

DARA NEWS

Tropes Are Our Friends (said in a creepy Mr. Rogers Imitation)

December Speaker: Cindy Dees

Widely misunderstood and blamed for all manner of bad writing, tropes are, in fact, the foundation of all story structure and one of your most powerful tools for creating a layered, complex, compelling story that your readers will love. The top selling novels in the biz today layer multiple tropes, sometimes dozens of them, into a single story. Join Cindy for a down and dirty master class on how to do this in your own work in progress. This is a hands-on workshop, so bring your thinking cap, a pen, and a work in progress or story idea you'd like to develop.

Bio:

New York Times and USA Today bestselling author of 120+ books, Cindy writes in a variety of genres, including thrillers, military adventure, romantic suspense, fantasy, and alternate history. She's also the creator and executive producer of an upcoming Netflix television series based on her Helen Warwick thriller novel series about a woman assassin of a certain age. Cindy has recently launched a series of bestselling non-fiction books about story structure called the Tropoholic's Guides. So far, she has released four of seven volumes of romance tropes and the first of eight volumes on thriller tropes. She's currently gathering tropes for books in mystery, sci-fi, fantasy, westerns, and melodrama genres. A former U.S. Air Force pilot and part-time spy, she draws upon real-life experience to fuel her stories of life (and sometimes love) on the edge of danger



You can find out more about her at <https://cindydees.com/>

DECEMBER MEETING



The December meeting will take place on December 7, 2024 at Dallas College Garland Center. The address is 675 W. Walnut Street, Garland, TX 75040. Breakfast will be served at 9:00am.



No charge for members. Guest will pay \$20.00 cash at the door.

Zoom Meeting For December 7th. Social Time: 9am. Business Meeting: 9:30 am. Speaker: 10am.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83434280984?pwd=Y2NEZWF1NlhMOFYyaE1JWVG84ckp3UT09>

Meeting ID: 834 3428 0984

Passcode: 548934

President's Letter

Thank You!

This is my final article as DARA's president. Wow! Where has the time gone?

While I have been in many leadership positions, this one has been one of the most fulfilling. It has been my pleasure to return us to face-to-face meetings, host a public library event to showcase our authors, and to add enhancements and additional content to our newsletter. I am very thrilled about the fact that we have also grown our membership over the past year.

With almost 40 members and two Romance Writers of America board members, DARA is one of the most active chapters of RWA. We had the most members attend the annual conference, and we all jumped in and played full-out. Our chapter has had exceptional speakers throughout the year (thanks, Anita), and it has been great to have several of our very own members share their knowledge and expertise at our monthly meetings. We are poised and positioned for greatness!

Not only is the chapter poised and positioned for greatness, so are you.

As Marianne Williamson reminds us, in her poem *Our Deepest Fear*, we all have greatness within us. The question is, will you let it out? Will you let your light shine? Will you share your gifts with the world? I hope so. Whether it's a story that needs to be written, a word that needs to be said, or a position that needs to be filled (hint, hint) – we are waiting on you!

I want to thank everyone that served with me, helped with events, offered a kind word, and those who joined in 2024. You make DARA great! It has been my absolute pleasure to serve as your president. I look forward to how our chapter will continue to thrive in 2025!

In the words of Bugs Bunny, at the end of Looney Tunes, "That's All Folks!"

—*Sharon Giddings Davis*

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

In the US, we celebrate Thanksgiving on the fourth Thursday of November, Christmas on December 25, and New Year's on January 1. Whether you celebrate these days or not, DARA would like to wish you a peaceful remainder of the year and a glorious start to 2025.



Welcome DARA 2025 Board



Donna McGoldrick has always enjoyed reading mysteries and romantic suspense books. She decided to write her own stories and finished a romantic suspense titled *Deadline*. After entering the manuscript in numerous writing contests sponsored by RWA chapters, it won first place in the Dual on the Delta contest and was third place in the Great Expectation contest. She is an active member of Dallas Area Romance Authors (DARA), Romance Writers of America (RWA), and Sister's in Crime (SinC). She writes mainly in the mystery and suspense genre with a little romance thrown in.

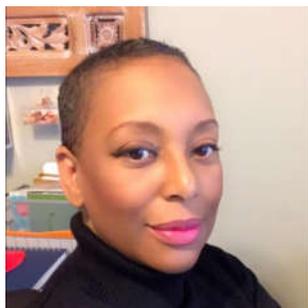
President



Michelle Miles believes in fairy tales, true love, and magic. She writes heart-stopping urban fantasy, young adult and adult fantasy, and paranormal romance with an action/adventure twist that will leave you breathless. She is the author of numerous series that includes everything from angels and demons to fairies, dragons, and elves.

She is a member of Romance Writers of America (RWA) and Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers Association (SFWA). A native Texan, in her spare time she loves reading, listening to music, watching movies, hiking, and drinking wine. She can be found online at Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and more!

President-Elect



Dren James is a long standing member of DARA who writes modern romance with a comedic twist and diverse characters. She loves reading, writing, paper crafting, watching sports and has previously served as treasurer and secretary.

Treasurer



Janet Leigh, a B.R.A.G. Medallion Honoree, was born in Garland, Texas, and has remained a loyal Texas native her entire life. She decided to take her love of storytelling and her archive of crazy family stories and write her own novel. She published her literary debut *The Shoes Come First* in 2015. Today, she is a full-time chiropractor and acupuncturist who splits her time between seeing patients and working on her next Jennifer Cloud novel.

Leigh lives in Dallas, Texas, with her husband and a dog with allergies. After working all day, and writing at every opportunity, she enjoys relaxing with a funny romance or mystery novel. Her favorite authors are Nora Roberts, Janet Evanovich, Diana Gabaldon, Sandra Brown, and for those times when she needs a good cry, Nicholas Sparks.

Secretary

DARA—Volunteers Still Needed

Below are volunteer positions we still need to fill. Please consider volunteering and help keep our community growing.

- Program Coordinator
- Membership Chair
- Communications (Newsletter / Website)



RWA Annual Conference

We shared several photos of DARA members at the RWA Conference, via Facebook, but below are several others. DARA was well represented and we had a lot of fun! The next conference will be in July 2025 in Niagara Falls (Canada side). It would be great to be the chapter with the most members, yet again!



Join Us For November Sprints

DARA members will be sprinting on Zoom during the month of November.

- Tuesday nights at 7:30pm to 8:30pm (Except for Tuesday the 12th. Due to a Chapter Leadership meeting with RWA, sprints will be at 8:15pm.)
- Saturday mornings at 9:00am to 10:00 am

The Zoom link will be sent to the Groups.IO list and DARA’s Facebook page.

Join the DARA Groups.IO

This list is for our members to discuss anything from craft to business. The meeting minutes and newsletter archives are uploaded the files section.

Subscribe: dara+subscribe@romancewriters.groups.io

New Releases / Roses

Michelle Miles will take over the Rose Presentation at the monthly meetings. Send your new release information to her at: mlmiles21@gmail.com.

Please include your name, title, date of publication (if known), publisher, available in which format, and whether or not it’s your first publication.

White Rose = First Novel Sale

Pink Rose = Subsequent Novel Sale

White Carnation (or Tulip) = Subsequent Novella Sale

Sunflower = Short Story

Gold Rose = Diamond Heart Finalist

Let us hear from you!



If you have ideas for DARA or would like to help us improve our organization, please share them with our board. Send your suggestions to info@dallasarearomanceauthors.com. We want to hear from you.

Who Wants to be a Program Coordinator?

By Anita Learned

WANT TO SELL MORE BOOKS? A Program Coordinator role might be the solution! That’s right, I’ll tell you how.

I know that you’re all eager to volunteer with DARA, so I’m going to tell you about the Program Coordinator position and how it can increase your sales as well as allowing you to interact with and learn from many interesting authors and people in the writing industry.

I’ve already secured five speaker spots. You just need to find six more. Schedule the ZOOM meetings for January through October. (December has its own ZOOM meeting) Get the name of the presenter’s workshops, along with a synopsis, their bio and a picture that you’ll send to the newsletter editor as well as advertise the workshop and last, but not least, their PayPal payment information. Post the advertisement for the workshop at least a week ahead of time on the RWA loops and DARA loops, inviting people to attend. Open the ZOOM and run it for the meetings. Give the Treasurer a voucher with the speaker’s payment information so they can pay the speaker right after the meeting. E-mail a link of the presentation to the members and share any slides. Work with the board to arrange the December Holiday breakfast.

Engaging with the speaker will help more people notice your name. And, equally important, each time your name is called to introduce a speaker, the folks in the audience **hear** your name. The whole key to publishing is getting your name in front of as many people as often as possible, so they remember you each time you publish a book.. It’s **FREE ADVERTISING** for you! Plus, sometimes, it’s all about who you know...or rather, who knows you!

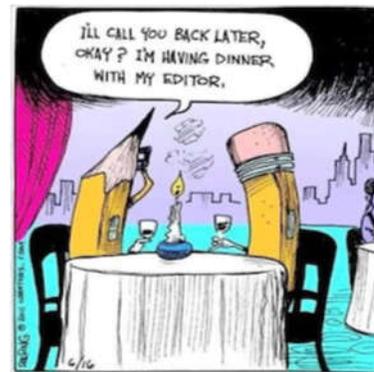
I’ve had a ball doing this, but since I’m volunteering as Secretary for RWA, it’s time to hand the baton over to you. Please don’t be shy, let any officer know you’re interested, or tell me and I’ll make sure they know.



FUNNIES

Find a man who strokes your hair and says how soft it is and doesn’t even care that it’s on your legs.

Writer's Block:
When your imaginary friends refuse to talk to you



Newsletter Tips



To keep your fans engaged, and purchasing your books, you may consider adding a newsletter to your marketing strategy. Newsletters are a great way to grow your readers, share information, and garner new ideas. Below are a few tips to help with developing, or revamping, a newsletter for your readers. Hint: you have to do more than tell them about the next book that's coming out.

1. Always collect your readers' email addresses. This can be done by asking them to subscribe to your newsletter at the end of each book, at book-signing events, or at speaking engagements.
2. Be consistent when your newsletter is distributed. Some authors distribute once a month (third Saturday of each month, etc.) and others distribute twice a month. Whatever frequency you use, be consistent so your readers know when they can expect to hear from you.
3. Give your newsletter a name. Better yet, let your readers suggest names and choose one that they suggest. Recognize the winner in the newsletter.
4. Include a link to deleted scenes. This gives readers information about your characters that they didn't previously know and an insight into your writing process.
5. Include games, tests, and activities. Keep it light, fun, relevant, and entertaining.
6. Get readers engaged with contests. Have a contest to let readers name a character, name a town in which your character will visit, name a fictional disease, etc.
7. Include information related to your genre. If you write YA, include things that are relevant to YA readers (technology, software, AI, etc.). If you write erotica, include information on different sex positions, kinky places to have sex, etc. You get the idea ☐.
8. Review a fellow author's book for your readers. If your readers like your books, introduce them to a similar author. Perhaps you could interview each other for your respective newsletters.
9. Speaking of interviews, interview one of your characters for your readers. You can ask the questions you think your readers want to know.
10. Include links to all your social media platforms. Let your readers know where to find you when you are at book signings, when you are, and when you are a guest panelist.
11. Ask your readers for honest feedback. What did they like about your last novel? What did they dislike? What was confusing? What could have been done better? Listen to your readers. If they give you feedback, use it.
12. Lastly, feature a reader in one of your stories. Have a contest. Ask your readers to provide email addresses of others that read your genre. Then feature the reader who provides the most email addresses in a future novel

Upcoming Meetings:

1/25/25 - Lara Zielinsky - Developing Skills as a Beat Reader as a Way to Better Your Own Writing

2/22/25 - Laura Bull - Branding

3/22/25 - TBD

4/26/25 - Wren Valentino - Marketing

DARA Newsletter

Our Mission: To inform the membership about chapter events, RWA news and classes, our member’s good news, and other things important to our members.

DARA welcomes letters, comments, and articles on writing and publishing. The DARA News is seeking articles that cover self and traditional publishing, author interviews, genre and subgenre writing techniques, grammar, reports from conferences, marketing / promotions, social media, and many other writing advise and tips. You don’t need to be a published author to submit an article. Send your submissions in MS Word format to Donna McGoldrick at dsmcgold@donnamcgold.com

The DARA News is published monthly from January through November. DARA does not publish a news-letter in December. **DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION is the 10th of each month.**

SUBMISSION POLICY

In the interest of good journalism the editor reserves the right to refuse or edit any material that could offend our readers and the right to edit to meet space requirements. Accuracy of the articles, announcements, and informative statements are the sole responsibility of the submitting author and not this publications or its supporting Executive Board. DARA does not endorse any person, firm, partnership, or corporation mentioned in this newsletter. Readers are urged to determine for themselves the reliability, integrity, and financial responsibility of those with whom they deal. DARA makes no warranties or representation, either expressed or implied.

To our sister Chapters: We invite you to use any part of our publication with proper credit to the author and chapter.

If you have a new release, send your information to Michelle Miles at mlmiles21@gmail.com.

Please include your name, title, date of publication, publisher, format, and whether or not it’s your first publication.



DARA’s Website:

dallasarearomanceauthors.com

Mailing Address:

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PO Box 833092
Richardson, TX. 75083-3092

DARA Board of Directors for 2024

- President—Sharon Davis
- President Elect—Donna McGoldrick
- Treasurer—(Acting Treasurer—Sharon Davis)
- Secretary—Janet Leigh

DARA Leaders

- Program Coordinator—Anita Learned
- Membership—Carolyn Williamson
- Member Awards (Roses) - Michelle Miles
- Communications (Newsletter / Website) - Donna McGoldrick
- Pan Liaison—Open
- Pro Liaison—Open