April 2017 Heart to Heart Newsletter View this email in your browser

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Our very own Marsha West was interviewed on the Dear Texas Radio Show.
If you'd like to listen, click here.

The following article first appeared in the March 2017 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.

Thanks,

Leslie Marshman

Editor, In Print!

~*~*~

Contest Coordinator
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Chrissy Szarek

Writing Incentives
Chrissy Szarek

PRO Liaison
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Bylaws
Angi Morgan

Two Step Conference
Angi Morgan

Great Expectations
Lisa Fenley

The Carolyn
Jen FitzGerald

Spotlight
Jen FitzGerald

Hospitality
Jen FitzGerald

WRITE WITH CONFIDENCE, WRITE DRUNK, JUST WRITE

by Terri Richison

Bringing a character to life is more than back story. It's more than weight and height and hair color. It's more than speech patterns and grammar. It's more than anger and joy and confidence.

So what is it? I don't have a clue!

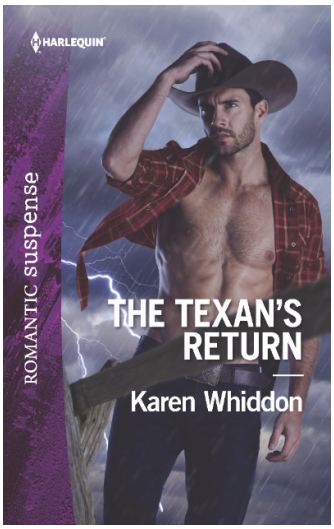
Oh wait. I asked the question. Now I have to fake my way to an answer. It's my job to convince you to come with me on a journey to discover my truth of that premise. I have to write with confidence, write drunk and just write. All at the same time. Easy-peasy NOT!

How do I write with confidence? By knowing my characters' backstory. Because this happened in your past, now you react like this.

Example: BLUE BLOODS – *Tom Selleck's character, Frank Regan, hates his birthday. Why? On Frank's tenth birthday his friends had been invited to a baseball game. No one showed up. Turns out his dad gave everyone the wrong date. Ten-year-old Frank only knew that he had a birthday party and nobody came. Now he hates his birthday. After Frank is reminded of this tenth birthday fiasco, he buys baseball tickets and surprises his family and friends by giving himself a 'surprise' birthday party.*

Proper motivation allows our characters to react exactly the way we need them to react, but we must share the backstory so readers understand and empathize, without an information dump or making readers feel manipulated. It needs to be organic to the story and germane to the plot.

Wow, that last sentence sounds really smart, but what does it mean? Organic to the story: Don't drop a bomb out of left field.



The Texan's Return
Karen Whiddon
Coming April 1st

Germane to the plot: There is a reason for everything that happens.

Now, let's all get drunk and write! Not literally. Well, unless you want to, but remember that to write drunk, you have to write. I've talked about this concept before in my blog post How Not to Be Frozen By Knowledge or the Lack There Of at www.writeorconsequences.com. Or read Ann LORINDA Peake's take on this subject at Write Drunk at the same blog.

Basically, get out of your own way! Forget all the rules and write whatever comes to mind.

(continued below)

WRITE WITH CONFIDENCE, WRITE DRUNK, JUST WRITE
(continued from above)

Just write. If you don't know what to write, write anyway. Need the ultimate motivator? Check out the most dangerous writing app (http://www.themostdangerouswritingapp.com/). Set the website timer and write. If you stop writing before the timer goes off, you lose everything you've already written. So you have to keep putting words on the page, even if they don't make sense or you forgot a comma or you don't remember so-and-so's name. You must keep going and going and going, just like the Energizer Bunny.

The only way to get beyond writers' block is to write. And the most dangerous writing app forces you to do that. For me, it went further. When I couldn't stop to worry or question or plan or even think, I discovered a new joy in writing. That's right – joy in writing. And I amazed myself. I set a timer for three minutes and I wrote 341 words! That's a page and a half. In 3 minutes!

But, more important it got me beyond not knowing what came next. I write totally by the seat of my pants, so when I don't know what happens next, I'm at full stop. Instead of wallowing in self-pity 'cause The Girls weren't coming out to play and risking a 'pie in the face' (for more on pies, and a video of our first 'victim' www.writeorconsequences.com) if I didn't have twenty pages to turn in at critique group, I set the timer and started writing. When those words started fading off the page, motivation struck like lightening. Were they good words – hell yes they were, even if they don't make the final cut! Because those words started a momentum that is still pushing me forward.

My character needs to buy a car; instead of stopping to figure out what kind of car, I put a XXX in the manuscript and kept going. She needs a car. She buys a car. Must. Keep. Typing.

Later, I'll open a bottle of wine and decide what statement I want the car to make. Will it be a practical,

inexpensive, no frills Ford Ranger? Or a Lexus NX, low end luxury, but still a Lexus. Or a Lexus LX, top of the line luxury. Or, maybe it's a Nissan because when she was sixteen years old, she broke down on the side of the road and the boy who helped her drove a Nissan.

The car she drives may not have an impact on the plot, but it does make a statement about the person and her budget. Figuring out the car she drives will help me write with confidence. Working on the most dangerous writers' app will help me write drunk. Now, it's time for me to just write.

Have you written today?

Terri Richison lives in Clear Lake City with the prototype of all her heroes, her high school sweetheart and husband of forty plus years. She is working toward a goal of self-publishing women's fiction. When she isn't writing or spoiling her grandsons, she is trying to keep up with her giant Great Dane, Thor (giant, even by Dane standards.)

35TH ANNIVERSARY PROGRAMS

Interested in the ***Charm Program***!

More information can be found on the website.

How about the ***Continuity/Anthology*** Lone Star Love?

More information is available here.

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Leslie Marshman

Editor, In Print!

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HAVE YOU BECOME BITTER AND JADED?

by Julie Glover

I recently had a bad author day. If you've been writing for a while, you probably already know what I mean. It's that day when the obstacles loom larger, when confidence in your abilities wanes, when being a stunt person seems like safer choice than putting yourself out there for more rejection or bad reviews. It's that day you hunt for silver linings, but gray clouds keep moving in and blocking them from view.

Honestly, the whole business of writing was getting me down. So I hopped on Facebook and said something grumpy to my critique partner. After a bit of discussion, she ended up saying that she didn't want me to become "bitter and jaded." Ouch! But you know, it was the jolt I needed. Mulling through that warning, I recalled one of my favorite movie scenes ever, from The Rookie.

In The Rookie, an older man who's been coaching a high school baseball team tries out for the pros. He lands a position as a relief pitcher on a minor league team, but the business of baseball—being on the road and away from his family—frustrates him. Feeling bitter and jaded, he considers leaving the team and tells his wife, "I'm wasting my time here." His wife agrees the schedule has been tough on them, but then she asks, "Do you still love it?" Meaning baseball. When he doesn't answer, she adds, "Just think about that, okay?"

He does think about that, quite thoroughly. The next morning, he shows up at the fieldhouse sporting a massive smile and greets another player on the team with: "You know what we get to do today? We get to play baseball." (You can watch the full clip here.)

What's your answer to that question: Do you still love it? Do you love writing?

I still love it. When I'm in the midst of writing or editing, when I read something I've written that sings, when I share scenes or a full book with others and it gives them "the feels," I'm on Cloud Nine with silver linings shooting out of my ears. I love my stories, my characters, my prose. I adore the camaraderie of writers, where I can finally hang out with people who "get" me. I'm eager to meet readers and sign their books or hear how they related to a character I wrote.

Sometimes this business can get you down—whether it's the learning, the waiting, the rejections, the bad reviews, the lack of cash in your pocket. But let's remember that, while we are entrepreneurs, we are also storytellers. Everyone loves a good story, right? But we also love telling the story, including those stories in which bitter-and-jaded characters find true love and savor their happy endings.

And writing, for me and for many of you, is true love.

Julie Glover writes young adult fiction, collects boots, practices rampant sarcasm, and advocates for the interrobang. Her YA contemporary novel, SHARING HUNTER, was an RWA® Golden Heart® finalist. She's also conference chair for our upcoming Starfish Con.

MARCH 18 2017 BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday,

March 18, 2017 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The President and the Secretary were present. The meeting was called to order at 10:47 a.m. The minutes for the February 18, 2017 meeting were approved.

OFFICER REPORTS:

President: Kim Miller reported:

- Will be filing paperwork for affiliation with RWA.

Secretary: Robin Nelson reported:

- The February 18, 2017 meeting minutes were approved and filed for audit.

Treasurer: Cindy Dees reported:

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

Program Director: Amanda McMurrey was not present

- Open to suggestions for ideas especially writing faster.
- Today's Meeting**:**
  - March 2017 ~ J. Kathleen Cheney: Historical Fiction for Fiction Writer
  - April Meeting – Brainstorming Group
  - April 1st Workshop on Tammy Cowden.

Membership Director: Angi Morgan was not present

- Will be sending out membership reminders and membership packets.

Communications Director: Jen FitzGerald reported:

- Send information / articles / photos for inclusion in the newsletter to newsletter@NTRWA.org by April 1, 2017.
- Social Media—please complete the profile information for your social media formats to share with the chapter. If there are changes there is a form online.
- Please send in an office selfie.
- If you need information added to the website, send to website@ntrwa.org.

Contests Director: Lisa Fenley reported:

- Need volunteers for both contests.

Great Expectations Contest: Lisa Fenley reported:

- Paper Thank You's for contest finalists were signed.
- Contest date extended as editors need more time.
- Looking for technical people to help out.

Carolyn Contest: Jen FitzGerald reported:

- Judging almost complete.

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:

PAN Liaison: Chrissy Szarek reported:

- Pencils for book releases / sales to members present
- RWA pins for milestones (starting at 5 books published.) Pins are $10 apiece. Order through RWA. You must order your pins yourself.

PRO Liaison: OPEN POSITION:
Need someone to take position

- If you are not a PRO member, please see Clover for application information. PRO pins must be purchased from RWA.
- PRO membership allows you on the NT PRO loop, where training and information are provided to our chapter PRO members.

Two Step Conference: Angi Morgan was not present

- April 1st – Tammy Cowden at Grapevine Concourse. Links will be in the membership renewal notice and will be in newsletter and on website. $30.00 for members and $90.00 for non members
- Only 20 people registered. Please share on social media.

Hospitality: Jen FitzGerald reported:

- Always looking for ideas for gifts.

Writing Incentives: Chrissy Szarek reported: No report.

Bylaws: Angi Morgan was not present

Spotlights: Jen FitzGerald reported:

- The spotlight is on Cathy MacRae

35th Anniversary Committee:

- **Charm Program: Chrissy Szarek reported:**
  - Only 17 people signed up for Anniversary Charm Bracelet. Please sign up.
  - Charm bracelets available for those who already signed up.
  - Starts today and goes meeting from meeting. Two weeks before meeting reminder will be sent out to report results.
  - Need to get information to Chrissy Szarek Friday before meeting. As soon as you make number can fill out form on website.
- **Anthology/Continuity: Jen FitzGerald reported:**
  - Must take place in Dew Drop Texas.
  - Due January 27th 2018.
  - Must be Romance except Erotic. Must be PG13.
  - Words 3000-3500.
  - Shooting for 10 stories.
  - Ebook Only.
  - On the NTRWA website there is a link to find more information and the town bible.

Unfinished Business:

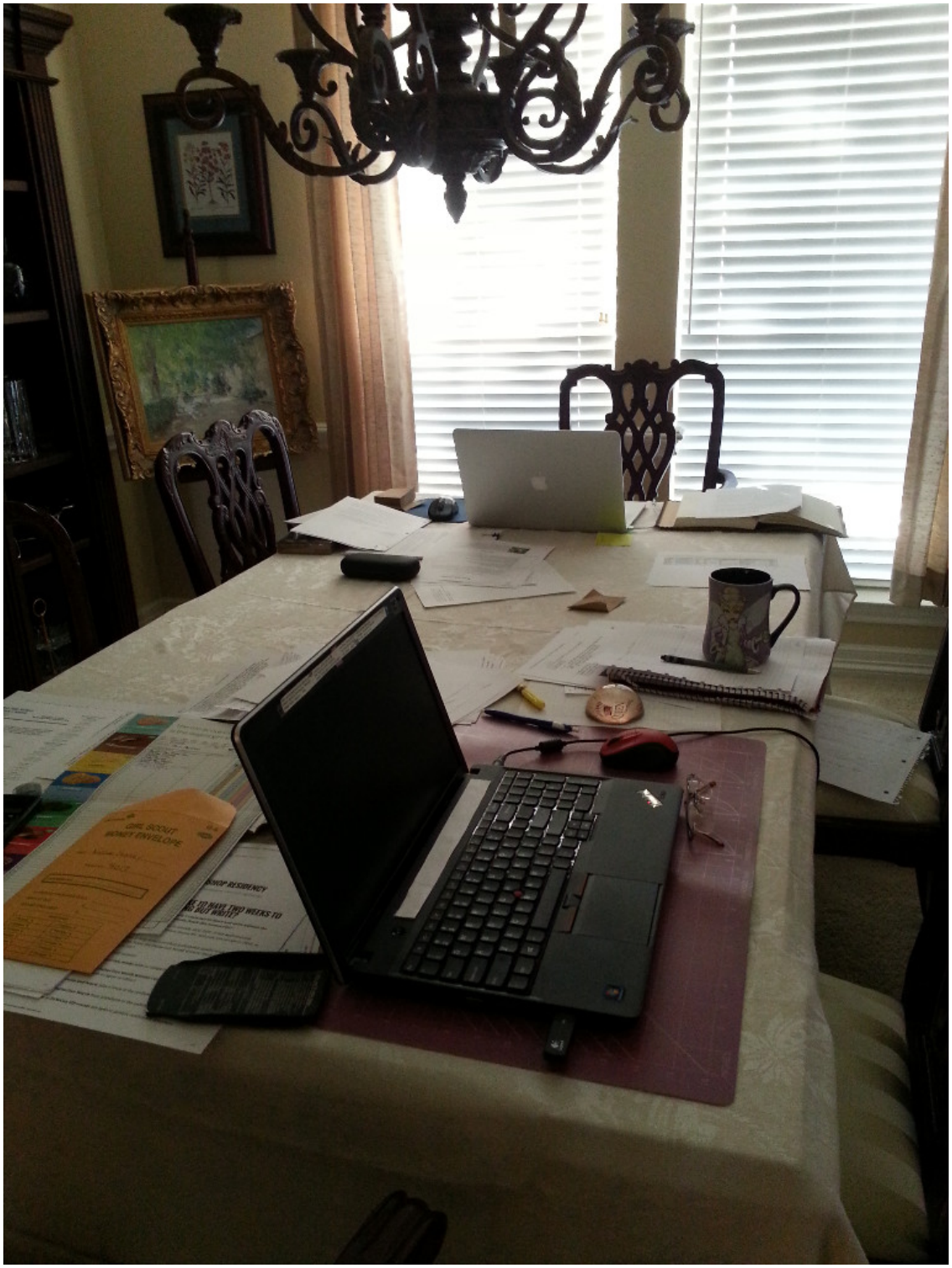
- No unfinished business to report.

New Business:

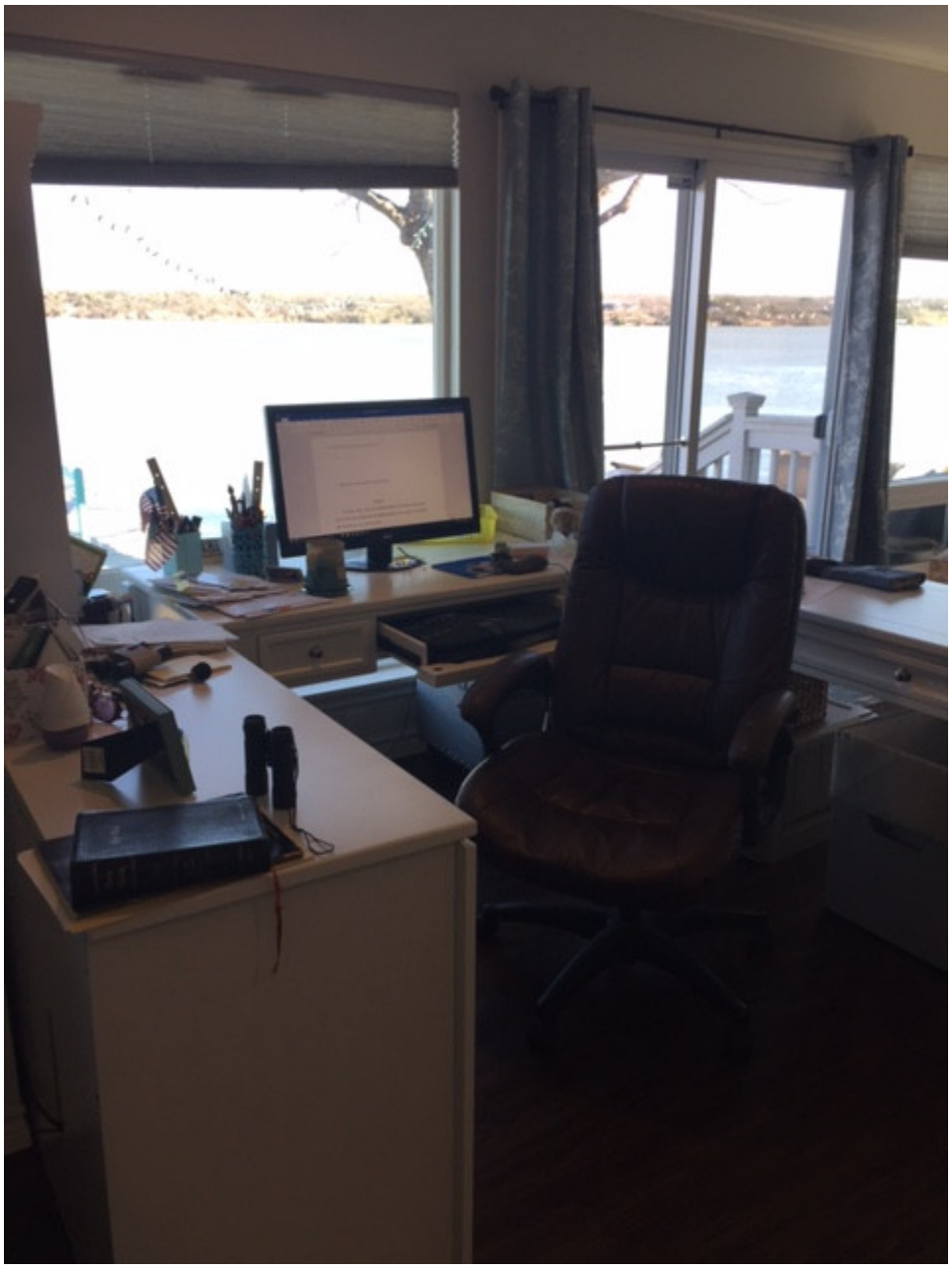
- No new business to report.

Next Business Meeting: 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 15, 2017 at La Hacienda.
The meeting adjourned at 11:14 a.m.
Submitted electronically by Robin Nelson.
Date Approved: _____
Date Corrected: _____

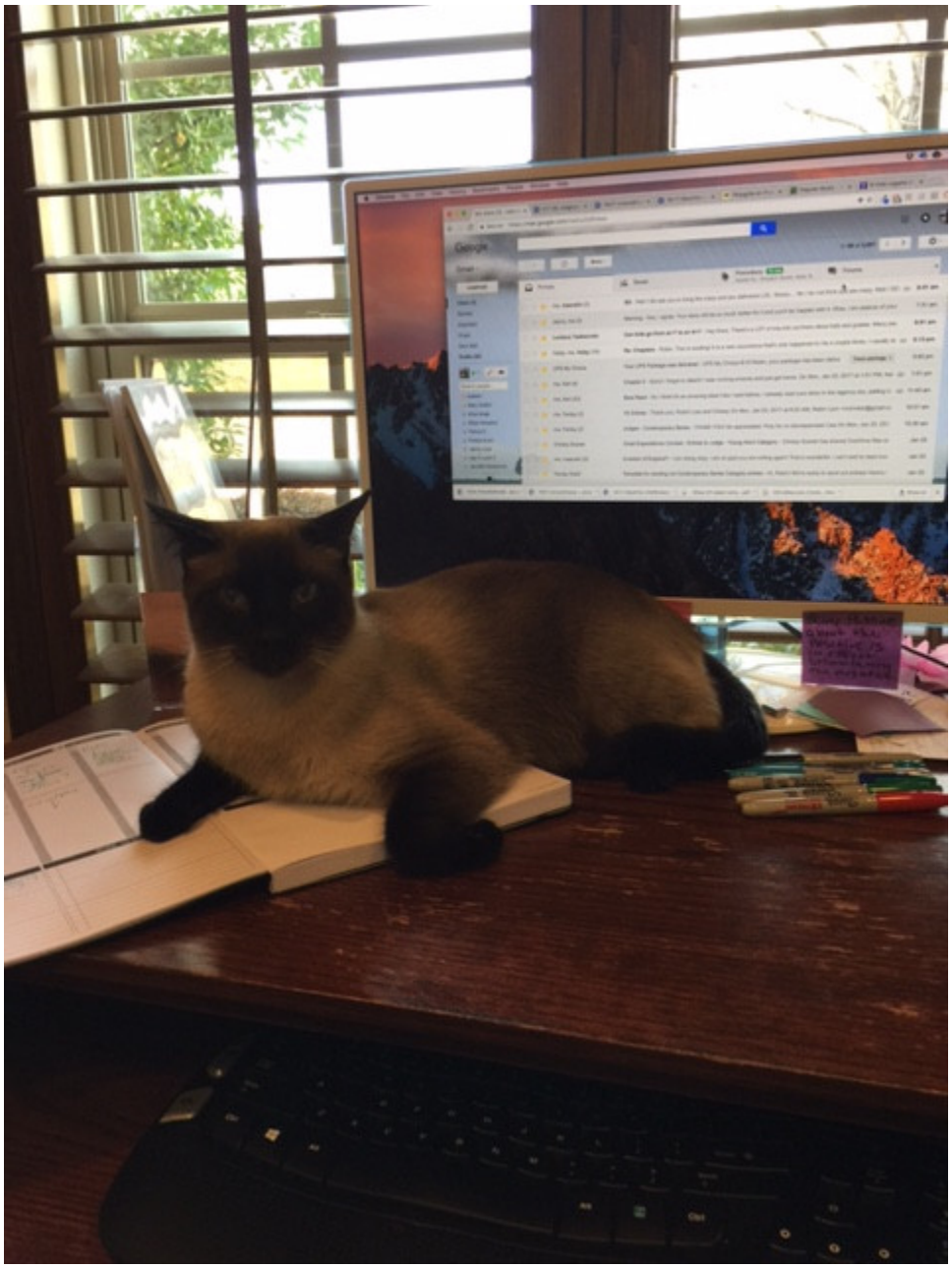
OFFICE SELFIES



Lisa Fenley's work space. Two laptops??? She's working doubly hard. :0)



Marsha's got a great view from her desk.



Robin Nelson has a furry muse.

More office selfies coming in May! Send yours to newsletter@ntrwa.org.

OUR APRIL PROGRAM--APRIL 15, 2017

April Plot Party!

Tired of your taxes and wanting to get back to love in the sun or danger in the big

city? Join us on April 15th for NT's April Plot Party!

Need to perk up that plodding plot? Iron out your story wrinkle? Tune up that twist? Complex the heck outta those characters? Your NT sisters are here for you!

Join us for two hours of plotting, planning, and…Cindy Dees' Spaghetti Bowls! Wait—what are Cindy Dees Spaghetti Bowls, you ask? You'll just have to come see! Hint…they're carb free, but great for your story…

And don't worry, if you want a couple of hours of just writing, free of kids, pets and large male kids, you can do that too. We'll have a couple of power cords and prizes for most words written during the two hours.
Make sure to bring your earbuds and playlist!

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