

Interview with: Romance Junkies, www.RomanceJunkies.com, posted December 2006.

Favorites and Fun Questions

How long does it take you to write a book? Do you write one book at a time or do you have a few going at once?

I work on one project at a time. From outline to final revision, it takes me about ten months to complete a manuscript.

Interview

Hi Patricia and Welcome! Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to interview you for Romance Junkies. First, can you let us know what projects you are currently working on?

Thank you for asking. My debut novel, YOU BELONG TO ME, is a November 2006 release. It's a romantic suspense that reunites a divorced couple in a race to unmask a serial killer.

I'm currently working on another romantic suspense, ON FIRE, which will be a September 2007 release. The hero is a fire investigator. The heroine is a newspaper reporter. These two start as adversaries but, when a string of arsons become a series of murders, they work together to solve the crimes – and run up against a powerful political machine.

I also have a proposal for a mystery series set on a fictitious Caribbean island. The series has romantic and paranormal elements, and gives me the opportunity to share my Caribbean roots.

What does your writing space look like? How do you fit writing into your schedule?

My writing space is actually the sofa in my family room. I have a full-time day job, so I write in the evenings and on weekends. Since I also like to spend the evenings with my husband, I'll settle down with my laptop in the family room and write while he reads or watches television.

Has your environment/upbringing colored your writing at all? Have you ever written about life's experiences?

For writers, I think it's inevitable that our environment and upbringing echoes in our stories. They're reflected in our writing voices and our stories' themes. For example, I was brought up to believe family is very, very important. The theme of my debut novel, *You Belong To Me*, is family. How do you define family and what would you do – how far will you go – to protect them?

Do you do any research for your books? What is the most interesting thing you have learned?

I did a lot of research for *On Fire* and learned many interesting facts about fires and fire investigation. One of the most interesting things I learned is that experts estimate one out of every three fires is arson. But that statistic can't be confirmed because arsons are difficult to prove since evidence is damaged in the fire.

Do your characters need names before they can develop personalities or does the personality have to emerge before you can name them? How do you get the names of your characters?

I can't get completely comfortable with a character until I've settled on his or her name. I can have an idea about what that character wants, but I can't develop the character's conflict or motivation until I'm comfortable with his or her name.

I enjoy watching sports, so I get a lot of my characters' names from athletes.

How did you celebrate the sale of your first book? Who were the first people that you told?

I celebrated the sale of my first book with a giant chocolate chip cookie. After I signed the contract, my husband took me to my favorite restaurant for dinner.

The first person I called was my sister. I've often told her she was the one who gave me the dream of becoming a published author. I blame her for my imaginary friends, so she had to be the first person I called. Then I called my husband. He's been living with my imaginary friends for years. Then I called my brothers and my critique partner.

How did you meet your husband? What is the most romantic thing you have done for each other?

I love these questions. I met my husband in college my freshman year.

One of the most romantic things he's ever done for me was drive to my rescue when my car broke down.

I was on my way to work near downtown. He was already at work about 20 miles away. Smoke started coming out of my car's engine, so I pulled over and I walked several blocks to a pay phone to call him. He asked me where I was and told me he was on his way. He didn't ask me 20 questions; he didn't tell me to deal with it on my own. I needed help and he was on his way. That meant the world to me.

How does your family feel about your writing? Have they read your books?

My family is over the moon that I've been published. They've supported and encouraged me from the very beginning. Several family members have read *You Belong To Me*. My sister has read every version of it, from rough draft to printed copy.

My family's spreading the word about *YOU BELONG TO ME* to help me increase sales. I'm very grateful for their support and encouragement.

What kinds of hobbies do you have? Is there anything you would love to learn but just haven't had the chance to yet?

In addition to reading, I jog. I used to crochet, but I don't have the time right now. I hope one day to have time to crochet again. I'd also love to sew again.

There are so many things I would love to learn to do. I'd like to learn to speak and read a foreign language fluently. I'd like to learn to quilt and do home repairs.

What kinds of books do you read? What is the last book you read that left a big impression on you?

I enjoy fiction and non-fiction. The fiction genres I enjoy include mystery, suspense and fantasy. And, of course, I enjoy romance, including romantic suspense, paranormal and fantasy.

In the non-fiction category, I enjoy history, current events, politics and biographies.

The last book I read that left a big impression on me was Angela Henry's THE COMPANY YOU KEEP. Great story with strong characters.

MORE FUN...

What are your favorite TV programs? Do you have any that you can't miss every week?

There are two programs I absolutely cannot miss each week, LOST and BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. I also enjoy LAW & ORDER and LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT.

What is your favorite way to spend a weekend day?

My favorite way to spend a weekend day is first going for a run in a park in the morning. (I'd like to preface, this would be a late spring or early summer, early fall day.) Then, spend most of the afternoon curled up on my sofa reading and the evening curled up with my husband.

What are three words you would say describes you? Are they the same as family and friends would use?

Creative, assertive, caring. And I hope those are the same three words my family and friends would use.

What is your favorite way to vacation, camping, a cruise or spending a lazy week at a hotel?

Whenever my family and I go on vacation, we do a lot of sightseeing, either walking or riding bikes.

What will you miss most with summer passing this year? Do you look forward to anything with fall coming?

I'll definitely miss the warm summer weather. But I have a lot to look forward to during the fall, including my debut with You Belong To Me. Several of my relatives' birthdays are in the fall. My cousin is getting married in November. And two of my favorite sports start this season, football and basketball.

Thank you, Patricia, for spending time with us. It has been a lot of fun! Good luck with your writing!

By [Kim Atchue-Cusella](#)
Romance Junkies Publishing Editor