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Letter from the President

[INSERT HERE]

October's Guest Speaker- Andra Dunn
of Convertible Communications

She will give us a lesson on social media marketing for your demographic.

Like her on:

<https://www.facebook.com/convertible.communications/?fref=ts>

The following article first appeared in the October 2016 issue of the quarterly newsletter of the Maryland Romance Writers chapter of RWA. Permission granted to reprint or forward to sister RWA chapters with proper credit to author and chapter.

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HOW TO TRAVEL THE WORLD WITHOUT GETTING ON A PLANE

by Eliza Knight

Ed.: We all write things we don't know firsthand. Bestselling historical romance author Eliza Knight is here to tell us how to get those fabulous setting details right without overwhelming our travel budgets.

That's right, you read that correctly! But chances are, you already know that you don't have to go anywhere to build a world. As writers, we have very vivid imaginations. We spend our days escaping into the realms that we've created, building landscapes for our readers to traverse. Sometimes, we're lucky enough to visit the places we write about, and other times, we have to take advantage of what we have at our fingertips.

The best way to immerse a reader into your world is to strike them at their senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, taste.

When I'm writing a scene, I like to close my eyes in complete quiet and imagine that I'm sitting smack in the center of my imaginary world. What do I see? What do I hear? What do I smell? What do I feel on my skin? What can I taste? All of these sensory details are what my reader will experience through the character. I want them to be as vivid and true as possible.

Are you ready to travel? These are a few tips on how I "get" there.

Sight/Sound

- **GoogleMaps:** I use GoogleMaps almost daily. I use it to see the places on the map, visit them through satellite images (zooming in and "walking" around). You can also use it to get from point A to point B, walking or driving.
- **Travel Blogs:** These are great because you can see it from another person's perspective, see their pics, and also pick up on tiny tidbits that you might not have been privy to from an official travel website. For example, you might learn that everyone in a particular town avoids a certain road because its believed to be haunted, or that Bess at the tavern makes the best muffins, but Nell at the bakery makes the best Bailey's spiked hot-cocoa. You get the point.
- **Site-seeing websites:** These are great if you are writing about a

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place and you want your characters to visit or live in the vicinity.

For me, castle websites are great because I learn about the history and can take virtual tours.

- **YouTube:** YouTube may be one of my favorites! I've been able to watch travel videos (professional, amateur, tourist), documentaries, cooking shows, learn to dance in an Elizabethan court, listen to medieval music, listen to dialect, etc... You can literally find EVERYTHING on YouTube.
- **TripAdvisor:** More personal anecdotes, pictures, tips, etc...
- **People:** Talk to anyone who has been there! Find out what they know!
- **Library:** Check out books about where you want to write!
- **Your Own Backyard:** Believe it or not, we can often find places "similar" to where we want to travel. One of the reasons I love hiking so much is that I can pretend I'm in a medieval forest. If you write historicals, check out a local Renn Faire, Medieval Times, museums, visit a lake, a forest. If you write contemporary, take advantage of the same sort of atmospheres! Is your heroine a marathon runner? Maybe you should start with a 5K. Is your hero into hot cars? Check out a local car show. Watch the sunrise or set, stare at the stars, put your bare feet in the grass, and let the rain drip on your face. The world is literally at your fingertips, all you have to do is open your eyes.

Scent

This one can be a bit tough, but here are a few things I do...

- Scented Candles (I even found a peat smoke one!)
- Incense
- Cooking/Eating/Drinking
- Perfume/Cologne
- Visit a place near you that may have the same "scents". For example, if you want to smell horses, visit the local equestrian center.

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Taste

- Try cooking some of the things in your story!
- Want to know what it tastes like to kiss after eating baked apples? Give it a shot.

Touch

- This one can be tougher, but you can try! Visit a fabric shop to feel fabrics, take a fencing class, and re-read my note above about exploring things in your own back yard. (Be careful about asking hot dudes in public if you can touch their abs for research... lol)

I hope these tips help you immerse yourself into your world! Open your mind. Do a bit of brainstorming, and above all, HAVE FUN!

MRW member **Eliza Knight** is an award-winning and USA Today bestselling indie author of over fifty sizzling historical romance and erotic romance. Under the name E. Knight, she pens rip-your-heart-out historical fiction. She lives atop a small mountain with her own knight in shining armor, three princesses and two very naughty puppies. Visit Eliza's [website](#) or her historical blog [History Undressed](#). You can also find her on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



The following article first appeared in the August 2016 issue of In Print!, the monthly newsletter of Houston Bay Area RWA. Permission granted to reprint or forward to sister RWA chapters with proper credit to author and chapter.

GRAMMAR GREMLINS: I Wish I Were...

[Subscribe](#)[Share ▼](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)*by Kay Hudson*

The esteemed newsletter editor who's been bugging me to write a grammar piece now and then cornered me at lunch the other day and even gave me a starting topic: Is it *I wish I were* or *I wish I was*, and what's the grammar rule?

I thought I knew the answer, but it's been a very long time since I learned the technical stuff, so the first question really was *what do I look up?* I was fairly sure the term *subjunctive* was involved, but subjunctive what? Tense? Case? Voice? Plowing through the indexes of several of the grammar books on my reference shelf finally led me to the answer: subjunctive *mood*.

About half of the books I checked didn't even mention the subjunctive. *The Merriam-Webster Concise Handbook for Writers* (1991, p. 176) gives it one sentence (concise indeed!): "The subjunctive mood expresses condition contrary to fact (I wish that he *were* here)."

By far the most common subjunctive usage in modern English is the one my friend asked about: thoughts beginning with *if I . . .* or *I wish I . . .*

If I were Queen, I would make everyone happy (but, alas, I'm not, and can't).

I wish I were half as good a writer as [insert your own favorite here].

If I were you, I wouldn't adopt a baby gorilla.

The Wordwatcher's Guide to Good Writing & Grammar (1990, p. 136) addresses the subjunctive under the heading IF, explaining that not all "if" sentences call for the subjunctive. The subjunctive (*were*) "expresses a wish or a contrary to fact," while the indicative mood (*was*) expresses "a simple condition relating to the past." In other words (my examples):

If Alice were at the meeting, she would have raised the question (but she wasn't there, so go with the subjunctive).

If Alice were not at the meeting, the question would not have been raised (but she was there, and raised the question—again, contrary to fact, therefore subjunctive).

If Alice was at the meeting, I didn't see her (she might well have been there, someone said she was, so go with the indicative for this one).

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There are other uses of the subjunctive mood that seem to be fading from modern English usage; if you're interested, Theodore M. Bernstein goes into some detail in *The Careful Writer: A Modern Guide to English Usage* (1965, pp. 430-432). He identifies the subjunctive as "the form associated with condition, command, wish, doubt, desire, possibility and the like," and marked by a verb change, was to were being the most familiar. Standard phrases like *Far be it from me . . .*, *The public be damned*, *Lest it be thought . . .*, *God forbid*, and *Come what may* are also remnants of subjunctive mood.

Remember that anything goes in dialog, depending on how you want your characters to be perceived: they might be highly educated and adhere to the rules of grammar even in everyday speech (few people do), or they might have little or no education. They might make an effort to speak standard English, or they might be happily colloquial in their speech. That part is up to you.

Please note that Kay Hudson bit her tongue (or gripped her mouse) and refrained from making any political jokes in this article. It wasn't easy. The word index has two acceptable plurals, indexes and indices. She looked it up so you won't have to. Kay Hudson has far too many books on the craft of writing waiting on her Kindle. She should be writing instead of reading. Visit her at kayhudson.com.

Think you could do a better job on this newsletter?

I completely agree!

Think about becoming the VP of Communications for 2017.

You can put any damn thing in here you wish. Isn't that great?!

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SOCIAL MEDIA

Are you doing your homework?

*Remember to Like, Tweet, Share, Retweet with your peeps!

If you'd like your information to be included, please use the Social Media update form in the members only section of our website. Please remember that information on our roster is for members only use and is a violation of chapter bylaws to be sold or used for profit.

<http://ntrwagreatexpectations.blogspot.com/p/ntrwa-social-media-form.html>

MINUTES from SEPTEMBER

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday, September 17, 2016 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The President-Elect and the Secretary were present. The meeting was called to order at 10:49 a.m. The minutes for the August 20, 2016 meeting were approved.

OFFICER REPORTS:

President: Suzan Butler was not present. Kim Miller reported:

- If you are interested in a leadership position for 2017, whether a Board position (requires a membership vote) or a Committee Chair position (appointed), please see Kim Miller. If more than one person is interested in a board position, a run-off vote will occur.
- The positions requiring a membership vote are:
 - President
 - President-Elect

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- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Vice-President, Program Director
- Vice-President, Communications
- Membership Chairperson
- Chapter Contests Chairperson

President-Elect: Kim Miller presented:

- We need to have a board meeting in October 2016. Kim will send out a meeting request through the board loop. Tentative date: October 1, 2016.

Secretary: Lisa Fenley reported:

- The August 20, 2016 meeting minutes were approved and filed for audit.

Treasurer: Jen FitzGerald reported:

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

Program Director: Amanda McMurrey reported:

- Information on next month's program will be provided soon.
- Today's Meeting:
 - **Chris A. Crawford on *Scrivener***

Website Director:

- If you want to post information to the website, please contact Jen

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FITZGerald.

- **COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:**

Membership Director: Angi Morgan was not present.

- No report.

Communications Director: Audra Lewandowski was not present:

- Report submitted:
 - Send information / articles / photos for inclusion in the newsletter to newsletter@NTRWA.org by September 28, 2016.
 - Social Media—please complete the profile information for your social media formats to share with the chapter.

PAN Liaison: Chrissy Szarek reported:

- Pencils for book releases / sales to members present:
 - Cindy Dees – Two new books with Dreamcatcher
 - Carolyn Rae Williamson - *Just the Two of Us*
- RWA pins for milestones (starting at 5 books published.) Pins are \$10 apiece. Order through RWA. You must order your pins yourself.

PRO Liaison: Clover Autrey reported:

- Report Filed:
 - If you are not a PRO member, please see Clover for application information. PRO pins must be purchased from

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KVVA.

- PRO membership allows you on the NT PRO loop, where training and information are provided to our chapter PRO members.

Two Step Conference: Amanda McMurrey reported.

- No report.

Great Expectations: Lisa Fenley reported:

- Report filed:
 - We need volunteers to help with the 2017 contest. Category coordinators are the most pressing need.

Carolyn Contest: Jen FitzGerald reported:

- Report filed:
 - Contest Complete and winners announced
 - We need volunteers to help with the 2017 contest.

Hospitality: Faith Stencil was not present:

- Faith Stencil will continue her tenure as hospitality chair for the next half of the year.

Writing Incentives: Chrissy Szarek reported:

- Top 3 Edited Pages: Cindy Dees – 690, Carolyn Rae Williamson – 581, Chrissy Szarek - 281
- Top 3 Written Pages: Lisa Fenley – 127, Carolyn Rae Williamson

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– 96, Jen FITZGerald - 89

- Quarterly Gift Card Drawing:
 - Most Edited: Gina Nelson
 - Most Written: Cindy Dees

Bylaws: Angi Morgan was not present.

- No report.

Spotlights: Open Position:

- No Report.

Unfinished Business:

- No unfinished business to report.

New Business:

- No new business to report.

Next Business Meeting: 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, October 15, 2016 at La Hacienda. The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Submitted electronically by [s] Lisa Fenley.

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#delish

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.

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

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