

# DARA NEWS



## *Lara Zielinsky*

### *Developing Skills As A Beta Reader As A Way To Better Your Own Writing*

All writers want to improve our craft, but formal classes, seminars, and courseware will only get us so far. The biggest strides forward for developing quality writing can be made if you develop skills as an analytical reader. Reading published books is one way, but to really understand how even the smallest tweak can vastly improve how a story engages readers, beta reading is da bomb. In this presentation, long-time author and editor **Lara Zielinsky** will show you how to **Beta read your way to better writing**.

#### Lara’s Bio:

Lara Zielinsky has been writing stories for 20+ years. She started in fanfiction and moved to writing original fiction in 2005. All her shorts, novellas, and novels feature leading women who find romance and adventure, (self) acceptance, and loving, supportive partners. She’s written contemporary, historical, adventure, and fantasy LGBTQ stories.

She lives for word games and gloats just a bit when she finds seven-letter words. Her day just doesn’t start right without her NY Times and morning writing sprints. Her favorite way to close the day is watching *Jeopardy!* and then enjoying a good book in her home library. In between she can be found writing, editing other people’s books, exercising her dog, bicycling with her spouse, exploring Florida’s beach towns, and sleeping on the beach.

Visit Lara’s website for more information: <https://linktr.ee/aularazielinsky>



#### **Book 1: We 3**

When the new bartender, Jess, flirts with them and agrees to play in a threesome, Eric and Elena make plans for a single night of pleasure. All three are satisfied, so Jess is invited to come again. And again. However, they all know that's the deal in the lifestyle. Swingers move out of each other's lives all the time. Complication is the enemy. So what happens when they start to fall in love?

#### **Book 2: We Fit**

For Elena, Jess, and Eric, attempting to reconnect reveals how much they all still have to learn about each other and making relationships like theirs work.

## President's Letter

*The secret of getting ahead is getting started. – Mark Twain*

Happy New Year!

January is the month we see the same articles about setting goals, making resolutions, and planning writing careers. If we set goals in January 2024, we should reevaluate those goals. What projects were started or completed? Where are we in our writing career today compared to last year? We don't need a new set of goals for 2025, we only need to tweak the goals we made in 2024 and move forward.



January is also the month to usher in a new Board of Directors. Our past President, Sharon Giddings Davis, deserves a round of praise and thanks for all she's done for DARA during the past year, especially the last few months as acting Treasurer as well. Thanks to Janet Leigh for agreeing to stay on as Secretary. Welcome aboard Michelle Miles, President-Elect, and Dren James, Treasurer, as you settle into your roles.

Our goal as the Board is to keep DARA running smoothly. However, we are all volunteers struggling with our own writing deadlines, full-time jobs, family, and other daily activities. Jennifer August has volunteered to be our program coordinator. She has a list of wonderful speakers already lined up for 2025. However, we do need a few more volunteers to help with:

- Membership: collect dues, give the dues to the Treasurer, take care of any membership problems.
- Website: maintain pages.
- Newsletter: use any format you like.

I encourage you to consider volunteering, if not this year, keep next year in mind. DARA's future depends on its members, and members will benefit from working and connecting with a smart group of writers. I also encourage you to take advantage of DARA's email group in Groups.io. Introduce yourself. Start a conversation about your goals and what you write. Share your writing adventures. Ask questions. Check-out the recordings from past workshops under the Files section. If you're not on the group, go here and subscribe: [dara+subscribe@romancewriters.groups.io](mailto:dara+subscribe@romancewriters.groups.io).

January is the month for new beginnings, new changes. I look forward to 2025 and to working with a great bunch of writers as we move DARA forward.

—*Donna McGoldrick*

**Zoom Meeting For January 25th. Social Time: 9am. Business Meeting: 9:30 am. Speaker: 10am.**

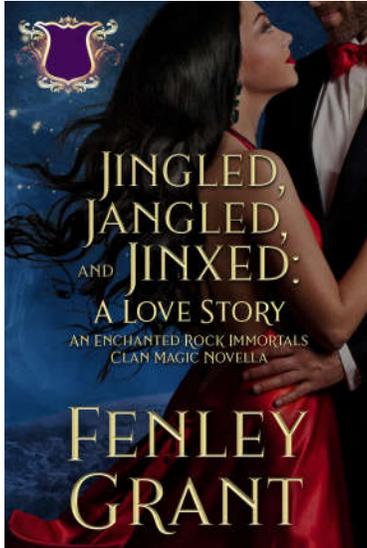
Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 895 4635 4660

Passcode: 897562

## *New Releases*



**Title:** Jingled, Jangled, and Jinxed  
**Author:** Fenley Grant  
**Release Date:** December 3, 2024  
**Available In:** Kindle  
**Genre:** Paranormal Romance  
**Length:** Novella  
**First/Subsequent Sale:** Subsequent Sale

Sorcerer Lauren Williams give the appearance of having her life together--but appearances can be deceiving. The Cape of Compulsion, a fae relic she turned over to its owner at her place of work, keeps showing up in her closet, ruining her reputation, and putting her job...and the financial means of saving her family...in jeopardy. The paranormal community's security team forces her on a quest, paired with a fae who's familiar with the disappeared relic and the missing fae female who owns the cape--her sexy ex, Dillon "Jinx" Archer.

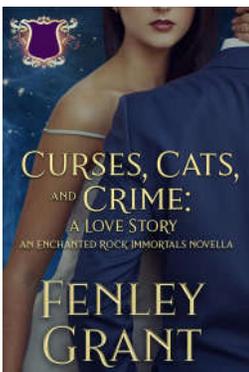
Jinx may be her "fated mate," but he's no angel--he should've told Lauren he was engaged to the very woman who's now missing. The sooner the cape and his fiancée are reunited with him and all three are returned to the fae realm, the faster she can get her organized life back on track and escape the only man she's ever loved.

With fae assassins tracking their every move, the forced proximity is resurrecting her attraction to the man who destroyed her trust and her heart. Lauren's caught between holly and jolly--save her family by reuniting Jinx with his fae fiancée and the accursed cape, or open the sweetest gift of all, the love of her life.

**Fenley Grant is the 2025 Diamond Heart Finalist in the Speculative Fiction Category with two books.**

### **Her Highland Choice**

Taryn Bain, a fertile woman from an infertile future, knows the mission for which she was born is critical to saving humanity—go to fifteenth century Scotland, find a genetically ‘perfect’ male, and return to the year 2352. Alone. And pregnant.



### **Curses, Cats, and Crime**

Her jinxed jewelry.  
 His cursed crush.  
 A murderous ghost's rise will bring together this friends-to-lovers couple.  
 The question is, will the poltergeist unite the pair in life or in death?

Visit Fenley's website at <https://www.fenleygrant.com/>

**Carolyn Williamson** signed a contract with The Wild Rose Press for her book titled Double Jeopardy. No release date or cover art yet.

# *Conference Announcements*

## RWA 2025 Annual Conference

Whether you're new to romance writing, an established author, or anywhere in between, there's something for everyone—dynamic workshops, exciting community activities, and much more to elevate your career and connect with fellow writers.

Go to <https://www.rwa.org/conference> for more details and registration.



## Southern Fried Crime Conference



*From Diane Kelly, I am an RWA member (as well as former RWA president and treasurer). I'm currently treasurer for the Southeast chapter of Mystery Writers of America (SEMWA).*

*I'm writing to let you know about a fun, affordable conference that will be jointly hosted by SEMWA and the Georgia Writers Museum this April at a lake lodge near Atlanta. Your members who write romantic suspense might be interested in attending. We'd appreciate you sharing the information below with your membership.*

Treat yourself to this special holiday present that supports your love of writing, and make a New Year's Resolution to hone your writing skills!

There is no “mystery” about the Southern Fried Crime Conference to be held April 4-5 on beautiful Lake Oconee near Eatonton, Georgia. Whether you're an experienced author or a newer aspiring writer, this intimate experience will provide a unique setting to learn, network, and work in a beautiful, peaceful setting. The conference faculty are renowned authors with extensive experience in the mystery/crime-writing genre. From practical workshops to an encouraging keynote to an engaging Crime & Wine cold case program, you'll have a great time and learn new ways to enhance your writing success as a mystery/crime author. Attendance is limited to 45 people, so register now for two days of instruction, inspiration, and fun

Go to <https://www.georgiawritersmuseum.org/southern-fried-crime-con/> for more details and registration.

## The 2025 New England Readers' Choice Awards Contest

Welcome to the 2025 New England Readers' Choice Awards contest for published authors, recognizing excellence in published romance fiction. Sponsored by New England Romance Writers, the NERCA contest is one of the few judged exclusively by fans: librarians, booksellers, and devoted romance readers.

This year, the grand prize winner of the New England Readers' Choice contest will receive two hours of Story & Character Development Coaching by [Jeannie Moon of Five Harbor Literary](#). The first, second, and third place winners in each category will receive a web badge, as well as a printed award certificate.

Winners will be announced on the NERW website and on NERW's social media accounts at the end of April 2025.

**Questions?** Contact the Contest Coordinator at [contest@nerw.org](mailto:contest@nerw.org)

**Ready to enter?** Click the link to complete the entry form. <https://forms.gle/xx3f413agFcMy8Qq8>

Deadline to enter is February 28, 2025.

Go to <https://www.nerw.org/contest-opening-2025/> for more information.



## *What Is Happening In DARA This Year?*

**Monday Night Sprints.** Janet will be heading up the Sprints via Zoom every Monday at 7:30 pm. Check your email for the Zoom link, or check DARA's Facebook page for details.

**Member Spotlight.** Our past President started the member spotlight as a way to get to know our members. I'd like to continue that this year.

**Face-To-Face Meetings.** We will meet face-to-face again this year in March, June, September, and December (holiday party). Details will be posted in the newsletter, Facebook, and Groups.io.

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://dallasarearomanceauthors.com)

**Mailing Address:**

Dallas Area Romance Authors  
PO Box 833092  
Richardson, TX. 75083-3092

**DARA Board of Directors for 2025**

- President—Donna McGoldrick
- President Elect—Michelle Miles
- Treasurer—Dren James
- Secretary—Janet Leigh

**DARA Leaders**

- Program Coordinator—Jennifer August
- Membership—TBA
- Member Awards (Roses) - Michelle Miles
- Communications (Newsletter / Website) - Donna McGoldrick
- Pan Liaison—Open
- Pro Liaison—Open