

DARA NEWS



Laura Bull

Building Your Personal Brand Into A Literary Empire

This presentation is designed to help participants understand and harness the power of personal branding to elevate their literary careers. Through concise and actionable insights, participants will learn the foundational elements of branding and how to differentiate it from marketing. The session will provide practical tools for identifying their brand purpose, defining shared values, and creating strong brand pillars.

The highlight of the workshop will be a quick, accessible lesson on constructing a **Brand Matrix**—a proprietary tool to align all aspects of their authorial identity with their readers' expectations. Attendees will leave inspired and equipped to build their personal brands into enduring literary empires.

Key Takeaways:

Branding vs. Marketing: Understand the core differences and how branding builds long-term trust.

Why Branding Matters: Learn why a strong brand can be the foundation of an author's career.

Branding Basics: Discover the importance of purpose, shared values, and brand pillars.

The Brand Matrix: Gain a practical framework to bring all branding elements together cohesively.

Q&A: 15-minute session to answer specific branding challenges and questions from the audience.

Laura's Bio:

Laura Bull is the founder and CEO of The Brand Management Company, a bestselling author, and a brand strategist who specializes in transforming people into competitive and sustainable business brands. Early on in her career, Laura spent ten years with Sony Music Entertainment, becoming one of the company's youngest executives at the age of twenty-eight. During her tenure, she spearheaded artist development and marketing for globally recognized brands including Carrie Underwood, Brad Paisley, and Johnny Cash among hundreds of other artists from Arista, RCA, Columbia, Epic, and Monument records. A veteran of the music industry, she has served for more than a decade on the National Advisory Board for Musician's On Call.

Now an Amazon instant bestselling author in multiple categories like Marketing, Direct Marketing and Marketing for Small Business, *From Individual to Empire: A Guide to Building an Authentic and Powerful Brand* offers insurmountable knowledge to teach others what it takes to become a powerful "influencer." Everyone in the marketing arena keeps discussing the power of influencers, but no one is discussing how an influencer becomes powerful. Now she redefines the term "influencer" by expanding its scope offline, highlights positive psychology principles in terms of branding, and reveals the proprietary Brand Matrix that gives entrepreneurs step by step directions to discover their own authentic and competitive brand.

A consultant and speaker, Bull spent six years as an adjunct professor teaching disciplines in marketing and music business at multiple colleges and universities including SMU's Temerlin Advertising Institute. She has a BBA from Belmont University's Mike Curb School of Music Business and a Master of Liberal Studies from Southern Methodist University.

She currently resides in Dallas with her husband and two daughters.

View her bestseller at [Amazon](#). Go to <https://www.thebrandmgmt.com/> for a free brand checklist.

President's Letter

If you have no critics, you'll likely have no success. ---Malcolm X

Happy Valentine's Day!

It's the month for flowers, chocolates, Hallmark movies, and romance books. With love in mind, February is a good time for a book launch. Something about Valentine's Day puts romance books in high-demand.

Publishing in other months can be just as successful as February. It takes marketing know-how. I've read several articles on marketing and one message that runs through them all is don't wait until the book is published to start marketing. Get busy building a platform now. Developing a readership before you publish the book helps you create your target audience.

I know social media can drain you mentally, and can be a time suck, but it's one way to grow your readership. Make an effort to get to know your readers and interact with them. The most important platform, a seriously must have, is a basic website. Post a blog or an article once a month to keep followers coming back. For website design ideas, scroll through other writer's websites. It's the same concept as studying a book for its plot.

This may all sound like good advice, but there's something more I've only heard about recently, and that's personal branding. I know nothing of personal branding or why it even matters. Which is why I'm excited about our February speaker, Laura Bull. The description of her presentation sounds like it will be full of wonderful and helpful information.

I hope you all join us on Saturday the 22nd and learn about branding. We all need help across the marketing landscape no matter if we're published or working through a first draft. It's not too early to start promoting your writing and yourself.

—Donna McGoldrick



Zoom Meeting For February 22nd. Social Time: 9am. Business Meeting: 9:30 am. Speaker: 10am.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89546354660?pwd=u21xAD6ii05leZd0bb6pCDwX8KyRiM.1>

Meeting ID: 895 4635 4660

Passcode: 897562

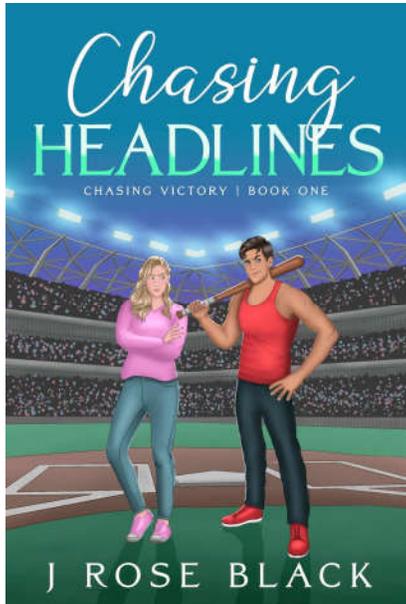
New Releases



Title: Born For This
Author: S.K. Snyder
Release Date: January 25, 2025
Available In: Kindle and Hard Cover
Length: 355 Pages
First/Subsequent Sale: Subsequent Sale

The Marquess of Worthington loathes his father, the 4th Duke of Derbyshire. When summoned by his father, he is astounded to learn at the age of nine and twenty, not only is it time to set up his nursery, but he has been betrothed since he was thirteen years old. The chasm deepens between the father and son as the resolute marquess is determined to evade the impending affiance.

Cassandra Worthington has lived her entire life graced by the breathtaking allure of the Mediterranean coast. The only child of an absent father, she has been privy to a life of indulgence, cosseting and the love of her adoring grandparents. After both their deaths and that of her father, she learns she is to be removed from the only life she has ever known and forced under the guardianship of an English Duke.



Title: Chasing Headlines
Author: J Rose Black
Release Date: January 2, 2025
Available In: Kindle
Length: 524 Pages
First/Subsequent Sale: Subsequent Sale

**They're chasing the same dream...
 Too bad they're not on the same team.**

When Breslin Cooper's major league dreams go up in flames, he's left with his backup plan: college baseball at Texas State Tech. But his altercation with a reporter saddles him with probation, therapy--and a toxic "Storm Cooper" reputation no baseball scout will touch.

Liv Milline's family name is practically synonymous with IML baseball. Yet despite her love for the game and her dreams of becoming a baseball scout--her father holds one, ironclad rule: No baseball for Olivia.

Her one loophole? Playing sports reporter for Texas State Tech.

Chasing similar dreams, Liv attempts to befriend Breslin. But the amazingly talented, pain in her aperture has only two words to say whenever she's around: "No comment."

When a lapse in judgment catches Breslin in a real-world rundown, jeopardizing his probation and scholarship, his only choice may be to rely on Liv--the aggravating, attractive, relentless reporter, chasing her latest headline.

Author Interview with Mary Karlik

Submitted by Donna McGoldrick



Mary Karlik is a prolific Young Adult writer who spends her time between Texas and Scotland. She's published her Hickville High Series as an indie author, and traditionally published her Young Adult Fantasy series, Fairy Trafficking.

Welcome Mary, and thank you for taking the time for this interview.

Tell us a little about yourself.

First, thank you for having me.

This is I'm sure more than you want to know but here goes.

I was born in Dumas, Texas but spent my teen years living in Taos, Ski Valley, NM. I graduated from Nursing school in 1980 and Texas A&M in 1988 (class of '82). I've done a lot of jobs in the healthcare field from Labor and Delivery Nurse to nursing instructor at Navarro College to VP of Quality at Holy Cross Hospital in Taos. I'm also a professional certified ski instructor. I have two grown married daughters each with one son. After being widowed for thirteen years I met the second love of my life while studying Gaelic in Skye Scotland. My husband, Keith, is from St. Andrews and is a fluent Gaelic speaker. We married in 2023 and now live part of the time in a *wee, little village* outside St. Andrews called Pitlessie and Waxahachie, Texas with travels around the world in between.

What is your favorite aspect of writing for young adults?

I started writing Young Adult when my kids entered their teens. We were privileged enough to have a house where the kids hung out. I love that age group.

They're trying on roles and ideas about their future, and it all comes with a lot of angst. It makes for instant conflict. They make mistakes and do bad things. But I also believe that pretty much everybody is redeemable, so the antagonist in one book tends to become the redeemable protagonist in the next.

I have now shifted from YA to Adult romance—none of which have come out yet. But new my agent has them out on submission. Fingers crossed.

What do you think are the key elements that keep your readers engaged?

That's a great question. I think it is paramount to have conflict. I've picked up several books lately that have lovely descriptions and sweet romance between the characters and zero conflict. Everybody is happy



Mary Karlik Continued

and I expect to hear the Leggo movie song playing in the background. It's hard to hurt our characters but they need conflict or there is no story.

I try to end every chapter with a hook. I'd like to say I end every paragraph on a hook, but I haven't managed it. I don't want to give the reader a chance to put the book down.

I also think dynamic dialogue is important. I've read some books lately that have conflict but it's mostly introspection. That slows the pace down.

What is your typical writing process? How do you stay focused? And do you use writing software tools?

When I find a nugget for a story, I start with asking three questions: What does my character want? Why does he/she want it? What can't they have it? Once I have those answered I look for what wound makes the MC believe he/she can't have it. I use Cathy Yardleys Rock Your Writing template to plot. She has free downloads. (www.rockyourwriting.com)

Once I know my turning points and characters I just write. It's probably a terrible way to write because I don't plot but it works for me.

I have ADD so focus is a constant issue. I have discovered I can download "Focus Music." I listen to it through my ear buds and it really helps. I can go into my writing world and block out the temptation to check email, scroll FB etc.

I don't use any software tools to write. I do use Plottr to keep up with where I am in the plot and who my characters are and what the setting is. I love this tool and don't know how I wrote without it. All I have to do is enter the info and it's there at my fingertips. I used to write everything in a notebook and would invariably need it when I was in one country, and it was in another. Plottr is especially good if you have a series. I'm writing the second in a series right now and I can click on the character tab and find the character I'm writing about and boom, I know he has blue eyes. It also has a ton of templates you can use to plot. I don't really plot but I download them onto my timeline to make sure my pacing is on point.

How do you keep details straight while writing a series?

One word. Plottr

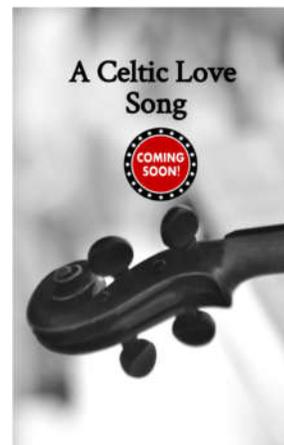
Can you talk about your current work-in-process?

I have rebranded and am writing about Americans who find their love in Scotland. FYI, I started this before I met Keith. We are such a cliché.

Here's what's on submission. A Celtic Love Song is set in the traditional Scottish music world which is intertwined with the Gaelic world. In this book an American fiddle player travels to Scotland to find the father she never knew and ends up meeting the lead singer and fiddle player of a Traditional Scottish band. The problem is, she has a never date a musician mantra, he vows to never put romance above music. But when they play together their hearts sing a different tune.

Here is a partial blurb for my holiday romcom, A Shortbread Christmas.

Heather MacPherson is meant to spend Christmas in the Caribbean not in the snow-bound Scottish Highlands.



Mary Karlik Continued

HEATHER MACPHERSON loves her job as a world record verifier—who wouldn't enjoy counting the record for the number of pogo jumps, timing the fastest beer chug, or measuring the longest beard? But verifying the world's largest shortbread biscuit a few days before Christmas in a Highland village is not in her sugar-plum dreams, especially when that village happens to be the one she fled ten Christmases ago. And worse, the owner of the factory is now BLAIR GORDON—the god-like object of her teenage crush. The man who, when they were teens, humiliated her in a packed pub causing her to flee not only her village but the UK.

I am currently writing the second book in each of these series. And BTW If you're interested in contemporary Scottish Romance written by a Scott here are my faves:

Catherine Walsh (She's Irish but still counts.)

Snowed Inn

One Night Only

The Rebound

The Matchmaker

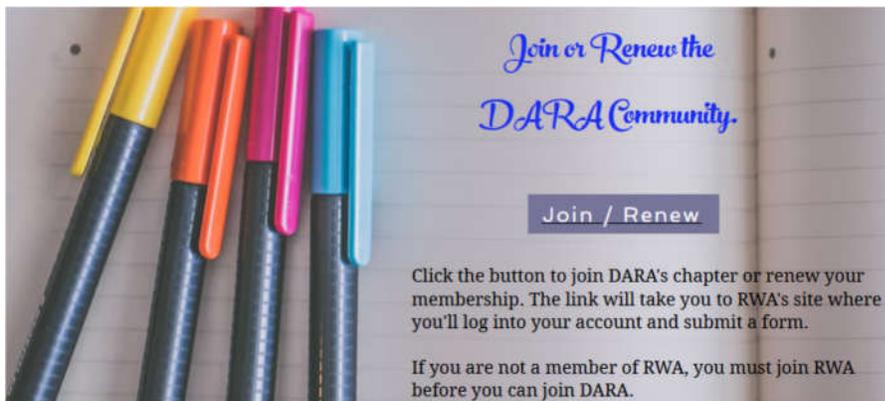
Zoe Allison (And she's from England but living in Scotland, so counts. Plus her books are hilarious.)

The Ex-Mas Holiday

The Wedding Engagement



Renew Your Chapter Dues on DARA's Website



Please go to DARA's website to renew your chapter dues for 2025. Click the **Join/Renew** button. This will take you to RWA's site first, then the chapter will be notified of your renewal. You'll receive an email with an invoice to pay chapter dues via PayPal. You can also write a check and send it to our post office box with your invoice. (See the last page for the mailing address.)

Website: <https://www.dallasarearomanceauthors.com/join>.

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

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SUBMISSION POLICY

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