



Judith Laik  
romance author

February, 2009

Volume 4 Issue 1



**Happy  
New Year!**

I believe these words have special meaning this year. Most of us probably said goodbye to 2008 with a sense of relief and anticipation of looking forward. 2009 might pose challenges, but also brings hope that we can find real solutions to the problems that have plagued the US and the world for many years.

And we do have challenges to face. Any illusions that the serious issues in the world will turn around like magic will quickly dissolve when we confront the actual work.

But I like to remember these words, quoted in *Around the Circle Gently*, my book with Lynn Moen: “The word ‘crisis,’ when written in Chinese, is composed of two characters: one represents danger, the other, opportunity.” (Virginia Lawrence Larsen)

In our current crises, we can worry about job loss, foreclosure, homelessness, violence, disease, war, global warming, and all the other ills—or we can see them as an opportunity, if we’re only willing to roll up our sleeves and get to work. We may not solve all our problems, but we can make a glorious beginning!

So, here’s to glorious beginnings for all of you!

**Welcome 2009**



Intentions  
**Intentions**

For the past few years I have been a student of intention. A quick explanation for anyone newly back on the planet after an extended intergalactic journey, or who for other reasons has missed out on *The Secret*, books on intention and manifestation by Wayne Dyer, or the works of several self-improvement leaders: the principle behind intention is that what you focus your thoughts on is what you bring into your life.

One version of this concept that I particularly love is Sonia Choquette’s *Creating Your Heart’s Desire*, which is available in both a book and an audio program. I and several of my writer friends have used her technique with amazing results.

Since I got “The Call” in 2004, four of the five members of my romance critique group



## A Complaint Free World

have sold books. One other good friend has made multiple sales to a small publisher and won awards with her books. And another has taken a fledgling editorial business to a more solid footing.

That hasn't happened without a lot of work on their parts. That's one of the misconceptions by critics of the various works on intention—the belief that all you do is think “I intend” a particular result to happen, then just sit back and wait for it. That's not how the principle operates at all.

Books don't write themselves, no matter how much we writers wish they would. You can stare at a blank monitor screen or blank piece of paper all day, and words won't magically appear. (And yes, I've tried it!)

And nothing else that one wants to achieve happens without effort, either. But if you think about it, how hard are you likely to work at a goal if all the while you believe it's hopeless and you're wasting your time? The only goals you're likely to put real effort into are those you believe you can make happen.

I inadvertently learned the power of reverse intention. The Regency line at Kensington was cancelled in the summer of 2005, just before my second Regency was published. I was left without a publisher, so I changed focus and began to write a different kind of book. I knew many writers who'd had similar setbacks, often lasting years, and I didn't want that to happen to me.

During the years since then, I was writing, but nothing worked. I couldn't produce a book that I, my agent, and my critique partners felt was saleable. Then, a few months ago, I realized I had been focused on a negative intent, not a positive one. And sure enough, negative things were happening in my life.

Since then, I've turned my focus around to writing a great story. It isn't easy to overcome self-doubt. ❧❧❧

I've discovered a new weapon in the struggle, however. It's a purple bracelet and a book called *A Complaint Free World: How to Stop Complaining and Start Enjoying the Life You Always Wanted*, by Will Bowen. Simply speaking, you wear the purple bracelet (made of rubber) on either wrist. As long as you don't voice a complaint, criticism, or gossip, you continue to wear it on that wrist. When you do complain, you change it to the other wrist. The goal is to go for 21 days (the time it takes to establish a new habit or break an old one) without changing the bracelet to the other wrist.

I received my bracelet about six months ago. I haven't yet made it through 21 days without moving it to the other wrist—but it's staying on the same wrist longer. In the meantime, I'm finding I'm more aware of the words I say and even of the thoughts in my head. So I'm moving toward a more positive view.

(Bowen's church, Christ Church Unity, will send out bracelets free upon request at [www.AComplaintFreeWorld.org](http://www.AComplaintFreeWorld.org). They gratefully accept donations to help defray their costs of purchasing and mailing the purple bracelets. They also sell merchandise and copies of the book, which explains the program in more detail. The book is also available at Amazon and other online and actual book stores.) ❧❧❧





## My Writing Life

My short story, *Sentimental Journey*, is now available for download (cost \$1.50) at <http://www.coffeetimeromance.com/BookStore/index.php> and search for “Sentimental Journey.”



## The Highwayman

I was in high school when I read Alfred Noyes' long story-poem, *The Highwayman*. That began a long love affair with bad boys. Down the years, I've loved bad boys in lots of guises, James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause* and *East of Eden*, Marlon Brando in *The Wild One*, all the way to current day Johnny Depp's Captain Jack Sparrow in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies. But, to get back to the poem, there was even a movie based on it. Nobody seems to have heard of it, but I saw it in its original theatrical release. Like a lot of romantic

girls, I wanted to rewrite the ending so that Bess and her highwayman lived happily ever after.

Fast forward—I always knew I'd want to write a highwayman story someday. I've finally embarked on it. The plot doesn't resemble the Noyes poem at all—and of course, being a romance writer, I'll give my characters a happy ending.

***Cornelia and the Highwayman*** features a dashing ex-soldier bent on revenge, a spinster botanist desperate to save her home, and their quest for a queen's lost treasure—could it lead to something more priceless—love?

I'll keep you updated about the story!



# Celebrate Romance

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page 1: *Judy & Jenny*, taken by Moriah Rice

page 2: *Ricky & Brendan*, taken by Jacquie Rogers

page 3: *Sentimental Journey* cover designed by Jacquie Rogers

*Skyla*, taken by Moriah Rice

page 4: *Judy & Jacquie*, taken by Mercedes Rice  
*Laik Family*, taken by Rani Laik

At the end of February, I'm going to Portland, Oregon, for the Celebrate Romance conference. I've wanted to attend this event for years but never made it. It's a very reader-friendly conference and, from all I've heard, a lot of fun. This year, when it was practically in my own back yard, I just had to go.

Jacquie Rogers and I are driving down together on Friday, and anticipate having a great weekend, meeting other authors and potential new fans. I'll report on the weekend in a later edition, with pictures I hope! ☺☺☺

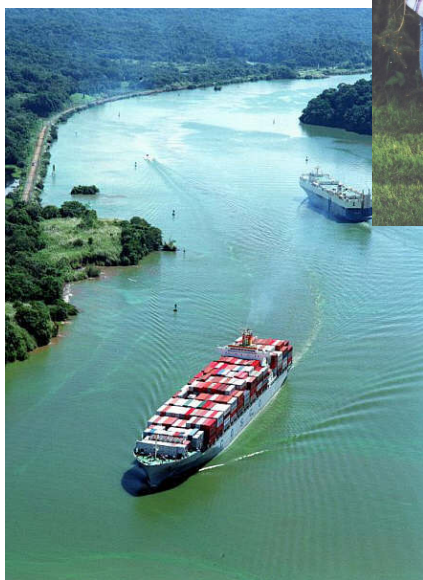


## The Laik Family



## Cruisin'!

In April, my husband Rein and I are going with some friends on a three week cruise from Ft. Lauderdale and through the Panama Canal, ending up back in Seattle. I don't know what to expect, except lots of adventure and romance. I can hardly wait!



Last spring our son Ron came up from California with his girlfriend Katy. We had a family gathering (minus a couple of grandchildren and a daughter-in-law).

Back row: grandson Brendan, Rein, son Jeff. Middle row: granddaughter Candis with son Ricky, Judy, Ron and Katy. Front row: daughter Jenny, granddaughter Emilee (plus Collies Madeline and Alanis).