



*A note from the 2011 president,
Marsha West*

Happy New Year, NT members! I hope your holidays were filled with wonderful experiences and love. It's a little daunting to follow our past president Gina Nelson in writing this piece. She strings words together like she's writing a song with only the notes missing. As a reader, the beauty in her phrasing constantly struck me. (Huge thanks to her, the past board, and committee chairs for the great year NT had in 2010.)

Okay, gang, here's the deal, I write straightforward, a little wordy, but not lyrical. My critique partners help me cut the excess in my novels, and I'm sure I can count on Jean (our newsletter editor) and Kim (our new pres-elect) to assist me here.

As the time for this endeavor has drawn nearer, I've considered whether I'd have a theme for the year or just wing it every issue. Because I consider honesty to be a very important character trait, (my fifth novel is titled *Truth Be Told*), I decided to fess up about an embarrassing issue. Writing has been so difficult for me the last half of 2010, I've considered quitting. I haven't for a number of reasons.

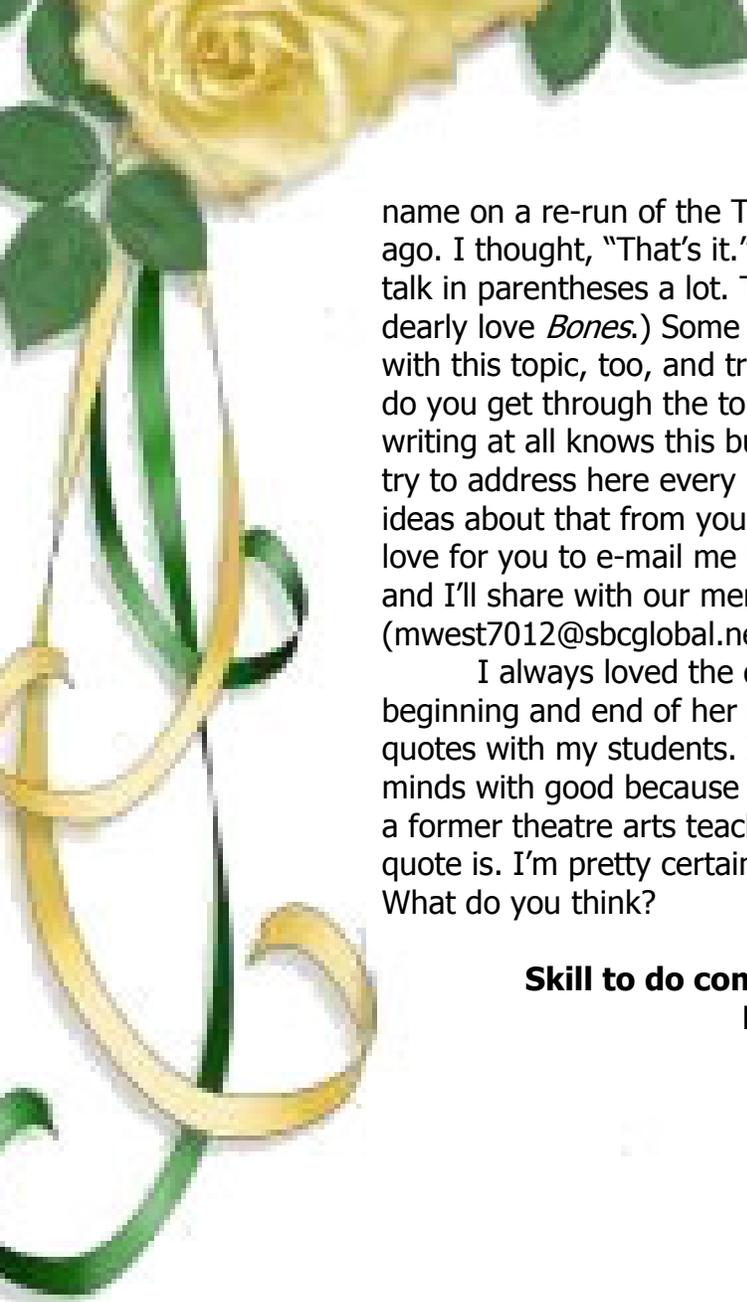
1) My critique partners would kill me and I don't want them to go to prison.

2) I'm a responsible person and feel strongly about fulfilling commitments. I made a commitment to you to serve as president this year. It's a job I'm grateful to take on, because I've gained a lot from this chapter and it's definitely time to pay back. Also, I'm an organization person and find it fun to help facilitate meetings and read bylaws.

3) I'd be lost without this group of friends and acquaintances, the work, and challenges. I've never been one who can just sit around without a task at hand.

From the angst of my struggles, I've I drawn a theme for the year. Keep on Keeping On. I heard a song of that





name on a re-run of the TV show *Bones* a couple of weeks ago. I thought, "That's it." (You will have noticed by now I talk in parentheses a lot. The point of this one is how much I dearly love *Bones*.) Some of the various loops have dealt with this topic, too, and tried to answer the question, "How do you get through the tough times?" Anyone who's been writing at all knows this business is tough. That's what we'll try to address here every month. I know many of you have ideas about that from your own and others' experiences. I'd love for you to e-mail me with what you've found helpful, and I'll share with our members.
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I always loved the quotes Gina included at the beginning and end of her column. When I taught, I shared quotes with my students. I believe we have to prime our minds with good because society bombards us with junk. As a former theatre arts teacher, I know how true this month's quote is. I'm pretty certain it pertains to our writing, too. What do you think?

Skill to do comes of doing. ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

