

DARA NEWS



Elizabeth Essex will present - Toolkit for Character: Using Character Themed Words To Power Up Your Manuscript

All authors want to create characters that ‘leap’ off the page and become vibrantly alive for their readers. But how? Using examples from best-selling and award-winning commercial fiction authors, Toolkit for Character will examine six different ways to bring characters out of the author’s head and vividly to life on the page, and will demonstrate the difference between “describing a character” and “revealing character.”

Bio: Elizabeth is a USA Today Bestselling author of Romance. Her critically-acclaimed and award-winning Reckless Brides and Highland Brides historical romance series have been nominated for numerous awards, including the Gayle Wilson Award of Excellence, the Romantic Times Reviewers' Choice Award, and RWA's prestigious RITA Award, and have made Top-Ten lists from Romantic Times,

The Romance Reviews and Affaire de Coeur Magazine. Her fifth book, A BREATH OF SCANDAL, was awarded Best Historical in the Reader's Crown 2013.

Writing as Elizabeth Hobbs, she writes historical mysteries full of wit, wickedness and adventure. MISERY HATES COMPANY is the first book in her Marigold Manners Mysteries series. The second, MURDER MADE HER WICKED will be released in 2025, with the third MERIDIAN OF MALICE to follow in 2026.

Learn more about Elizabeth at <https://www.elizabethessex.com/>

March 28, 2026 Meeting Information

Join us at the **Vickery Park Branch Library, in classroom 1, on March 28th** for our quarterly in-person meeting. The library is located at **8333 Park Ln, Dallas, TX 75231**. The meeting will also be broadcasted on Zoom for those members who can't be there in-person.

Social time is between 9-9:30am, followed by a business meeting at 9:30am. Our speaker begins their presentation at 10am.

Non-members are invited to attend our meetings for a \$5.00 attendance fee. The fee includes the speaker recording. You are required to register for the meeting. Go to [DARA's website](#) and click the button to register. You'll receive an email with the Zoom link. The link and the recording will be sent to you with the email you register with.

President's Letter - *The Season of Becoming*

There's something about March that feels like a quiet turning.

Not the loud declarations of January. Not the heart-forward warmth of February. March is subtler. The air shifts. The light lingers. The earth begins to soften beneath the surface.

And beneath the surface, so do we.

Spring doesn't arrive all at once (or if you're in Texas, it does!). It pushes up slowly. Tentatively. Green shoots breaking through soil that, not long ago, looked barren.

Writing seasons are like that too.

Some of you may be in a full bloom moment. Drafting quickly, revising confidently, submitting boldly. Others may still feel like you're underground. Gathering strength. Building roots. Wondering if anything is happening at all.

But growth is often invisible before it becomes undeniable.

We don't talk enough about that part.

In romance, we show the turning points—the confession, the first kiss, the moment they choose each other. But what makes those moments powerful is everything that came before. The hesitation, the missteps, the internal shifts no one else could see.

As writers, we experience those invisible shifts constantly.

The craft insight that finally clicks.

The rejection that teaches resilience.

The scene that doesn't work—until it does.

The voice that strengthens because you kept using it.

March is a beautiful time to ask yourself: What is quietly taking root?

Maybe it's discipline.

Maybe it's confidence.

Maybe it's a new understanding of your process.

Maybe it's simply the decision not to quit.

And that decision matters more than almost anything else.

This industry moves in waves. There are seasons of acceleration and seasons of waiting. Seasons of celebration and seasons of doubt. But just like the natural world, there is always something happening beneath the surface.

Sometimes the bravest thing you can do as a writer is trust your own timing.

You do not have to bloom on someone else's schedule.

There are so many forms of becoming. Writers trying a new genre. Authors hitting milestones. Others quietly finishing drafts they've been carrying for years.

All of it counts.

Spring reminds us that beginnings aren't always dramatic. Sometimes they are gentle. A single page



written. A workshop attended. A brave email sent. A new connection formed.

Momentum doesn't require speed. It requires movement.

So this month, I invite you to choose one small act of forward motion. Not ten. Not a complete reinvention. Just one.

Finish a chapter.

Submit a query.

Outline the next book.

Ask for feedback.

Offer encouragement.

Volunteer for a role.

Attend a meeting you might otherwise skip.

One small act.

Because growth compounds.

And just like the first crocus pushing through frost, once movement begins, it builds.

Romance writers are experts in transformation. We understand that change rarely comes from grand gestures alone. It comes from repeated choices. From showing up. From vulnerability. From hope.

Hope is the heartbeat of our genre.

And hope, like spring, always returns.

No matter how long winter felt.

As we move into this season of becoming, my hope for each of you is simple: that you recognize the growth already happening within you, even if it hasn't fully surfaced yet.

Trust it. Nurture it. Let it rise.

The light is lasting longer now.

So are you.

—*Michelle Miles*

Speakers Booked for 2026

April - Kris Bock - *Fast Starts—How to Hook Your Reader*. Understand the promises your first chapter makes so you promise what you deliver and deliver what you promise.

June - Alex Langley - *The Alex Langley Amazing, Spectacular, Uncanny Guide to Being a Professional Writer & Nerd*.

July - Lisa Rabey - *Introduction to Websites, Newsletters, and Blogs*. Building your online presence.

August - Aaron Ryan - *Properly writing and structuring Your Novel*. How to finalize your book and prepare for publishing

October - Karen Docter - *The "W" Plot...or The Other White Meat for Plotters*.

Member's Corner

A place to celebrate success, recognize our members, and welcome new members



Title: Love At First Con-Flict
Author: Janet Leigh
Genre: Rom-Com
Release Date: February 16, 2026
Available In: Kindle and Paperback
First/Subsequent Sale: Subsequent

Two secret identities. One epic Comic-Con. Zero chance their hearts leave unscathed.

Jade has one shot to save Shadycade—the quirky vintage arcade bar that’s become her entire life. When her reclusive romance-author twin begs her to attend San Diego Comic-Con in her place, Jade grabs the chance to study the latest gaming trends and prove the bar can be a full-on nerd paradise...not the next Starbucks.

There’s just one rule: no one can know her real name.

Luke would rather be grinding on Xbox than grinning behind a booth, but he’s stuck manning his comic shop’s table and secretly ghostwriting his boss’s brutal reviews. As the anonymous hatchet man who once tanked a certain romance author’s career, he’s used to ruining lives from behind a keyboard. And he’s sick of playing someone else’s game.

There’s just one rule: no one can know he’s the reviewer.

Book Signing Events

Michelle Miles - April 11th

Liberty States Fiction Writers Conference,
Hamilton, New Jersey

Sharla Wylde - April 10-11th

Tropicon ‘26 Hot Springs in Hot Springs, AR

Stephanie Pass:

March 22nd

Lakewood Brewery in Garland, TX

March 28th

Storytellers Bookshop’s The Spring
Chapter at the Dallas Farmer’s Market

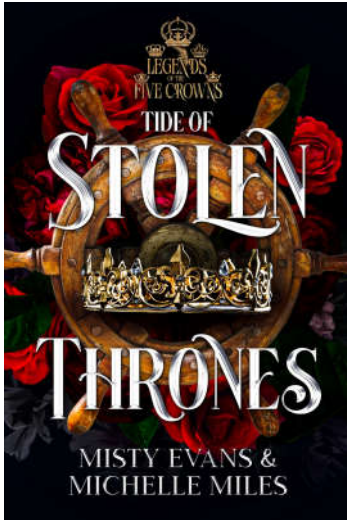
April 11th

Denton Yarnworks

*Please send your member announcements and book signing events to
Donna McGoldrick at dsmcgold@donnamcgold.com*

Member's Corner

A place to celebrate success, recognize our members, and welcome new members



Title: Tide of Stolen Thrones
Author: Michelle Miles
Genre: Fantasy Romance
Release Date: February 17, 2026
Available In: Kindle
First/Subsequent Sale: Subsequent

In the realm of the Five Crowns, stories are power. When Seabright's magic begins to unravel, and its royal bloodline vanishes from memory, everything starts to fall apart.

I am Calliope Lorewyn, guardian of Fablehollow and keeper of truths others would rather forget. When prophecy collapses, and the sea itself begins to turn, I'm sent to uncover what was taken... and who took it.

My search leads me to Henry Hawkins, a pirate with a charming smile and a past written in forbidden ink. Once an unwitting pawn of the Story Thief, he helped fracture the old fairytales and has been living with the cost ever since.

Henry doesn't deny what he's done. I don't know what it will cost to walk beside him anyway.

To restore a stolen throne, we must cross storm-tossed seas and the shattered heart of Seabright itself. But fixing a broken story may demand more than truth. It may require sacrifice—and a choice between the ending the world needs and the one my heart is beginning to write.



Hello authors,

I am putting together a book signing for Sunday June 14th at the Half-Price Books store in Dallas. This is their flagship store so it receives a lot of reader traffic. We can have 4-6 authors.

Here are the details. Please email me at Janetleighbbooks@gmail.com if you are interested.

1:00–2:00 PM: Meet-and-greet, book sales, and signing

2:00–3:00 PM: Panel discussion, audience Q&A, and optional readings

3:00–4:00 PM: Additional time for sales and signing

If you are not yet published, please add this to your calendar so you can stop by and support your fellow DARA authors.

Hugs,

Janet Leigh

Member's Corner

A place to celebrate success, recognize our members, and welcome new members



Title: Captivating the Highland Rogue

Author: Michelle Miles

Genre: Fantasy Historical Romance

Release Date: March 5, 2026

Available In: Kindle & Paperback

First/Subsequent Sale: Subsequent

In the battle for Time itself, love may be the most dangerous weapon of all.

When beach-loving Brianna Sinclair can't reach her sisters, she leaves her Caribbean life behind and heads to Scotland in search of answers. Her only clue comes from a strange Edinburgh shopkeeper who hands her a mysterious stone—and a warning to find her sisters.

One touch whisks her back to 14th-century Scotland, straight into the path of Jamie MacLeod, the clan's most charming rogue. Instantly captivated, Jamie knows she's meant to be his. But Brianna carries more than his heart—she holds the final piece of the keystone, an ancient relic that grants its wielder control over Time itself.

Reunited with her sisters and the other fragments, Brianna discovers the stone's immense power—and the ruthless clan determined to claim it. When the enemy abducts her, Jamie must decide to surrender the keystone and risk altering all of history, or fight to save the woman who has become his destiny.

Writing Sprints 2026 ZOOM Link

Janet Leigh host the Writing Sprints every Monday night at 7:30 CST. Look for the link in Circles and on DARA's Facebook. Join the sprinting action on Zoom.

If you can't click it, highlight the link and paste it in a browser.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86099936742?pwd=ApZiLtnB0J0PX30lcia4fHbHuXWeab.1>

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.

DARA Newsletter

Our Mission: DARA is focused on providing education and marketing opportunities to the members. With monthly programs on writing craft, publishing business, and writing tools, we strive to improve our writing skills. We support and encourage our members no matter their writing level.

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 newsletter 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, the title, the genre, release date, format, and whether or not it's your first publication.



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