
♥ CHECKING OUT ROMANCE ♥

The Romance Writers of America Library Affiliates Program Newsletter

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Booklists and Bibliographies Oh My!

by John Charles

Booklists and bibliographies can be a busy librarian's best friend. As readers' advisors, we want to spend as much time as possible with a reader trying to help them find just the right romance. There are times though when this just isn't possible. Sometimes you get busy at the desk with other patrons, sometimes readers themselves are in a hurry, and sometimes you have a reader who might not yet be comfortable discussing their reading interests with you.

This is where booklists are invaluable. If you have a variety of different booklists already printed up and ready to hand out, you can at least give your shy readers, or your readers anxious to get going, some ideas of romance authors and titles they might enjoy. Booklists also offer an excellent opportunity to market your romance collection to readers.

Most booklists fall into one of two categories: a mix of various subgenres or a match of one particular type of subgenre. Both kinds of booklists have their own value. The mixed booklist will appeal to a wider variety of readers because there is a little something for every reader from which to choose. The matched booklist will appeal to a smaller audience of readers, but this kind of booklist provides them with more reading choices. Try to plan on having both kinds of booklist available for readers in your library.

Once you have selected the titles for your booklist, you will now need to write annotations for each title. Writing interesting annotations for a booklist is an art, and few of us are gifted with this talent, but it does become easier with practice. As an annotator you are trying to distill the essence of a book into one short, snappy sentence. As you write your annotation for a book, ask yourself the following questions: Who is the protagonist? What is the setting and time period? What is the mood of the story? Is it dark, gritty, humorous, light, or cozy? Try to use sharp, memorable words and phrases in your annotation, and don't worry too much about achieving grammatical perfection. The annotation is merely designed to draw a reader's interest.

Here are a few more guidelines to help you in preparing terrific booklists:

- Select titles you have enough copies of in your library system to satisfy demand or that are still in print and can be ordered for your collection.
- Between 10 to 30 different titles are a good number for a booklist. This gives readers enough books to choose from without overwhelming them.
- Whenever possible booklists should be annotated. Keep your annotations to one sentence in length per book. For good examples of annotation writing, check the *NY Times* Bestseller list.
- Remember, booklists can also be a part of your library's web page.
- Booklists should be updated and revised on a regular basis to keep them fresh for readers.

With a little bit of time and effort, you too can have a bounty of booklists ready to hand out to grateful readers!

My Experience as Librarian of the Year

by Joanne, Hamilton-Selway, Collection Development Coordinator for the Scottsdale, AZ Public Library



When I got the phone call from RWA President Tara Taylor Quinn that I'd been named Librarian of the Year for 2005, I was so very thrilled and honored. Sharing my love of the romance genre with library staff and my patrons at Scottsdale Public Library has been a joy but then to get this award for doing so, it was overwhelming. The conference in Reno was amazing. I truly felt like Queen for a Day, traveling to the hotel in a stretch limo. A gift bag of soaps and lotions from RWA was presented to me when I checked in, a room service delivery of chocolates and champagne compliments of the hotel soon appeared, and when roses and orchids arrived from Debbie Macomber, I was over the moon! Each author I met thanked me for my work at my library for the romance genre. Authors I loved and admired thanked me! When I accepted the award at the luncheon, I gave a little speech in front of more people than I have ever done before, a sea of faces. I thanked RWA for this great honor and I thanked my fellow librarians who have been friends and mentors to me; Shelley Mosley, Kristin Ramsdell and the amazing John Charles (who got his own round of applause). I thank the RWA Board and the members and staff for making this a once in a lifetime experience.

“Readers for Life” Literacy Autographing

RWA's kicked off its 25th annual National Conference with the tradition massive literacy autographing -- bringing nearly 500 authors together to sign and sell their books, with all the money made from the sales going to fight adult illiteracy.

The thousands of new-release romance novels by today's leading authors were donated to the association by the major publishers of romance fiction. RWA and the member-authors who wrote the books sell them to fans who are eager to meet their favorite authors and get signed copies. The romance readers that attended this year's “Readers for Life” Literacy Autographing in Reno, NV raised more than \$50,000 in the three-hour time period. All the money raised at this event is donated to international literacy charity, ProLiteracy Worldwide. RWA joined the cause in 1990 and since then, they have donated a total of over \$450,000 to the fight. Also, any books left from the event are donated to the local library system where the event takes place which this year was Reno.

RWA Librarians' Day Event

by Arlene Griffin, Adult Reference Librarian, West Regional Branch, Jacksonville Public Library, FL

Being an avid romance reader, I was thrilled to see the announcement about this event featured in Library Journal. Since I had never heard of this organization, the journal gave it the stamp of approval I needed to attend. I had no idea what to expect other than the chance to hear some of my favorite authors speak and hopefully meet fellow librarians.

Needless to say, this was an adventure I will never forget. The speakers brought to life the pictures on the back covers of my books. It gave voice and feelings to the women I have been reading. It also added a depth to their work I had never noticed before. The editors panel provided not only a peek at the behind the scenes of writing a romance novel but also the different sub genres. The librarian of the year's comments had me networking and taking notes on librarians' various experiences with the romance genre. The goody bag and luncheon were added bonuses to an already fabulous day, while the grand finale autograph session was a dream come true.

As a result of attending this event, I will be joining RWA and have already made contact with the local chapter. I am also working to establish a permanent Florida romance writers display in our library to use as a future model for our system.

