

IN THE HOT SEAT:

Meet Chapter Mate Nicole Seitz



By Dorothy McFalls

According to Nicole Seitz, our newest published member of LRWA, God and hormones inspired her to pick up a pen and write. “My desire to write fiction was sparked each time I was expecting a child,” she said.

When she was pregnant with her daughter, Olivia, in 2002, she began writing a middle-grade novel about a young girl, Hannah Bliss, who lives in a lighthouse on a Florida island and who, quite by accident, discovers the secrets of the Bermuda Triangle. She finished that book, *Where the Sky and Sea Collide*, in 2005, and it remains unpublished.

While pregnant with her son, Coulter, in 2004, she was struck with the idea for *The Spirit of Sweetgrass*, an adult novel about a sweetgrass basket weaver, Essie Mae Laveau Jenkins, who weaves powerful “love baskets” to affect the lives of those who visit her roadside stand. Nicole recently sold that book in a two-book deal with Integrity Publishers!

She also has a completed chick lit-esque novel, *Spicy Tuna*--written when not under the influence of pregnancy. It is about a superstitious single woman’s hilarious journey to understanding why she continues to make the same mistakes with men.

Though she has dabbled in the genres, she is currently focusing on mainstream women’s fiction. Her stories follow the struggles and triumphs of every-day women. Her strong Christian faith often filters through to her pages, so although she doesn’t categorize her work as Christian fiction, it has been embraced by a Christian publisher.

Nicole comes to fiction writing with a background in journalism and illustration, with bachelor degrees in both. She has worked as a freelance writer for *The*

Island Packet and *The Bluffton Packet*. And she is also an exhibiting artist. Her Lowcountry and Gullah scenes are on display at the Artists’ Loft Gallery in Mount Pleasant.

One of her biggest writing challenges is finding the time to write. She runs her own business out of her home and cares for her two young children. When she’s not busy with other things--or too fried, and inspired--then she’ll go sit in front of her computer and write.

But she is dedicated to finding that time. “I have several stories in me right now that I feel compelled to tell,” Nicole said. Her stories are inspired by real-life experiences, either hers or someone else’s.

When she starts a new project, she has a loose plot in mind, but often doesn’t know what the characters will do until they actually do it. “My work is extremely character-based.”

This changed for a while after she sold her first book and knew there was another due the next year. The pressure of the deadline had her thinking about the market, the business aspects of publishing. She quickly realized that her work is intuitive and really shouldn’t be over thought--at least not until the first draft is finished!

When asked if she has any advice for aspiring writers in LRWA, she reminds us: “We all have stories that we are supposed to tell. It can be daunting, but the answers are there in the heart.”

THE SPIRIT OF SWEETGRASS will be published by Integrity Publishers in early 2007. Details can be found at www.nicoleseitz.com.