



NTRWA



North Texas Romance Writers of America

HEART to HEART

Founded March 1983

Chapter 33, Region 5

September 2011

Volume 30, Issue 9

Rising Star Awards Most Pages Written

Donna Stockton

200 pages

Nikki Duncan

150 pages

Christine Crocker

145 pages

Spur Awards Most Pages Written

Morgan Fox

728 pages

Shelly Bradley

612 pages

Jerrie Alexander

375 pages

Join us September 17th
for
Finding Your Place in the Market with
Tracy Wolff



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President's Corner — Marsha West

Random Thoughts



I just scanned what I wrote in the August newsletter and noticed a few glitches. I didn't remember to have us all look at our goals at the August meeting. We'll do that in September. I've never sent the chapter loop info on my web page. Will be addressed soon.

As I write this, I'm struggling with a sinus infection. Thankfully, I haven't had one since I retired. They are yucky. After 2 hours in a clinic, I got meds, so will hopefully, be feeling better tomorrow or Sunday sometime. I'm afraid to leave this in case my younger daughter's daughter decides to make her arrival this weekend. Very exciting time for our family. She'll be the second granddaughter, and the little girls will be 6 months apart. Should be really fun. By the time you get this, I'll have posted news on the NT Loop.

I'm still not writing new words, just trying to improve the old ones, querying e-publishers, reading and posting on blogs, and trying to get the hang of FB. Had a new idea for a book, but I've spent lots of time getting ready for what should be # 6. Hard to know whether to stop and do something about the new 6. But right now all the focus needs to be on querying.

Fell taking the puppies out for their last potty of the evening. Foot slipped in crack between the grass and sidewalk. Poor right elbow and hip. Both took the brunt of falls during the last year. Puppies came and gave me kisses.

Please see the article from the nominations committee in another part of this newsletter. We need people to step forward for leadership positions for NT to grow and flourish.

Best wishes are sent to all of our RWA chapters impacted by Hurricane Irene. Hard to understand how we can be drying up in the unmerciful heat and our friends to the east will be drowning (hopefully, only figuratively) in the excess rains from Irene.

Keep on keeping on. See you September 17. We'll have a board meeting at the Snooty Pig before the general meeting. Let me know if you'd like to come.

Diligence is the mother of good luck. Benjamin Franklin.



August Minutes

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday, August 20, 2011 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The President, Treasurer, Program Director and Secretary were present. The meeting was called to order at 10:35 A.M. Corrections were made to the July minutes.

OFFICER REPORTS:

President: Marsha West reported:

A first sale book cover presented to Jeannie Guzman.

First sale pens will be given to Jerrie Alexander and Marty Tidwell since they have sold books to publishers.

Marsha West will Chair the 2012 Nominating Committee. A motion made by Regina Richards and seconded was passed electing Clover Autrey and Michelle Welsh to be a part of the nominating committee. Invited everyone to the next NT board meeting. Sept. 17 at 9 a.m. at the Snooty Pig.

Treasurer: Ron Campbell reported:

The July's treasurer's report will be filed for audit.

Program Director: Nikki Duncan reported:

The schedule for NTRWA 2011 calendar was reviewed as follows:

September – Finding A Place in the Market with Tracey Wolf

October – Discuss Dialog with Julia Quinn

November – Members' retreat

December – Christmas Party

There is early registration for the Texas Two Step.

Items for raffle baskets for the Texas Two Step Conference in March of 2012 are needed.

Membership: Jamie Webb reported:

There were three visitors:

Visitors: Jennifer August, Katie Pierce, Richard Stockton

There were two new members:

New members: Jill Myles and Raquel Rodriguez



August Minutes

Communications Director: Marsha West reported for Jean Marie Brown

Articles are due to Jean Marie Brown by Sunday, August 28th.

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:

PRO Liaison: Clover Autrey reported:

The BETA Read has been successfully concluded.

Writing Incentives: Roni Griffin reported:

Please provide feedback with thoughts the writing incentives and how / if things need to be improved.

Audio Librarian: Michelle Welsh reported:

CDs from nationals are available to check out.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

Next Business Meeting: 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, September 17th at La Hacienda.
The business meeting was adjourned at: 11:00 p.m.

Submitted electronically by Sheniqua Waters

Date Approved: _____

Date Corrected: _____



Spotlight on Jill Myles

By Carolyn Williamson

Jill Myles is a new member of NTRWA. She has been published by two traditional publishers and also does some self-publishing of novellas and short stories.

1. What kinds of romance writing do you do?

I write paranormals, contemporary erotic romance, and I self-publish a lot of time-travels.

2. Why did Pocket Books want you to publish under a different pen name? Tell us what you will be writing under the name of Jessica Sims.

Sales, of course! My first series is 1st person, light and almost urban fantasy. It's an ongoing series with the same characters. The new books will be traditional romances with new characters in each book, so it's also for branding.

3. What is the theme of your new series for Pocket Books? Will you be writing about continuing characters?

My new series takes place at a paranormal dating agency that's run by humans. The same characters pop up from book to book, but there will be a new hero/heroine in each one..

4. How did you get Holly Root as an agent? Did you meet her at a conference or send a query letter?

Query letter - I was looking for an agent to submit a new project after I had sold the first one. I had worked with Holly back when she was an assistant at Trident Media on a submission revision, and I remembered her because she was so incredibly nice. When I found out she'd hung her own shingle, I queried and the rest is history.

5. What's the name of the book coming out in May from Berkley Heat and what is your pen name for that?

That book WAS going to be called WHEN SPARKS FLY, but, irony of ironies, there is a SPARKS FLY that is coming out from NAL on the same day. Whoops! So I'm going to have a new title. What it is yet, we don't know. The pen name is going to be Jessica Clare.

6. How did you get into doing self-publishing, and do you find it financially rewarding?

I started self-publishing because I was putting up my free stories that I'd written for my series in as many places as I could. When I started making money, I started paying attention. In February, I uploaded some projects that I had sitting unused on my computer and that was that. Self-publishing is very rewarding. I love that there is no story off the table anymore. Financially rewarding - definitely. This year I'll probably make more self-publishing than I did on either one of my NY contracts.

7. What is the name of your next book that's coming out in October and what is it about?

BEAUTY DATES THE BEAST is the first book in my paranormal dating agency series. It's coming out under the name Jessica Sims and it's about the office manager of the agency, who is very, very human. She's not supposed to date clients, but when she meets Beau Russell, she has a hard time saying no.

Searching for 2012 Leaders

Clover Autrey, Michelle Welsh, and Marsha West are serving as the nominations committee looking for leaders for next year. We have quite a few blanks and need your help. While we know many of you, we don't always know what you like to be doing or what you're really good at. For instance, Marsha has never served as a treasurer in any organization and won't!

You know what you're good at better than we do. Right now, NT needs your help. The nominations committee needs your help filling in some blanks we have for next year's board and chair positions. Please look at the list below and then email one of the committee members telling us how you are willing to serve the chapter. With that information, we can come up with a slate of officers to present to the membership.

There are a few requirements. To serve in any of the board positions, you need to have been a member two years before this election. The chair positions only require one year. We've got a great chapter, and I know the right people will step forward. Thanks for your help.

Email Marsha at mwest7012@sbcglobal.net
Email Clover at autreyclover@yahoo.com and Michelle at welshmic@charter.net

Board

Secretary. The Secretary shall be responsible to keep a record of attendance; record the minutes of all meetings of the Board of Directors and the membership; keep chapter records, including copies of newsletters, RWA communications, chapter business correspondence, committee reports, and all other official documents; mail notices; and fulfill any other obligations designated by the Board of Directors.

Treasurer. Plans a budget for the year, keeps monthly records of expenses and funds coming in, handles PayPal issues, takes the dues, prepares monthly reports for the membership and quarterly reports for the Board.

Website Director. The Website Director shall be responsible for planning and overseeing the official chapter website, and fulfill any other obligations designated by the Board.

Communications Director. The Communications Director shall be responsible for planning and overseeing official chapter communications tools, and public relations; and fulfill any other obligations designated by the Board. This person usually is the newsletter editor.



Chair Positions

Newsletter Editor—Gather and arrange articles for the newsletter, email to all members, mail legacy board members.

Hospitality—handles baskets for meetings and getting the basket together for national conference.

PRO Liaison—Must be RWA PRO, writes articles for newsletter, encourages members to become PRO, organize classes on the NT PRO Loop, organize a Beta Read for those interested.

Spot Light—Find members to write about in the newsletter, send them questions which they answer. At monthly NT meeting highlight that person

Writing Incentives—Use various ways to encourage writing. Recognize the members for their pages written and edited at each meeting with a token. Currently magnet words.

Audio—Keep up with the CDs of programs and trainings. Advertise them to the membership, bring to meetings so they can be checked out.

NT Needs You!

MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations

**Jerrie Alexander "The Green Eyed Doll" sold to
The Wild Rose Press - Crimson Rose line.**

**Sophie Oak "TWO TO LOVE" won the erotic division of the published
division of Lories, sponsored by the From the Heart chapter of RWA.**

**Shelley Bradley sold Project Alpha series--2 sexy romantic suspense mass
markets--Berkley Sensation**

Kym Roberts "Tips for Writing Authentic Police Stories

Marty Tidwell "Good Gravy" True Story Magazine-November

The following article first appeared in the Sept/Oct 2011 edition of Novel Notes, the newsletter of Volusia County Romance Writers.

Taking The Plunge Into Social Media

by Gerri Bauer, VCRW member

Embrace the world of social media that surrounds us today.

Use it to empower you, your work, and our chapter.

Fine, you say. But just what is social media? Well, it's a term that encompasses a rapidly growing collection of online tools that all have the same goal: interconnectivity. The reason social media is called "social" is because it opens up new ways for engaging with others. You post news, photos, comments, videos, etc., on your social media pages, and others respond. Likewise, you should respond to what others post on their social media sites. In social media, the conversation moves fast, and it moves 24/7.

New social media platforms seem to crop up almost daily, but the behemoth is Facebook (FB for short). What started as a way for college students to "connect" with one another via the Internet has grown into a kind of global yellow pages. More than 750 million people use FB, according to company statistics. You can create a personal page and keep it as public or private as you like: My personal page is viewable only to other FB users I accept as Friends, while my teenage godson's is open to the world beyond his circle of 900 Friends. If you want to engage young romance readers, you'd be wise to establish an author page such as member Catherine Kean has done.

FB also allows users to create pages for organizations, which is why I was able to create a FB page named Volusia County Romance Writers. We've been on FB for a year, but our site cries out for more engagement - the give and take between social media users. More about that later. Romance Writers of America® is on FB, as are many chapters. I posted news of the Laurel Wreath contest on about 30 other RWA-related FB sites, some as far away as Australia and New Zealand.

The best FB pages - indeed, the best sites in any form of social media - are ones that stay vibrant and active. You want to regularly post news of interest, personal thoughts, questions designed to spark conversations, photos of events

and videos. Our VCRW FB page would be livelier if everyone who posted success news on the loop would also post that same news on our VCRW FB page. And those who congratulate other members on their successes could also post those congratulations on our VCRW page. Such activity will show the world what an energetic and fun bunch we are, and could help us increase membership.

FB, by far, isn't the only social media platform. It's just the biggest one. Other big sites are Twitter, a kind of microblogging platform; YouTube, dedicated to videos; and flickr, a photo site. Many authors or groups of authors maintain blogs. Our own Kaitlyn Schultz keeps her Nocturnal Readings blog lively and engaging. Published member Barbara Cameron is one of four authors who write the Amish Hearts group. Published member Connie Mann houses her Busy Women. Big Dreams blog at a web address in her own name: www.conniemann.com. Such initiatives help keep your name and your books in front of the world.

As with anything else, there are rules of engagement in social media. Always be professional and courteous. Social media, by its very nature, is public. You don't have to dig deep to find horrendous examples of people acting negatively and even illegally. Maintain high standards at all times.

Step in slowly if you are new to social media, but do take the first step. Like it or not, social media is a part of our world. Make the most of it.

The following article first appeared on the Savvy Authors blog, August 22, 2011 and was reprinted in the September 2011 issue of Tide Lines, newsletter of the Vancouver Island Chapter.

A Spell for Suspension of Disbelief

by Shereen Vedam

For a reader to enter a secondary world so fully that it seems real, Tolkien suggests writers need to cast a spell on the reader.

A writer's spell must beguile and intrigue enough to take the reader on an incredible adventure that will last for 300-odd pages. If anywhere along that journey the reader stops and says, "Seriously?"...the reader will be rudely jerked back into the real world.

The moment disbelief arises, the spell is broken; the magic, or rather art, has failed.

—J.R.R. Tolkien

This can have a devastating effect on the writer, too, with her book relegated to the bottom of a TBR pile or, worse, disposed of without the valued, "You've got to read this, you'll never believe how good it is," recommendation.

I recently ran an impromptu survey on an Amazon fantasy forum, where I asked, "What took you out of a fantasy read?" (b) Suspension of disbelief was the oft-repeated answer, expressed in various forms:

- * be realistic
- * build a plausible world
- * immerse me in a consistent world

An on-line dictionary defines suspension of disbelief as:

A willingness to suspend one's critical faculties and believe the unbelievable; sacrifice of realism and logic for the sake of enjoyment. (c) So how do we convince a reader to mentally step into another world and relinquish all doubts for a story's duration?

We need to cast that spell.

STEPS FOR CASTING AN EFFECTIVE SPELL (d)

1. Get the ingredients right. Have you interspersed authentic details without historical inaccuracies or conflicting information?
2. No mistakes in the incantation. Did you avoid overblown language and bad grammar? Have you proofread, proofread, proofread?

3. Is the moon in the right phase? Did you choose the perfect setting? Eliminate superfluous details to focus on the most pertinent aspects of every scene?

4. Is the spell caster ready? Have you groomed the main character until he is likeable, skillful and engaging enough to carry the entire story? Even more important, be she werecreature, extraterrestrial or ordinary, is she quintessentially human? By that I mean, despite having a myopic viewpoint or robust self-survival instincts, can your spell caster save the day for others? Is your spell caster ready to be a hero?

5. Has the spell been well rehearsed? Have you written enough? Learned and grown in your craft until you feel confident you can convey your vision with confidence, style, panache? Is this the best work you've ever produced?

6. Is this the right spell? Have you researched the market, read in the genre and appropriately matched story to reader?

7. Do you believe the spell will work? Do you believe in your story? Is it from your heart?

8. Is the universe on your side? To cast a good spell, you absolutely need a pinch of magic. There are many ways a reader can be pulled out of a story. A writer's job is to make a tale so compelling that the reader believes in the story world.

Achieving the above involves a reader/writer partnership in which the writer signs a contract with the reader to provide a guaranteed, unbreakable enchantment. Once the spell is cast, and it's done correctly, fairies come out to play.

References:

(a) On Fairy Stories by J.R.R. Tolkien

http://www.bjorn.kiev.ua/librae/Tolkien/Tolkien_On_Fairy_Stories.htm

(b) Amazon Fantasy Forum

<http://www.amazon.com/forum/fantasy/...TxFVE1DQ2L8BG7>

(c) Dictionary Reference—Suspension of Disbelief

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse...n+of+disbelief>

(d) Tips for Casting Spells <http://www.spellsofmagic.com/tips.html> (used in this article with permission of the site owner)

Shereen Vedam is a member of VIC-RWA and writes historical tales set in magical lands where love, like magic, is often unplanned, untimely...and thoroughly uncontrollable.



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NTRWA monthly meeting

NTRWA monthly meeting
Third Saturday of the month
Doors open @ 10 a.m.
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