

A Letter from Susan

Welcome to the Book Club Kit for the Mainely Romance series. Thank you for choosing my books!

I'm an author from Maine, where Rebecca and Rob live in the first book and where Rebecca's sister Wynne joins them in the second book. I grew up about an hour north of Portland, where Rebecca and Faye are employed, in the small town of Belgrade, where the cottage is located. I was born in Waterville, where Rob's company is located.

Belgrade is a small but sprawling town in three clusters: North Belgrade, Belgrade Village, and Belgrade Lakes. The town itself touches the shores of seven lakes: Great Pond, Long Pond, Messalonskee Lake, North Pond, East Pond, Salmon Lake, and McGrath Pond. I grew up closest to Salmon and Messalonskee, and I chose the shore of Messalonskee at the site for Rob and Rebecca's cottage. Wynne also grew up in this area and enjoys visiting Rob and Rebecca's lakeside home.

She Gets July runs from May to September, while *Off the Record* takes place the following spring. I hope you enjoy a visit to my home town, and the enclosed resources and activities. I can't wait for you to get started!

Happy reading!

Susan Page Davis

Series Snapshot:



Book 1, *She Gets July*, stars Rebecca Harding, a nurse in Portland, Maine. In spring and summer, her favorite getaway is going to the cottage she owns jointly with her former fiancé, Rob Wallace. She hasn't seen Rob in three years.

When Rob's sister has problems in her romance and Rebecca runs into trouble at work, the two exes are in danger of seeing each other again at the lakeside cottage. And that's not the only danger!

A second book follows this one. *Off the Record* features Rebecca's sister, Wynne Harding, who is starting out as a reporter at a fictional newspaper in Waterville. *The Guardian* in the story is a lot like the paper where I used to be a correspondent, but it's different enough that I wanted to make it a fictional business.

Wynne deals with some challenging assignments for the paper. Through them, she meets some interesting people, including Andrew Cook, a farmer whose little girl has been injured in a fall. Andrew hates reporters, with cause. Wynne isn't comfortable around him, but she loves his grandparents and adores his four-year-old twins.

I also have plans for a third book starring Rob's sister Debbie.

Character Cheat Sheet (*She Gets July*):

Below are some of the most important characters in *She Gets July*. This information can help you keep track as you read and discuss the story.

Rebecca Harding:

A nurse in Portland, Maine, Rebecca shares a cottage with her ex-fiancé. The problem is, they're never there at the same time.

Rob Wallace:

An intelligent architect in Waterville, Maine, he's clueless as to why he let the love of his life get away.

Brittany Dexter:

She's never seen Rebecca, but she's jealous of her. Brittany wants to take first place in Rob's heart.

Debbie Wallace:

She has a different sort of problems in her love life. She wishes she'd gotten to know Mark Elliot better before she accepted his ring.

Faye Roman: She's Rebecca's friend, and she's game for new adventures, whether it's learning to paddle a canoe or doing a little sleuthing.

Eric Plourde: Rob's pal, he wishes Rob would wise up and take his advice.

Character Cheat Sheet (Off the Record):

Below are some of the most important characters in *Off the Record*. This information can help you keep track as you read and discuss the story.

Wynne Harding:

A rookie news reporter, Wynne isn't sure she chose the right career, especially when she offends people by simply doing her job.

Andrew Cook:

A farmer who hates farming, Andrew feels stuck. The widower has to do whatever he can to provide for his family. He just wishes the nosy reporter would leave his family alone.

Irene and Thomas Cook:

Andrew's grandparents, who own the farm. They love having Andrew and his kids live with them, but someday they'd like to retire. And they want to befriend Wynne, whether Andrew likes it or not.

Andy and Hallee Cook:

At age four, these twins are great at bringing laughter, love, and worry. Wynne adores them, but she doesn't want to make Andrew uncomfortable by getting too close to his family.

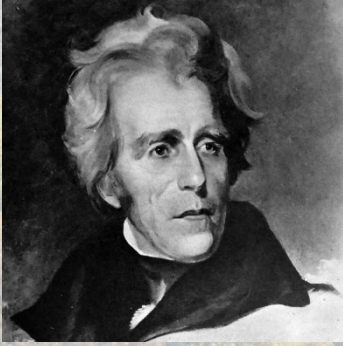
Helen Turner: mother of Andrew's dead wife, she really does love her grandchildren, but spending much time with them is just too painful.

Julie Saxton: The Guardian's jack of all trades and Wynne's friend at work. Searching spiritually, she'll give Wynne a helping hand when needed.

Chuck Barnes: Wynne's difficult boss, he has his own ideas about putting out the paper.

Rob and Rebecca Wallace: Wynne's sister and brother-in-law. They're always there to lean on, but Wynne wants to be independent.

Family Traditions:



Andrew Cook's family has a firm tradition of naming their sons for U.S. presidents. Andrew Jackson Cook, for instance, is the grandson of Thomas Jefferson Cook in the story.



Does your family have a strong clan tradition?

Here's one from my family:



My dad created the Cheap Skate Award from an antique ice skate and plastic holly. It was awarded each Christmas, after we drew names by generation and exchanged inexpensive gifts. The Cheap Skate went to the family member who bought the best gift for the least amount of money. The award then stayed with the winner until the next year. You can read the complete story on my website, under the Freebies tab.

Author Q. & A.:

Q. Where did you get the ideas for these books?

A. I grew up in Belgrade, Maine, and I actually spent a fair amount of time at (and in) Messalonskee Lake. By the way, this lake is also called “Snow Pond” after Philip Snow, who crossed the lake from the Sidney side, and became the first known resident of what is now Belgrade in 1774, in a hunting camp. Besides swimming and boating there, I did attend the music camp that is mentioned in *She Gets July*. I was a student there one summer while in high school band. My uncle had a cottage on the lake, and we lived within walking distance of a swimming area on the railroad’s right of way. My father, who was a game warden, took me and my siblings out on the lake in a boat many times. So *She Gets July* was a plot waiting to happen for me. As for *Off the Record*, I did work for the real newspaper in Waterville for several years as a correspondent, and my husband was a copy editor, but I changed the name for this book because Wynne’s newspaper and coworkers are not at all like the real ones I knew.

Q. What real things are mentioned in the books?

A. The cemetery in Belgrade is described as I remember it, which means it’s probably not exactly as I wrote it. The little church in Wynne’s story is based on the church my family attended. I had to set its renovation from a train depot to a church ahead about twenty years, in order for Andrew’s grandfather to remember it. A few other places described are “sort of” real, but Rebecca and Rob’s cottage and the Cook farm are totally fictional. The hospital where Rebecca worked is totally fictional.

Q. How did you choose the names for your stories?

A. A few of the names in these books are found in my real extended family, including Rebecca, Robert, Andrew, and Connie, as well as the surname Cook. Others I chose because they sound right. Hallee is not a family name, but several things about Hallee Cook are based on my youngest daughter, including her head injury. In real life, it was sustained after a fall from a bike—and yes, she hated wearing the helmet.

Discussion Questions (She Gets July):

1. Rebecca has days when she really hates her job. In her situation, when do you think it's time to start looking for a new position?
2. Rebecca broke up with Rob because he ignored her for a long time and extended his time away from Maine without explaining it to her. Do you think she was justified in breaking the engagement? What could she have done differently?
3. When Debbie comes home with a black eye, Rob wants to protect his sister. Do you think Rob and their parents handled the situation well? What would you have done if Debbie was your sister?
4. Rob can't seem to let go of Brittany. Eric tries to talk sense to him, but Rob's not taking his advice seriously. What would you say to Rob as an observing friend?
5. Why hasn't Rebecca taken anyone to the cottage with her until she takes Faye?
6. What do you learn about Rob from the things he leaves at the cottage?
7. Stewart musters his courage to give his grown kids a bit of a lecture. Is this part of his right and responsibility as a dad, or is he butting in when he shouldn't?

Discussion Questions (Off the Record):

1. Wynne's new job comes with substantial challenges, which she eventually must tell her supervisor. Is he in the wrong for insisting she cover a case she's struggling to handle?
2. Andrew is having trouble processing the loss of his wife when Wynne first meets him. In what ways do you think he does or doesn't allow others to help him grieve as time goes on?
3. Some of Wynne's co-workers don't handle things graciously, but others, like Julie, are open to growth. How would you address a co-worker who's interested in learning more about your faith?
4. With the Cooks, Wynne encounters different levels of acceptance. What are some of the challenges for her when Andrew's grandparents and the twins want her to come over frequently, while he seems unwelcoming?
5. Do you feel that Andrew hides from making life-changing choices behind the obligation to care for his grandparents? Or is he right to put them first and decide the rest later?
6. In the coffee shop, Wynne tries to explain to Dave exactly why she doesn't feel they should go out. In her situation, would you say anything differently? What do you think of his reaction to her profession of faith?
7. Andrew doesn't feel welcome around his in-laws, and in many ways, they work through their grief apart. How could they navigate the strong emotions of the situation to come together again?

Fun Facts and Freebies:

Belgrade, Maine is named after Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, which was also the capital of the former Yugoslavia.

My father was a seventh-generation resident of Belgrade, Maine. His ancestors (and mine) included some of the town's earliest settlers, including Simeon Wyman, Joel Richardson, and Paul Yeaton. The Wymans' graves are mentioned in the cemetery scene in *Off the Record*.

Maine is known as the Pine Tree State. Its state motto, *Dirigo*, means "I lead," or "I direct."

The fire in *Off the Record* was inspired by a real fire at a farm belonging to friends of mine, but it wasn't in Belgrade.

I once worked at a summer camp on another Maine lake, where I was a counselor and lifeguard. That was where I learned to love loons.

My family, like Rob's, was big on table games. Some of my favorites as a child were Monopoly, Parcheesi, and Clue. As an adult, I like Skip-Bo and Trivial Pursuit. I have an old board from the World War I era game "Kop the Kaiser" that belonged to my great-grandfather.

For book clubbers reading the Mainely Romance series, I'd be happy to send bookmarks. These can be requested individually at susan@susanpagedavis.com, or, more efficiently, as a group. The leader can ask for as many bookmarks as your group has members.

A Little More About the Author:

Susan Page Davis is the author of more than one hundred Christian novels and novellas in the historical romance, mystery, and romantic suspense genres. Her work has won several awards, including the Carol Award, two Will Rogers Medallions, and two Faith, Hope, & Love Reader's Choice Awards. She has also been a finalist in the WILLA Literary Awards and a multi-time finalist in the Carol Awards. Three of her books were named Top Picks in *Romantic Times Book Reviews*. Several have appeared on the ECPA and Christian Book Distributors bestselling fiction lists. Her books have been featured in several book clubs, including the Literary Guild, Crossings Book Club, and Faithpoint Book Club.

Besides writing novels, Susan enjoys reading, cross stitch, genealogy, codes and logic problems. She's a certified farrier, but it's been a looooong time since she shod a horse.

A Maine native, Susan has lived in Oregon and now resides in western Kentucky with her husband Jim, a retired news editor. They are the parents of six and grandparents of eleven.

Find Susan at:

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Amazon: amazon.com/Susan-Page-Davis/e/Boo01IR1CGA

Newsletter Sign-up: <https://madmimi.com/signups/118177/join>

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More of Susan's Novels:

Romance:

Mainly Romance Series:

She Gets July

Off the Record

Short and Sweet: 13 Sweet, Romantic Stories

The Charm Bracelet

Historical:

Homeward Trails Series:

The Rancher's Legacy

The Corporal's Codebook

The Sister's Search (releases July 2022)

The Outlaw Takes a Bride (western)

Counterfeit Captive

Almost Arizona

River Rest (set in 1918)

The Crimson Cipher (set in 1915)

Mrs. Mayberry Meets Her Match

Hearts of Oak Series (Co-authored with Susan's son James S. Davis, set in the 1850s):

The Seafaring Women of the Vera B.

The Scottish Lass

The Ladies' Shooting Club Series (westerns):

The Sheriff's Surrender

The Gunsmith's Gallantry

The Blacksmith's Bravery

Captive Trail (western)

Cowgirl Trail (western)

Hearts in Pursuit (western novella)

Christmas Next Door

Echo Canyon

The Prairie Dreams series (set in the 1850s):

The Lady's Maid

Lady Anne's Quest

A Lady in the Making

Maine Brides series (set in 1720, 1820, and 1895):

The Prisoner's Wife

The Castaway's Bride

The Lumberjack's Lady

Seven Brides for Seven Texans

Seven Brides for Seven Texas Rangers

White Mountain Brides series (set in the 1690's in New Hampshire)

Wyoming Brides series (set in 1850s):

Protecting Amy

The Oregon Escort

Wyoming Hoofbeats

The Island Bride (set in the 1850s)

Mystery and Romantic Suspense:

True Blue Mysteries:

Blue Plate Special



Ice Cold Blue

Persian Blue Puzzle

Skirmish Cove Mysteries

Cliffhanger

The Plot Thickens (releases November 2022)

The Maine Justice series:

The Priority Unit

Fort Point

Found Art

Heartbreaker Hero

The House Next Door

The Labor Day Challenge

Ransom of the Heart

The Saboteur

The Frasier Island Series:

Frasier Island

Finding Marie

Inside Story

Just Cause

You Shouldn't Have

On a Killer's Trail

Hearts in the Crosshairs

What a Picture's Worth

The Mainely Mysteries Series (coauthored with Megan Elaine Davis):

Homicide at Blue Heron Lake

Treasure at Blue Heron Lake

Impostors at Blue Heron Lake

Trail to Justice

Alaska Weddings Series:



Always Ready

Fire and Ice

Polar Opposites

Tearoom Mysteries (from Guideposts, books written by several authors):

Tearoom for Two

Trouble Brewing

Steeped in Secrets

Beneath the Surface

Tea and Promises

Tea Leaves and Legacies

And many more! **See all of her books** at <https://susanpagedavis.com>.