

Veritas Award Acceptance

On Friday, July 20, 2001, at the RWA National Conference in New Orleans Patricia McLinn was honored to receive RWA's Veritas Award for her article "Go Ahead, Make Jokes, We'll Be Here With Our Fans" in the Washington Post.

Thank you to President Harold Lowery, the board and the RWA staff for this honor.

Many thanks go to the authors quoted -- Kathleen Gilles Seidel, Carolyn Males, Anna Jacobs, Mary Kennedy, Jane Malcolm, Cheryl Zach, Laura Resnik and Laurie Grant - who provided the article with strong and diverse voices.

Thanks also to the generous authors who were not quoted in the final article, but who contributed material that helped shape it: Georgia Bockoven, Dawn Reno, Judy McAnerin, Rebecca York, Jan Hudson, Pamela Toth, Shirley Parenteau, Sally Hawkes and Joan Reeves.

In addition, thanks go to the editors of the Washington Post's Outlook section, who were open to the article: Steve Luxemburg, Frances Sellers and Nancy Szokan. Especially to Nancy, who brought curiosity and excitement to the project.

For those of you who didn't read the article published the weekend before the 2000 RWA conference in Washington, D.C., it is about dealing with those we encounter who don't accord romance and romance writers respect.

I want to share with you insights I gained from writing this article, from being a published romance author for 11 years and from being a journalist for ... oh, a few years longer than that.

Those insights boil down to:

--Hit 'em with facts. (RWA provides plenty of great ammunition in the statistics published in the RW Report - use it.)

--Hit 'em with humor. (If you get them laughing with you, half the battle is won.)

--Hit 'em with attitude. (Don't put up with any guff. If you're looking for examples of great responses you can't go wrong by checking out the retorts in the article.)

We have **nothing** to apologize for -- so don't.

Some of those who don't respect romance still won't get it even after you hit them with facts, humor and attitude.

If they're quiet, I figure they're entitled to their opinions -- misguided and uninformed as they might be.

But what if they're not quiet?

My first choice always is to squash them like a bug and move on.

Alas, that's not always. What if it's your boss? Or the book editor of your local paper? Or say the IRS agent doing your audit. Squashing is definitely not advised.

So, then what do you do?

You realize that holding the respect of such people belongs way down at the bottom of our wish list.

No. 1 on that list should be respecting ourselves -- individually and collectively. A very close No. 2 should be the respect of our readers.

After those two, little else matters.

Still, we're left with that question of what to do with the annoying people who don't get it and are rude enough to not keep quiet about not getting it.

Feel sorry for them

They live in a world where reality is that people suffer from abuse - physical abuse, emotional abuse, substance abuse. A world where people suffer from war and its aftermath. A world where people suffer terrible tragedies. And then those people are defeated and give up.

We live in a world where reality is that people suffer from abuse - physical abuse, emotional abuse, substance abuse. A world where people suffer from war and its aftermath. A world where people suffer terrible tragedies. And then those people struggle to survive, love, live good lives and possibly conquer their problems.

Which world deserves pity?

Which world do you want to live in?

Finally, if all else fails and these people still bother you ... turn them into characters and kill them off in a book in the most gruesome manner possible. It's the most satisfying response of all.