



Hello from Barbara Kyle

In this June Newsletter:

- 1. Fiction in Hard Times**
- 2. Historical Novel Society Conference Highlights**
- 3. July "Fiction Writer's Boot Camp"**
- 4. "Writing Fiction That Sells"**
- 5. Sailing**

FICTION IN HARD TIMES

In a recent Globe & Mail column Rick Salutin commented on how sports teams play a special role in people's lives during hard economic times, how fans fasten on their teams. Says Salutin: "I don't think this is escapist; it's more like finding solace in the sight of grace under pressure."

I thought: that's exactly like great popular novels. Fiction, I believe, has always performed this role. The Great Depression produced John Steinbeck's indomitable novel *THE GRAPES OF WRATH* and Preston Sturges's dramatic-comedy film classic "Sullivan's Travels." The most compelling stories give us characters we can identify as they deal with problems under stress.

HNS CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Last week I spoke on a panel at the Historical Novel Society conference in Chicago. The topic was "Is Sex Necessary?" in a historical novel. My view? The short answer is: Yes. The long answer is: Yes, duh!

The panel discussion was wide-ranging, from techniques for writing sex scenes (I suggest using them to do "double duty" by layering in plot development) to

keeping sex scenes reader-appropriate (other panelists eschewed explicitness so as not to alarm underage readers and not offend older readers, but I respectfully disagreed; kids and seniors are tough, they can take it.) In my opinion, every scene belongs to the characters. Their needs create the scene.

As always when writers get together these days, there was much talk in the various panel discussions about the future of publishing in our brave new world of digital books via the Kindle, the Sony e-book Reader, etc. Agents and editors love the digital format – agents because they can instantaneously submit a manuscript to an editor; editors because it means no more daily toting home a half dozen unwieldy manuscripts. And, whereas publishers used to print ARCs (advance reading copies of books they send out for review and promotion before publication) they are now sending out ARCs in PDF.

Here are a few other notes from the conference:

- Diana Gabaldon gave a reading at which the moderator introducing her mentioned a mind-bending statistic. I knew that Gabaldon's OUTLANDER series was phenomenally successful but my jaw literally dropped when I heard the sales figure: 17 million copies sold.
- Trish Todd, VP and Editor-in-Chief of Touchstone Fireside, a division of Simon and Schuster, said in her luncheon address: "I'm looking for books with the biggest middle market. I'm looking for PBS books."
- Everyone is hyped about online marketing, and this may indeed be the future, but so far Internet sales in the US account for just 15% of book sales. Mass markets like Walmart, Target, Costco, and Price Club account for 53% of book sales, said Barbara Peters, editor at Poisoned Pen Press. (And chain bookstores? "The chains are dying" she said.)
- Panelist Karen Essex (STEALING ATHENA) recalled the life-changing moment that came in the midst of her busy career as a university professor: "I woke up one night just after my 30th birthday and thought 'Oh my God, I forgot to be a writer!'"
- Every author knows that publishers are cutting back their budgets. There was a consensus that the book tour is dead. Quipped Christopher Gortner (THE LAST QUEEN): "If publishers get any more desperate, authors will be doing Skype interviews naked."

JULY BOOT CAMP

Enjoy five stimulating days of writing and learning July 20 – 24 at my “Fiction Writer’s Boot Camp” at the Haliburton School of The Arts in the beautiful Haliburton highlands.

Whether you're a new writer or experienced, this course will sharpen your personal creative skills. Through writing exercises, lectures, workshopping your work with fellow students, and my constructive critiques of your writing, you'll come away equipped to create unique and compelling fiction. Plus, the final session focuses on “Getting Published” in which you’ll learn how to find an agent, submit a manuscript, and how the publishing business really works.

This is my fourth year teaching my “Fiction Writer’s Boot Camp” at HSTA and it always fills up quickly, so I recommend registering soon. For all the info see:

<http://www.barbarakyle.com/Workshops-Courses.page>

<http://www.haliburtonschoolofthearts.ca>

Tip: watch my online video workshops “Writing Fiction That Sells” (see below) for just \$10 and you’ll be well prepared to attend Boot Camp and get the most out of it. The online videos also make a superb refresher to re-inspire you in the days and months following Boot Camp.

“WRITING FICTION THAT SELLS”

My online video workshop series “Writing Fiction That Sells” has become popular with writers.

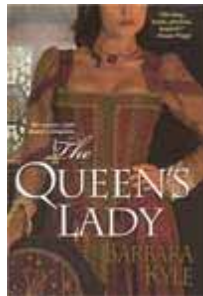
Give yourself this gift for just \$10. For info – and to watch a free excerpt – see <http://www.barbarakyle.com/>

A recent YouTube post about “Writing Fiction That Sells”: *“Enjoyed this video course immensely. Barbara “shows, not tells” even in her lectures with dozens of examples from modern movies, literature and song . . . I am watching the videos for a third time now, and still absorbing new knowledge. Recommended highly.”*

SAILING

My husband and I are sailors. We live aboard *Speedwell*, our 46' sailboat, from April to October. (Anyone who's read my novel *THE QUEEN'S LADY* will know how our boat got her name.) I love seeing inventive names on other sailboats, and since all writers love words I thought you'd enjoy these ones recently spotted: *Kinship*, *Luna Sea*, *Macintosh* (boat with shiny red hull), *Two If By Sea*, *ESCAPE Key*, *Stress Management*, *Sweet Chariot*, *Out of the Box*, *Empty Pockets*, *Second Wind*, and my favorite, *Summer's Lease* (from Shakespeare's sonnet XVIII "... summer's lease hath all too short a date.")

MY LATEST NOVELS



All the best with your writing!

Regards,
Barbara

www.BarbaraKyle.com