

Subject:

FW: May 2014 Newsletter

Come get your swag on. Don't miss our May meeting.

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Letter from the President

I was chatting with another author about some old books I dug out and was re-reading from years ago. You know, way back in the ice age when ebooks didn't exist.

She said, "Oh, so you actually read the kind of books you write."

That took me a bit by surprise. "Well, yeah, of course." Um?

Sure I began to write toward a trend, but it was a trend I love, have loved for as long as I've been reading. But the conversation made me think.

There's a writerly saying that goes: Write what you know.

Well, I've never had magical powers or have time traveled to the past, so that's a bit out of my experience range. Plus, boring. I don't want to read what I already know. I want the fantasy of doing things I've never done.

Besides, even though writing is hard work, it's also amazingly fun.

Always Write What You Love.

And then research anything you don't know. That's part of the enjoyment.

Let your own joy and excitement lift off the pages of your book. Readers can feel the depth of a writer's enjoyment, even if you are gleefully taking your enjoyment writing a deranged bad guy. They will feel it. I believe that.

So that's my hope for all of you this month. Write What You Love. Now go forth and create in this beautiful month of May.



Upcoming February Meeting: Swag

Our meeting on swag will be a casual get together and conversation about swag--what it is, what kinds there are and how well it works.

Please join us and bring your personal swag or something you received from someone/somewhere else.



THE PUBLISHING GAME

By Lise Horton

The Publishing Game: 2013 – The Year of the Gavel

In a recent issue of Publishers Marketplace they ran the following headline: “2013: The Year We Gaveled On.” And while some of the suits and legal wrangling were higher profile than others, there were many spreading across a variety of issues and they will all, ultimately, have an impact on us as authors specifically, but as members of a volatile industry in general. So here, in the interest of attempting to get a handle on the legal lay of the land, is a bit of a recap of this year’s litigious fun & games:

The massive cases that came to a close were the nearly decade-long Google book-scanning case, with Judge Denny Chin lowering the gavel on the last hold-out, The Authors Guild, following the “secret” settlements a year ago between Google and the original publisher plaintiffs. Because no details were given as to how the AUTHORS would fare in that settlement, the AG doggedly held on. And lost. But they vow to appeal the decision. Google’s altruistic intent to make the books available to everyone seems lofty – but the indirect benefit to having these books in their sole hands provides them the KNOWLEDGE base present in those books. And could that be why they are solidifying their place as the pre-eminent source for on-line searches – a monopoly on information?

The #2 legal behemoth was the Department of Justice case against Apple and the publishers who had “colluded” to fix pricing vis a vis the agency model that was promulgated. And on the heels of the DOJ came numerous State suits as well on the same matter. The publishers all settled, as Macmillan admitted that the legal cost to fight would be more than their net worth. Apple hung in but lost big – though the initial penalties were ultimately watered down a bit. But the case has many ramifications as digital pricing is so in flux. The line about just how creative publishers and on-line providers of digital books can be may harden. Immediately thereafter Amazon began playing with pricing. Clearly this case was huge. Otherwise, would we REALLY be seeing this presiding judge among the Publishers Weekly Notable People of 2013?

Of tremendous concern to authors is the issue of piracy. Clearly it is a protean evil that will never die, but 2013 saw some positive legal challenges. Early in the year, 2 New Yorkers were successfully sued for their pirating efforts by John Wiley, and will be forced to ante up \$7,000 in penalties. What was important was these individuals were offering up these titles via BitTorrent and the case was the first of its kind to find the uploaders guilty.

But there were numerous other cases and causes that added to law firm coffers in 2013.

There were cases by famous authors like Harper Lee against their agents and managers for mismanagement of funds. There were settlements in the case brought against a number of their authors by a big 5 publisher seeking return of their advances. There was the class action suit brought against Authors House (and its new big 5 owner, Penguin) by self-pubbed authors over royalty shenanigans. A collection of independent booksellers – including NYC’s Posman Books - sued over Amazon and the big 6 over DRM damages to competitive purchasing, a case that was just dismissed a few days ago. The Wiley suit over pricing of foreign editions of textbooks was a bust and immediately the first sale doctrine became a front and center concept: Especially as the question of whether or not First Sale can EVER apply to digital material is going to be a huge legal quagmire for all concerned. CAVEAT (figured a legal term was apropos) - A bright light in this area was the court decision that ReDigi’s sale of “used” music (iTunes) was clear copyright infringement.

Will that stand? Only time – and lawsuits – will tell.

Of personal interest to me as a Harlequin author was the 2013 decision in the 2012 suit filed by authors published in the 90's and early 2000's, that claimed "intercompany licenses" were permitting HQ to cheat authors of royalties. The judge found against the authors though they have appealed.

And of interest to all authors was the quiet resolution of the 2012 case initially filed by Penguin seeking return of advances from authors who they claimed missed deadlines. It "went away" without fanfare, but showed the willingness of a big house to seek redress when authors – and not necessarily the "big names" - don't adhere to contractual requirements. Given that this case came on the heels of last year's Sourcebooks suit against an author for breach of contract, it should speak loudly to the importance of understanding what you are signing, and how NOT understanding, or breaching your contract, can come back to bite you. Big time. Just ask actor Stephen Baldwin, who was sued by Hachette over the \$110,000 advance he received when he failed to deliver his book on time.

Other suits included public domain wrangles (Conan Doyle Estate), continued battles of digital rights by 3rd parties objected to by original publishers, Amazon's NY State sales tax fight defeat went to the Supreme Court – who declined to hear the case. Publishers breathed a sigh of relief when 2 cases found that their standard processes for vetting books (i.e. – and reliance upon an author's warranties about the writing and material) should stand. For an author? That means understanding WHAT you are repping and warranting in your contracts is paramount because you'll be on the hook in the event of any problems.

Outside the courtrooms, a recent issue in the arena of contract law which has come to folks' attentions, is the issue of the big houses' contracts with authors some of which, it seems, are being revamped to effectively allow them to pussy-foot away from what had

previously been clear and distinct promises of publication in certain formats. Now they can hedge their bets and opt NOT to issue a title in the print format originally intended, but say, rather in digital. Should it suit their purpose.

Other non-court legal matters were legion as well. We had the “disclosure” that the sneaky dude who leaked the truth that “Cukoo’s Calling” author Robert Galbraith was JK Rowling WAS – her lawyer! Even more salacious was the accusation against Larry Kirshenbaum – no LONGER the head of the Amazon publishing operation – of sexual harassment. The massive merger of Random House – Penguin (which was vetted worldwide) dominated publishing news. Barnes & Noble’s plan to hive-off of the tablet division to a separate entity waxes and wanes. Amazon’s rights-holder sanctioned fan-fic publishing arm came into being blurring lines further on the subject of copyright.

But from a legal perspective the most important conversation dominating the publishing industry might well be copyright. I have heard one intellectual property specialist proclaim “Copyright is dead”, and in nearly every corner the groundswell promoting a new copyright act that can address the myriad aspects of digital and electronic material that was never anticipated, is getting louder and louder. It’s turning out to be a whole new ball game.

So how’s YOUR fielding?

Lise Horton’s debut novel WORDS OF LUST launched in September 2013 and she is finalizing book 2 of the Stellato Siblings series for submission. You can read more about Lise, her books, and her blogs, by visiting her website, www.LiseHorton.com and to join her in the madcap whirl of social media!

This article was published in the RWA/NYC January 2014 newsletter. Permission is granted to share this article with the proper credits to the author and chapter.



The following article will appear in the March, 2014 issue of ShoreLines, the newsletter of the Long Island Romance Writers, Debora Dale, Editor. Permission is granted to sister chapters to reprint or forward articles with proper credit to authors, newsletter and chapter.

Promotion

That Doesn't Feel Like Taking Your Medicine

by Bernadette Walsh

In 2010 when I was offered my first contract by Lyrical Press I had a Twitter account with about five followers and a blog with even less. I struggled to post pithy observations on Facebook and marched onward through the social media wilderness, determined to fulfill my obligations to my publisher to promote my precious first novel.

I gamely posted and liked and tweeted my heart out, always feeling like I was shouting into a dark empty cavern. My LIRW chapter mates often talked about how much they enjoyed social media and all the connections and friendships they made on twitter. But whenever I struggled to come up with something to tweet about to my five faithful followers, I felt about as excited and fired up as a kid swallowing a tablespoon of cod liver oil.

Then this reluctant promoter agreed to be interviewed on a local cable TV show called The Writer's Dream. The producer, Linda Frank, provided me with some sample questions and I carefully wrote out answers to each. I was nervous when I drove to the studio in East Hampton but a funny thing happened: as soon as the director said "Action" I came alive. All my carefully constructed answers went out the window as I chatted with, and connected to, my host. The half hour interview flew by and it was then I realized that although I may not be great at posting or tweeting or liking, there was one thing I could do and that was TALK.

A few months later I decided to try my hand at hosting an interview show on blogtalkradio. I named my little show NICE GIRLS READING NAUGHTY BOOKS, and my "studio" consisted of a computer and phone in my spare bedroom with the door locked to keep out my noisy family. I started out by interviewing my editor at Lyrical and then my publisher Renee Rocco. The word

spread and I interviewed a few authors. Before I knew it I had interviewed over 40 people, my listeners grew week after week and blogtalkradio selected me as a “featured host”. I was no longer shouting in the wilderness. I was talking to writers from Florida, Texas, Massachusetts, Wales and Australia who shared with me their writing triumphs and struggles. I even interviewed one of my favorite authors, New York Times bestseller Paula Brackston. I was connecting and more importantly I was having fun.

The show even helped me in using social media because now I can tweet and post about my show and my fabulous guests. So if promotion feels like one more chore, you may want to try something new like being a guest on a radio show or maybe even starting your own. Radio, unlike other promotional tools, allows potential readers to connect with you and hear your voice in a completely different way from blogging and tweeting. Whatever you do, try and find a type of promotion that you enjoy, that best expresses your personality and that helps you connect with others.

Bernadette Walsh writes contemporary and paranormal romance and five of her novels and novellas have been published by Lyrical Press, an imprint of Kensington Publishing. Find out more about her books at <http://bernadettewalsh.com> and about NICE GIRLS READING NAUGHTY BOOKS at <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/bernadettewalsh>. Be sure to like <https://www.facebook.com/NiceGirlsReading>



A Note from the Newsletter Editor:

Please note photos included in the newsletter are provided by the members. Any photos you'd like to include can be sent to newsletter@ntrwa.org. It is at the discretion of the newsletter editor as to which photos will be included in the newsletter. Thank you.

April 2014 Meeting Minutes:

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday, April 19, 2014 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The President and Secretary were present. The meeting was called to order at 10:45 a. m. The minutes for the March meeting were approved.

OFFICER REPORTS:

President: Clover Autrey reported:

- Conference review.
- Congratulated the NTRWA finalists in the Great Expectations contest and for the Carolyn Award.

President-Elect: Angi Morgan reported:

- No Report

Secretary: Lisa Fenley reported:

- No report.

Treasurer: Jen FitzGerald reported:

- The Treasurer's report was presented by Angi Morgan and filed for audit.

Program Director: Lara Lacombe was not present. Clover Autrey reported:

- Today's speakers are Sylvia McDaniel and Kathleen Baldwin

Membership Director: Gina Nelson reported:

- 63 members to date.
- Guests at meeting: 7

- Shannon Canard
- Heather Mason
- Faith Stencel
- Amanda McMurrey
- Andrea Geist
- Sheila Curlin
- Dakota Byrd

Communications Director: Kim Miller reported:

- Send information / articles for inclusion in the newsletter to newsletter@NTRWA.org by April 28.

Website Director:

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:

PAN Liaison: Chrissy Szarek reported:

- Presented pencils to:
 - Ally Broadfield – Just a Kiss, One Last Kiss
 - Marsha West – Second Chances
 - Jerrie Alexander – No Chance in Hell
 - Chris Keniston – Almost Paradise
 - Chrissy Szarek – Collision Control

PRO Liaison: Jeanne Guzman was not present:

Great Expectations: Angi Morgan reported:

- Presented certificates to those who placed in the Great Expectations contest.

Carolyn Contest: Jen FitzGerald reported:

- No report.

Hospitality: Michelle Welsh reported:

- No report.

Audio Librarian: Debra Owens was not present:

Writing Incentives: Christine Crocker reported:

- Distributed writing incentives.

Texas Two-Step: Lara Lacombe was not present. Chrissy Szarek reported in Lara Lacombe's absence:

- Signing at the Southlake Barnes and Noble rescheduled for June 14.

Bylaws: Angi Morgan reported:

- Bylaws changes approved via online membership vote.

Spotlights: Regina Richards reported:

- Ally Broadfield is our spotlight for April.

Unfinished Business:

- No unfinished business to report.

New Business:

- DFW Writer's Workshop Conference reminder.

Email questions, comments, or articles to newsletter@ntrwa.org.

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