fuller

Ah, the beauty of working from home. No one sees your stringy hair, smells your morning breath, or spies the hole in the seat of your pajamas. Unless you are also a stay-at-home parent. Nothing, and I mean *nothing*, gets past the kids. Still, there's something to be said for not having to take a shower until three P.M. and scraping the last glob of SpongeBob SquarePants macaroni and cheese from the bottom of the pot, slapping it on a plate, and calling it lunch. Really, don't writers deal with enough pressures without having to worry about proper hygiene or nutritious meals?

However, even though we may not look professional to the outside world, deep inside writers are dressed in business suits and sporting hundred dollar haircuts. Or at least we should be. A professional demeanor is a must when corresponding with editors in print and/or on the phone. If you come across as a slob on the page, then you'll never get past the slush pile.

So how do we go about being professional? We can start off by having the correct equipment. That doesn't mean purchasing a fancy desk or a Cross ink pen or even the latest computer with all the bells and whistles. But a defined writing area is important. I'm not necessarily talking about a home office, although that would be nice. I am referring to a place where you can keep your writing supplies together—reference manuals, dictionaries, pencils, paper, and a computer and printer if you can afford one. Nothing will make you pull out your hair faster than having to search the kitchen for a pencil, the living room for a pad of paper, and the disaster your

son or daughter calls a bedroom for the dictionary. Save time and aggravation by keeping all of these writing tools in one place.

Before starting to write your article or story, research is crucial. This includes not only investigating your topic, but deciding what publication or publications you'd like to submit to. Narrow your focus to a few magazines or book publishers, and read a sampling of what they've published. Get a copy of their guidelines and study them thoroughly. Make note of what their needs are and the word count they'll accept. Also, find out if they want a query first, or if you can send the entire article or manuscript. This also applies to internet magazines and electronic publishers. In dealing with any potential outlet for your work, knowledge of your target publication is a must.

Once you've written your story or article, what should you do next? Print it off and send it out immediately? Only if your goal is to appear unprofessional, which you should avoid at all costs. If possible, set the piece to the side for a couple of days, then go back and read it over. Check for grammar and spelling errors, sequence and flow of the story, and make sure the writing is good and concise. Do the same with your query or cover letter. Be as certain as possible that you know the current editor's name and how to spell it correctly.

The great thing about submitting on the net is that the words never hit the paper. Emailing queries and manuscripts is quick and painless, and saves a bundle in postage fees. But if you're submitting to a publication that wants a hard copy of your work, here's a few things to remember

while printing it out: 1) Make sure your printer has sufficient ink. Never send out blurry or too-light-to-read copies. 2) Use white bond paper, black ink, and an appropriate font such as Courier or New Times Roman. 3) Don't drink coffee or eat the aforementioned SpongeBob macaroni and cheese around your computer, or you might risk spilling food on your work and having to print it out again. Also, don't assume the editor has kids and will understand the chocolate pudding smudge on the right hand corner of your query letter. She won't.

Finally, others will take your career seriously if you do. Don't answer the phone during work hours. Let the machine pick it up. That way you avoid annoying telemarketers, inconsiderate friends who want to chat, or spouses who thought of three more things for you to add to your "to do" list. By letting family, friends and acquaintances know that you really do *work* when you work at home, not only will you get more accomplished, but they will realize that writing isn't just an adventure, it's also a job.

By following these simple guidelines, it's easy to appear professional to the world outside your household domain. So feel free to wear your grungiest pajamas and ratty bunny slippers instead of a suit and leather shoes. When your readers read your work, they won't know the difference.

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*Kathleen Fuller's novella, "Encore, Encore" in CHANCE ENCOUNTERS OF THE HEART (Tyndale) is available now. Her next novella, "Christmas Legacy" in CHRISTMAS HOMECOMING (Tyndale) will be released October, 2003.*

## Plotting Using Mythic Structure: Part 3

by Holly Dee Dashnaw

In his book, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers and Screenwriters*, Christopher Vogler says every story is built around three acts: the hero's decision to act (ACT I); the action itself (ACT II); and the consequences of the action (ACT III). In my previous article covering Act I, I discussed the mythic structure elements necessary in every story to get a Protagonist-Hero to make a decision to act. This article will discuss Act II, the action itself, or what Dwight Swain in his book, *Techniques of the Selling Writer*, refers to as the Middle.

In the years since I started writing fiction, I have heard from one writer after the other how difficult it is to write Act I, the Beginning, of a book. They're right. There are many details that must be incorporated into those first three to six chapters. And they must be blended smoothly and with style to catch and hold the reader's interest. But for most of us-if we've done our homework up front-writing that first act is like falling in love. There's a sense of euphoria. Anticipation and the novelty of a new story and characters zip us along. And then, just when we gotten our focal character to finally make a decision, we reach the Middle, Act II, and stop. Like a married couple past the honeymoon, we wake up and discover most of the magic is gone and all that's left is a long hard haul to success. In short, we have to work. And all too often what looked to be a promising story either never gets finished or sags miserably.

Why? Because although we know we should be resolving the conflict, increasing the tension toward a climax, and having our protagonists grow emotionally, most of us don't know how to do this while generating at the same time new sources of conflict. When you consider that the Middle of a story generally comprises half the story's length, that's scary.

So how do you write Act II with a strong sense of direction and purpose?

Swain says the Middle of a story should be comprised of character action. The writer should rely on Scene/Sequel units to develop peaks in the intensity of the action (scenes) followed by equally balanced valleys of introspection and reaction to the action (sequels). These units should maintain a sense of continuity from one to the next based upon characterization, plot, and conflict, and they should build to a climax. In addition, the writer should never rehash points of conflict, but rather resolve old minor conflicts as new troubles arise.

All well and good. Scene/sequel units if done properly do generate and resolve conflict as they build from one to the other. But that didn't clarify for me how I should build the tension, nor did it explain exactly what each scene should accomplish, what their purpose was. And, unfortunately, all the W-Diagram for Romantic Plot Development tells us is that somewhere (approximately one-half to three-quarters of the way through the story) the hero and heroine should join together in their struggles (ie. The Consummation).

Vogler on the other hand says Act II should comprise a series of tests for the Hero. Why? Tests make the hero's strengths and weaknesses apparent to the reader and to the other characters. This raises the tension for the reader. As the tests become increasingly more difficult and put greater demand on the character, the writer must delve more deeply into the Protagonist-Hero's nature, raising questions in the reader's mind as to whether the Protagonist-Hero first of all has what it takes to be a hero and secondly, whether he will succeed. As for the other characters, their reaction to what the hero does will raise other sources of conflict which in turn produce more tests for the hero. In essence, the story begins to generate itself.

Tests also provide for the Protagonist-Hero's internal growth. As he raises to the challenges, he must confront and learn about himself. And as we all know, learning is the first step to any mental, emotional, or spiritual growth.

For both the Protagonist-Hero and the reader, tests also identify allies and enemies. Here is where a writer brings the hero's sidekicks to the foreground and uses them for comic relief. Here also is where mentors teach. Group heroes are forged as conflicts generate rivalry and special skills or traits weed out the leaders. In romances, the hero and heroine, at first appearing to each other as Shapeshifters, eventually learn to respect and appreciate each other as mutual attraction and shared experiences bind them more

closely. Shadows (ie. villains) make their presence known. And the Hero gains experience for the worsening ordeals ahead.

Finally, the tests help the Protagonist-Hero to discover the rules of the new Special World he has entered.

ACT II: Tests, Allies, and Enemies. How does the writer approach these tests? Vogler says the writer must first of all establish the new Special World into which the Protagonist-Hero has crossed. This should include a physical description of the hero's new environment or status and it should contrast strongly with the hero's old Ordinary World described in ACT I. In science fantasy the hero may go from reality to a world of magic and the unexplained. A time-traveler may suddenly find himself confronted by customs and mores he doesn't understand. The protagonist's love interest may suddenly prove unstable, elusive, even two-faced (ie. a Shapeshifter). In any case, conflict arises naturally as the Protagonist-Hero struggles to quickly adapt to the complications, obstacles, hardships, and traps of this strange environment.

Secondly, the Hero should confront a Threshold Guardian. He has just made a major decision in his life at the end of ACT I. As such, he has taken a great step, crossed a major threshold on his journey, and his path should be challenged. No goal should be easy to reach. A hero, to prove his worthiness, should be forced to fight for what he wants. The Threshold Guardian may be the new environment itself, another character, the hero's own fears or hang-ups, something mechanical, even a force of nature. But whatever it is, it serves as a barricade or checkpoint that the

hero must trick, bypass, acknowledge, or confront and beat to continue on his journey. (Not every test confronted by the Hero requires a Threshold Guardian, only those involving major steps in the hero's journey.)

As the complications, hardships, obstacles and traps in Tests, Allies, and Enemies challenge the Protagonist-Hero's strengths, reveal his weaknesses, develop his skills and experience, and help him identify his friends and foes, they should get progressively worse (ie. they should increase in difficulty thus raising the tension). But at no time should they be life threatening to the Hero. Tests at this stage of ACT II are merely meant to discourage, delay, or defeat the Hero.

Two types of scenes commonly found in ACT II during the Test stage are the "Watering Hole" scene, a bar or public place where the hero is an outsider and quickly confronts the new rules learning who his allies and enemies are, and Authentication scenes, scenes that show the hero working in his chosen pursuit or occupation. (In Star Wars, Luke, after making the decision to become a Jedi and help Princess Leia, journeys to Mos Eisley space port with Obi Wan and immediately meets with a strange new world in the space port bar. Note that in his confrontation with the alien being, there is never a real question of whether Luke's life is in danger.)

Approach to the Inmost Cave. In a story, the Inmost Cave is where the object of the quest is hidden. In entering the cave, the hero must cross another threshold. But the cave is generally heavily protected by the main Shadow of the story. Thus, as the hero approaches this point, he must

confront another Threshold Guardian. In addition, the testing takes on a more lethal aspect. This change in the tenor of the tests is the second mythic structure element in Vogler's ACT II, called the Approach to the Inmost Cave.

There are two parts to the Approach. The first is testing of the hero, much like in the Tests, Allies, and Enemies stage. But the tests at this point in the story are more life threatening to the hero or his allies with each new test resulting in higher stakes. Here the hero learns to stay alert, he hones the skills learned earlier, and Group Heroes learn to work together as a team. By this time rivalries, revealed and tested in the Test stage, have been laid to rest and the leaders selected. In romances, the Group Hero comprised of the male and female protagonists have learned about each other. They should be working together, each contributing their unique strengths to help the other. Neither should appear to the other as a Shapeshifter. In addition, here is where the focal character, the Protagonist-Hero, should make great leaps of insight into his own character and takes his first steps toward character growth.

The second part of the Approach is a pause in the story where the hero rests and prepares for his assault or the Supreme Ordeal yet to be faced. Why the pause? Up until this time, ACT II has been comprised of one test after the other, each progressively worse. The tension has continuously escalated. Though these tests are built upon scene/ sequel units that should incorporate their own peaks and valleys of tension, the reader still needs a respite.

In addition, pausing before the big challenge signals to the

reader that this next test is a major crisis on the hero's journey. The pause permits the hero a time of introspection in which to face and overcome his own fears or neuroses. Here he will often question who and what his opponent is and why they oppose him. In introspection, his thoughts and questions may parallel many of the reader's. And so, here, the writer, through the hero's thoughts, may answer them.

In a romance, this is the place in the story where the focal character may concede that his love interest is not his enemy, often leading to a love scene as the couple unit and commit themselves to the relationship, hence, the reason why the major crisis in Act II of the W-diagram is referred to as the Consummation.

In any case, the pause part of the Approach should be paced slower than the scene before and after it. After all, it is a sequel. This sets up the reader for the sudden escalation of tension, action, and intensity of the Supreme Ordeal which follows immediately.

Supreme Ordeal. Sooner or later the preparations are complete, the waiting is over, and the hero must face the life-death issue. He must die to be reborn. He must face his greatest fear in the Inmost Cave, the main Shadow or his strongest minion whether it's a phobia, a rival or enemy, or a storm, to reap his reward. Things have to get worse before they get better. This is the Supreme Ordeal.

The Supreme Ordeal is the major crisis of ACT II. Vogler says it is like a nerve ganglion in the story. Many threads of the protagonist's life (ie. conflicts) lead into it; many threads of possibility and change lead out of it-as contrasted to the Climax which only has one apparent outcome. In

pacing, it may come anywhere between the middle to the end of ACT II (ie. from one-half to three-quarters of the way through the story). A centralized Supreme Ordeal has the advantage of symmetry and permits the writer to elaborate on the consequences that flow from the confrontation. A delayed ordeal permits a slower and greater buildup of tension in the story. In any case, in the Supreme Ordeal the Protagonist-Hero gets a "taste of death".

Why give the hero a taste of death? This is the hero's first big chance to initiate change in his character. The death may be physical or emotional, real or symbolic, but whatever the case, it motivates the hero to change. Also, when the reader perceives the Protagonist-Hero is about to confront the possibility of his own death, great tension is created. The reader may be aware that the hero isn't truly prepared for this ordeal, or he may question the outcome. Remember, if the writer has built up the story properly, the reader wants the hero to succeed. By making the hero die or appear to die, the writer plays emotional hardball by drastically lowering than raising the reader's emotions when he learns his hero has survived. Since this emotional roller coaster is why readers read, the greater the reader's emotional response to the story, the better.

There are several possible types of death in the Supreme Ordeal. One is where the hero appears to die. This might actually occur in stories with Tragic Heroes. But in most cases the reader is only led to believe the hero has died. The most effective way to do this is to have another character "witness" the hero's death. (In Star Wars C3PO and R2D2 believe Luke, et al, have been

crushed to death in the Deathstar's garbage compactor.)

Another possibility is the death of an ally. Often this is a Mentor in the story. Since mentors are usually father figures to the hero, this death can have devastating effects. But it also serves to give the hero a reason to continue his fight and to grow (eg. he might have to fill in for the skills and wisdom of his mentor.)

The death may be that of another caused by the hero. This is particularly tragic if the character that died was an innocent bystander or an ally of the hero. It may result in "emotional death" of the hero-another method of potential growth.

Finally, and most common, is the death or apparent death of a Shadow. Remember, the reason for the existence of a Shadow in a story is to polarize the hero and give him some resistance to push against. Thus, if the Shadow dies or appears to die, the conflict he represents may be resolved. And, if the Shadow is defeated but survives, the hero will confront him for a final battle in the Climax.

Supreme Ordeals do not have to be a physical or emotional confrontation with a Shadow. They may be a crisis of the heart where the Hero has an emotional brush with death, such as moment of great intimacy. The hero's old self is left behind for a new relationship, a sense of oneness shared with another. What dies may be the hero's defensiveness. (A common plot for Romances and another reason why the W-Diagram refers to the Supreme Ordeal as the Consummation.)

Or the hero may face a period of separation from a loved one, who takes with her or puts to the test something the hero has fought very hard to obtain. (Eg. In

Romancing the Stone, Joan, after finding the emerald, is separated from Jack by a river. She must not only find her own way out of the jungle, but she must trust Jack to meet her in town with the emerald currently in his questionable possession. Her love and trust are tested.)

In particularly emotional or psychological stories, the Supreme Ordeal may be a sort of “mystical marriage”. Often symbolized by an actual wedding ceremony, the mystical marriage is an ordeal where the hero must balance opposing inner forces. (Eg. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde)

In some stories, the Supreme Ordeal is a junction where the hero offers betrayal, abandonment, or disappointment, some crisis in the arena of love. A shapeshifting lover may show another side—usually dark—leaving the hero dead to the idea of love.

Finally, the Supreme Ordeal may be a time when the Loner Hero accepts more responsibility by risking his life for the sake of a much larger collective life, or when a child emerges into an adult by standing up to the parent character in his life.

In any case, the Supreme Ordeal results in the death of the hero’s old self and a rebirth into a state of new consciousness (Apotheosis). In romances this is often symbolized by a period in which the hero feels rather above his troubles, invincible, due to love. In the W-diagram, the Supreme Ordeal is comparable to the Consummation.

The Reward (Seizing the Sword). After experiencing death in the Supreme Ordeal, the hero celebrates his rebirth, life, new awareness, etc. by resting, recuperating, and refueling prior to

turning back to the quest. This is a type of reward generally demonstrated by two scenes: the campfire scene and the love scene.

In the campfire scene, the heroes gather to celebrate their survival and review recent events. They may even joke, boast, or reminiscence. A Loner Hero may recall the people or events that influenced him or speak about the unwritten code by which he runs his life.

On the other hand, until he faces the crisis, the hero isn’t a hero but a trainee. He doesn’t deserve to be loved until he has shown his willingness to sacrifice. Thus, some stories demonstrate his reward by having a love scene at this point.

But why have a Reward?

After the Ordeal, the reader needs a chance to catch his breath. And, as characters recap or relive the story, he gets a chance to get to know them better.

In any case, the hero takes the Stake, the thing that he’s come seeking, in the Reward. It may be love, plunder, self-respect, or even control of his destiny. But like the sword of ancient myths, it is a symbol of his will, forged in fire, quenched in blood, broken and remade, hammered and folded, hardened, sharpened, and focused to a point.

The Reward should predominantly be a scene. It should involve active movement on the part of the hero to take his reward (ie. sometimes he must steal the Elixir—here the magic substance for which the hero has paid).

In any event, the hero should emerge from the Supreme Ordeal recognized as special or different, an initiate. Many writers symbolize this in the Reward by actually putting the hero through a special ceremony or giving him a

promotion, knighthood, or medals. In other cases the hero may receive special powers or abilities. He may gain new insight or understanding of others, clairvoyance, or suffer a strong bout of self-realization where his illusions are washed away and he sees his place in the scheme of things or realizes how foolish or stubborn he’s been. He may go through an epiphany.

Sometimes the hero’s reward is a distorted view. (This is particularly common in stories with Tragic Heroes.) He may get a swelled head about his greatness, become cocky or arrogant, or he may deny the significance of the ordeal, refuting anything has changed. He may even grow angry.

The Reward should be a point of low tension in the story. It is comparable to the last part of the Consummation in the W-diagram for Romantic Plot Development and is the last breath before the greatest tension in the story.

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*A transplanted-Yankee, and proud of it, Holly Dee Dashnaw lives in Charleston, SC with one very patient husband, four kids, three finger-eating turtles, one gerbil-escapee, and one very loud parakeet. Published in non-fiction, she started writing romance when she got fed up with the ending of a book she was reading. Currently President of Lowcountry RWA, Holly has consistently served on the board and/or as a committee chair since helping to found that organization in 1993. This article appeared in the June issue of The Jasmine, the Lowcountry RWA Chapter newsletter. Feel free to use with proper credit. Used with permission.*



DEAD BODIES, cont'd from pg. 2

So, give them a Murphy day, of course then you have to get them out of it. In Hung Up on You my story begins with the heroine in a perfect relationship, about to begin a perfect job. Of course, she doesn't understand why she feels less than perfectly happy. Then she loses the job, the fiancé, her grandmother runs away from the home and moves in, then...well you get the picture. The fun of the book is digging her out of her calamities and teaching her that sometimes perfect isn't all it's cracked to be.

So next time you're stuck and slogging through the mire, remember...Drop a Dead Body, Think Left, or invite Murphy in for a visit. Mainly, remember to have fun! Sometimes we get so caught up in what we should do we forget to do what we can do...enjoy the process. There's something magical about a job where dead bodies come in handy!

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Holly Jacobs, *GOLDEN QUILL & Double BOOKSELLER'S BEST Finalist*

<http://www.HollysBooks.com>

8/03—*DAD TODAY, GROOM TOMORROW, Sil. Rom., A Perry Square Romance*

9/03—*HOW TO HUNT A*

*HUSBAND, Harlequin Duets*

2/04—*HUNG UP ON YOU, Harlequin Flipside*

2/04—*FAIRLY HUMAN, Imajinn Books*

8/04—*BE MY BABY, Sil. Rom., A Perry Square Romance*

10/04—*LOSING IT, Harlequin Flipside*

## Central Ohio Fiction Writers' 13th Annual Readers and Writers Holiday

October 10-12  
Wyndham hotel Dublin, Ohio

Friday night workshop- Crime panel Q&A

Saturday -Keynote speaker Susan Elizabeth Phillips

Editors and Agents taking appointments- Monique Patterson, St. Martin's  
Elaine English, Graybill & English

Booksigning Saturday and Sunday

Conference fee- \$75

For more info, [www.cofw.org](http://www.cofw.org)

Our own Erin McCarthy will be signing her new release, *Bad Boys Online*.

## Conference News

### From Debby Conrad:

Harlequin is launching a new line called HQN Books. HQN will cover a broad range of mainstream romances—both contemporary and historical. Word count is approximately 85,000-90,000 words. Tracy Farrell will be acquiring.

Harlequin is also launching a new line in 2004 called Man Talk, which will feature male POV stories. Melissa Jeglinski will be acquiring.

Harlequin is looking for African American characters for the Red Dress Ink line, which is mainly chick lit. They also buy hen lit, which features heroines 35 years and older. For guidelines, visit their website @ Reddressink.com

### From Lindsey Brookes:

Conference was a blast as usual. And *Hero of My Heart* took 2nd in the Golden Pen awards. One of my highlights was when Antonio Banderas came out for a scene with his zipper accidentally down. <g> Well, I guess that doesn't count as a conference highlight unless you call it research. :)

## MEMBER NEWS

June Lund Shiplett will be teaching her "So You Want to Write a Novel" class from Sept. 23 to Oct. 23, Tuesday and Thursday evenings, 7:15-9:15.

Anyone interested call Community Education at Lakeland Community College.

She will also be doing a workshop on using the 5 senses in fiction writing, at the Western Reserve Writer's Conference at Lakeland on Sept. 20.

Anyone interested, call Community Education Lakeland Community College.

From Debby Conrad - My manuscript *PRYING EYES* is a finalist in the Stepping Stone contest and is on its way to Gail Fortune at Berkley/Jove for a final read.

## FALL RETREAT

Have you thought about attending the Fall Retreat?  
November 7, 8 & 9 ♥♥♥ Punderson State Park

For information, check out the web page: <http://members.aol.com/MLevigne/retreat.html>