

PRESIDENT'S CORNER - MARSHA WEST

The past month was one of the busiest January's of my life, and I've had some busy ones. I've always loved the starting over aspect of a new year. As a teacher and principal, I had lots of "do overs." Not just in January, but every August, every semester, every six weeks. In fact every week when new lesson plans were due offered another opportunity to do over. However far I'd planned to get was almost never as far as the kids and I would. (I taught in high school, but was a principal in the elementary setting, so I have a variety of perspectives. "Kids" in this instance refers to my high school theatre arts and English students.)



Sometimes it took longer for them to make the progress I wanted. Sometimes other things interrupted the process: unexpected fire drills, bomb scares, deaths of students, longer than intended pep rallies....Or just the basics: we all learn at our own rate, and I'd misjudged how long it would take for them to "get it."

Bear with me. This all does connect. On one of the loops I'm on, we've been going through an introduction exercise. It's been fascinating to see the wide spectrum of writers in every step of the profession and to hear how they juggle interruptions and what they do when they get stuck. I loved the person who said they took a shower, and somehow that released her creativity. My theory on that is like child rearing, you do whatever works.

Some on the loop had lots of books pubbed. Some had only been writing for a few years, but had a book or books published. Others had been writing for many years and hadn't received the magic call yet. Some authors hadn't entered a single contest or submitted even once, but had lots of books (or parts of books) completed. And then those shining stars who'd hooked the brass ring with their first attempt.

We had hard back published authors, paper-backs only, ebooks, and all combinations. One person hadn't started writing a book, but had already joined the loop. I was so impressed with her and believe her first attempt will be much better craft-wise than my own. I'd almost finished the rough draft before joining RWA or NT—knew nothing about the "rules" for writing a romance novel. I just had a story to tell. And boy did I--all 145,000 words. I still believe this was a great story, but craft-wise, it was pretty rank.

Just as my students above learned at different rates, we all progress along the writing continuum at our own pace. If you missed the January meeting, or if you're one of our out of town members, write your goals and keep them nearby. We'll check our progress every quarter. It's a new year, and we get to start over with new goals and new possibilities for all of us.

Happy writing...Marsha

"The Great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving." - Oliver Wendell Holmes

JANUARY MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday, January 15, 2010 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The meeting was called to order at 10:39 A.M. There were no minutes from a previous meeting to approve.

Board Members Present: Marsha West, Kim Campbell, Ron Campbell, Sheniqua Waters, Nikki Duncan, Jamie Webb, Jen FitzGerald

Board Members Absent: Jean Marie Brown

Chairs Present: Linda Graves, Clover Autrey, Angi Platt, Wendy Watson, Carolyn Williamson, Michelle Welsh

Chairs Absent: Karen Whiddon

OFFICER REPORTS:

President: Marsha West reported: Writers were asked to write down their goals on index cards. Those were taken up and will be handed back out each quarter for members to check progress.

The deadline to submit items for the newsletter is Friday, January 21st. Information was passed out to members on how to contact congress to share views on copy write infringement

A request for new and gently used books and a notice was passed out on how to help those affected by the flooding in Australia.

Treasurer: Ron Campbell reported:

No final numbers on the budget due pending numbers for the GE Contest.

Per the Treasurer's Report, the balance at the beginning of December 2010 was \$8,864.73. The balance at the end of the month was \$8,052.66. Total Assets (absent GE totals) \$8,501.65.

Expenses were as follows:

Roses for the President were \$21.63

November Retreat was \$250.15

Writing Awards \$136.99

Christmas Party \$354.22

Book exchange \$3.00

Paypal balance \$405.99

The 2011 budget should be ready soon.

The report will be filed for audit.

JANUARY MINUTES

Program Director: Nikki Duncan reported:

Rosemary Clement-Moore will be speaking about pitching to editors and how to send query letters.

Next month, Ron Campbell will discuss how writers should deal with taxes.

The deadline to participate in the May Roundtable is April.

Published authors should let Nikki Duncan know if they would like to critique manuscripts for the Roundtable.

In April, Sue Grimshaw, the lead romance buyer at Borders Bookstore, will speak at the NTRWA.

Two committees will be put together. One will be for the November Retreat and the other for the March 2010 Texas Two Step.

Membership: Jamie Webb reported:

There are 83 members.

There are two new members.

There are ten visitors.

Visitors:

Gloria Richard (romantic suspense)

Shelley Kaehr (paranormal, young adult, science fiction romance) (a former member)

Angelyn Schmid (historical romance)

Karen Goodchild (historical romance, contemporary romance)

Kim Miller (romantic suspense)

Julie Haza (homeopathic)

Cid Tyer (paranormal, young adult, science fiction romance)

Carolyn Rogers (mystery, fantasy)

Deidron Holcomb (pre-historic erotica, paranormal)

Patricia Wolf (paranormal erotica romance,
new age paranormal)

New Members:

Ruby Johnson (romantic suspense, western romance)

Cecyl Reckstol (mainstream with romantic elements) (same question)

Website: Jen FitzGerald:

Jen has offered to tutor anyone who is interested in learning how to work on the website.

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:

PRO Liaison: Clover Autrey reported:

New members should talk to Clover about getting into PRO.

New members should talk to Clover about the 'Get the Boot Workshop'.

January 31st is the RWA PRO Loop Boot Camp where Angi Platt will be teaching what needs to be learned before a book is sold.

JANUARY MINUTES

Hospitality Chair: Linda Graves reported:

Cindy Davis, editor of Wild Rose Press, will be giving a critique to whoever wins it.
Members are to tell Linda if they know anyone who knows an editor who wants to do a critique.
T-shirts can be purchased for \$12 and \$15.
Badges can be purchased for \$10.

Writing Incentives: Roni Griffin reported:

For every ten pages written or edited writers get a bead.
Open to ideas for new writing incentives.

Audio Librarian: Michelle Welsh reported:

CDs can be checked out.
A list is online of what CDs are available.

Great Expectations Chair: Angi Platt/ Wendy Watson reported:

2010 was a record breaking year for GE with 258 entries, 184 judges and \$6,785.00 (before paypal fees).

Spotlight Chair: Carolyn Williamson reported:

The spotlight was on Linda Graves

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Gina Nelson reported the 2010 Golden Spur Award went to Nikki Duncan for editing the most pages. She received a certificate and \$25 gift card.
Deloris Shaffer, the 2010 Hospitality Chair, received a service pen.
Roni Griffin received a first sale pen for two contemporary erotic books.
Linda Graves was presented the holder with her first book cover in it and a card signed by all members.

There was a break to order lunch at 11:24 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 11:39 a.m. and was adjourned at 11:40 a.m. before Rosemary Clement-Moore spoke on Loglines, Pitches and Queries.

Submitted electronically by Sheniqua Waters

Date Approved: _____

Date Corrected: _____

Next Business Meeting: 10:30 a.m. on Feb. 19 at La Hacienda.

2011 NTRWA Schedule

Check out our upcoming speakers and programs:

February: Ron Campbell- *Taxes for the Writer*

March: Misa Ramirez and Tonya Kappas- *Naked Hero*

April: Sue Grimshaw, Borders with a tour of the store

May: Round Table

June: Victoria Chancellor *Synopsis*

July: *Speed Pitching for Nationals*

August: TBA

September: TBA

October: Julia Quinn *Dialogue: It's more than what you say.*

November: *Retreat*

December: *Party*

SPOTLIGHT ON ANGI PLATT

BY CAROLYN WILLIAMSON

Angi Platt, author of *Hill Country Holdup* and *38 Caliber Cover-up*, believes in service. See below for an impressive list of all she has done—and that's just for romance writers. There's more on what else she's done at the end of this article.

RWA service: NTRWA website chair, Treasurer, President,
Past-President

I've helped with the GE since 2002 (actually before I
joined NT),

co-chair or chair since 04, advisor/judges 09

DARA newsletter chair, conference committee

National Regional Director, committee chair liaison

National Literacy for Life Book Signing chairperson
04,05, 06, 07



As a brand new author, she has lots to tell about her recent experiences in the world of publishing. See her answers to my questions.

1. Why did you volunteer to run the Literacy For Life book signing at the national conference? What benefits and good feelings did you derive from that?

Volunteer? Hmm--they asked if I would. In '03 while in NYC, I hate to say it this way but I kind of "saved" the signing set-up by stepping in and taking charge without telling the chair. (shy smile) There were lots of problems slammed on them: small room, difficulty working with the union, lost books. (Carolyn was there, and it was a mess until Angi took over.) Evidently, the incoming RWA President liked what she saw and asked if I'd be the chair in Dallas (my hometown). They went against policy to ask a non-published person to chair. Then...well, they liked my organizational skills (I had a lot of help from NT in '04 and '07 that made me look great!). No local chapter in Reno led them to ask in '05. Then incoming president Gail Wilson personally asked me in '06. And then incoming president Jill Limber asked for '07. Wow...that's a lot of history and I felt honored every time thinking that surely each year would be my last. Thank goodness I wasn't attending in '08 J

The best benefit was all the volunteer acquaintances that I made. We challenged ourselves EVERY year to do it faster and better--streamlining as many processes as we could. And the best thing of all? Meeting these hard-working volunteers, creating an admiration for the tireless hours they donated, well, it kept me going through the

SPOTLIGHT ON ANGI PLATT

the rejections. I worked with Amy Atwell for the first time in '04, which began a sister-friendship that I can't put a price-tag on. There are many volunteers 'round the world that I feel that way about.

2. What new information did you learn after you became published?

That I would have to write a complete synopsis and fifty pages before Intrigue could buy my next book... UGH... I hate synopses. Fortunately, my verbal pitches are much better and now the editors like and know my style of writing.

3. What nice perks did you get as a newly published author at the national conference?

Well, I spent most of the conference in my room hitting the keyboard (no wonder the laptop no longer works LOL) since I had a book due at the end of conference. But the Harlequin party was awesome. Sharing the news I had actually sold with friends who had missed the news. Winning the Golden Heart and having my book on sale the same night...what a totally awesome feeling.

4. What did you wish you'd known before you got published?

Absolutely too much for this short article. LOL In fact, I've written several blogs along the way and was asked by the PRO committee to teach a boot camp on the PRO-CLASS loop (Jan. 31 through Feb 5). But if I had to pick one? Learn how to write, plot, revise, promote all at the same time BEFORE you sell. Have all four routines in place so you don't have to learn all the nuances while you're trying to sell your 2nd book.

5. What did you do right before getting published?

I got my name out there by volunteering. By submitting steadily for several years, the editors actually knew I was in it for the long-haul. I had a website, knew the market, knew where I wanted to go with my career. I do wish I'd had several manuscripts ready to go for the INTRIGUE line. But the other stories I have are a bit out-of-date...so I'm starting from scratch for books 3, 4, & 5.

6. Tell us about the disappointments along the way and what kept you going?

Well, there were a lot of disappointments. In fact, I hate JULY 2nd. Two years in a row, I received several (not one, not two, not three) rejections. It was like my agent "saved them up" before sending. So right before conference I KNEW I wasn't selling and had nothing out there. Regaining that hope every year...it was tough.

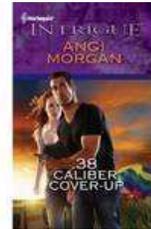
What kept me going? Chapter involvement, being around my writer friends, and a family that never, never, never doubted I would sell.

SPOTLIGHT ON ANGI PLATT

7. What kinds of family and volunteer/paid work kept you running during the last few years?

I've worked several part-time jobs...never anything for more than 6 months. I was almost a professional volunteer of 21 years. Giving up the volunteer status is hard. I'm actually having withdrawal.

LOL



Let's see if I can remember everything: church (dinner plays, choir and lots of other things through the years); PTA (every position and I mean EVERY position, some all at the same time); Band President 5 years (yes, before my youngest was in high school); Boy Scouts (den leader, North District trainer for Cubs & Scouts--yep, this gal can camp without getting wet in the rain); and there's Softball: I coached for 19 years (some years two teams), I've served on the board for 20 years, I currently work for them as scheduler, running concessions, tournament director, and setting/prepping fields for games. I also work for the City of Farmers Branch and Private High Schools prepping fields for them.

And I began volunteering for RWA, DARA, NTRWA and other on-line chapters from 2001 to now. With the new proposals and hopefully contracts, the volunteer hours are shrinking instead of growing. Speaking of which...I have a proposal to write.

Angi's website: AngiMorgan.com. Facebook: Angi Morgan and also has a fan page. Twitter: AngiMorganAuthr Angi blogs regularly at:

<http://GetLostInAStory.blogspot.com>

<http://eHarlequin.com> choose Intrigue Authors Blog

<http://dailydose-fantasyromance.blogspot.com/>

<http://BlameItOnTheMuse.com>

TAX TIPS!!!

Join us at the Feb. 19 meeting. NTRWA Treasurer and CPA Ron Campbell will update us on the latest tax law changes, and provide an overview of an LLC, Sub-Chapter S, and the 1040C, the advantages of each, and which is right for you as a writer.

He'll also share some tips on tax deductions, record keeping. And, yes, even if you are not published, you can still, in most cases, deduct expenses associated with your writing career, plus the reasons why and how.

In addition to being a Certified Public Accountant, Ron is a member of the AICPA, Texas Society of CPAs, HFMA, RWA, NTRWA, & KOD. He has been published in various professional journals and has been an expert witness before numerous

CHAPTER EVENTS LOOP

The chapter will no longer be responsible for sending info about contest and conferences to NT members on our loop. All of that is available to each of you on the Chapter Events Loop. See below for how to join that loop.

Thanks,
Marsha West
NTRWA President
President@ntrwa.org

The email address to send messages to the Chapter events loop is:
chapterevents@yahogroups.com.

To subscribe, the web address is:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/chapterevents>.

If you were a member of the previous Contest Loop, you do not need to subscribe.

Thank you,
Leslie Scantlebury
chapters@rwa.org

NT'S WEBSITE: OUR FACE TO THE WORLD

NTRWA's website is one of the nicest of all RWA chapters. I didn't design it and I used to judge the RWA chapter website contest when they had one. I've been studying and learning about and playing with and creating my own websites for a decade now. I'm not looking for accolades but I know what I'm talking about.

Everything I know I learned on my own. I adopted my first website in 02/03 and learned to update it using Notepad. (Yes, really.) Notepad, by the way, is the simplest most basic HTML editor there is. After that I graduated to *Microsoft Frontpage* and creating my own websites, and now I use *Adobe Dreamweaver*. I will freely admit that I am not an expert in Dreamweaver at all. I know the basics. There *are* a lot of cool functions and features that I've never tried to learn because I don't do websites for a living (despite my husband's frequent entreaties to try my hand) and I don't need to know them. When there's something I *do* want to know how to do, I Google and/or consult one of the many tomes we have on various aspects of websites, HTML, cascading styles sheets, Dreamweaver, etc.

So...despite all that mumbo-jumbo above, taking care of our site really isn't that hard. There are certain things that need to be known and understood to keep our site looking neat and professional—Not that I never make boo-boos, okay? I'm only human.—but those things are pretty easy to grasp and implement. I promise. Now we all have our gifts; for some, learning websites and the jargon that goes with them would be like trying to learn Greek or Latin; for most of us, it's really a matter of taking it step-by-step and learning it in small chunks.

So with an eye to recruiting a nominee for website director for next year or the following one, I'm putting out an offer of training for anyone who would like learn a little more about the wonderful world of websites, baby step by baby step. We can work via chat, via e-mail, create a Yahoo group; whatever works for whomever we get. If you're interested, please send me an e-mail at jen@stormsedge.com.

Thanks!

Web Site Director, Jen Fitzgerald

**DON'T FORGET
2011 DUES
Are Due Now**

If You haven't paid by Feb. 28,
You Will be Dropped from
the Roster And the Loops
If you have questions contact

Membership Director,
Jamie Webb
Membership@ntrwa.org

Show your visible support for our Chapter. Happy Tails T-shirts available - \$12 for short sleeve and \$15 for long sleeve. Also we have a few professional badge holders still available at \$10 each. Both will be available at the meetings. Also, I'm looking forward to offering more awesome door prizes in our future meetings. Any NTRWA member who could donate a critique, workshop, etc. or have a potential contact for a professional publisher or editor, please contact Linda Graves.

linda@lindagraves.com



newsletter@ntrwa.org

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2100 W. Northwest HWY
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Grapevine, TX 76051

NTRWA MONTHLY MEETING
THIRD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
DOORS OPEN @ 10 A.M.
LA HACIENDA RANCH
5250 HIGHWAY 121 SOUTH
COLLEYVILLE, TX

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