

*A note from the 2011 president,
Marsha West*

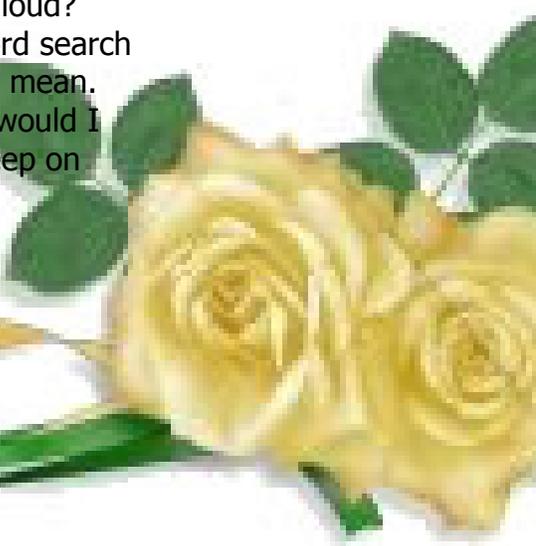
Let me begin by saying, "AAAGGGGHHHH!" I'm doing word searches on my 3rd book, *The Theatre*, (92,000 words give or take a few) getting ready to send to agents that Jeannie, Jerrie and I visited with at the NOLA conference. What an exhausting, backbreaking, shoulder-aching endeavor. My list compiled from various sources, including Margie Lawson, my CPs, and discoveries of my own "favorites" contains 75 word(s)/phrases. The process has been ongoing over a couple of weeks and especially intensive the last four days.

Some are not words I use often. Others are near and dear to me. For instance, I found 85 "a little." (Got it down to 3.) Eighty-two feel/felt combinations, down to 6. The biggie is "see." One hundred seventy-eight of those babies, down now to 14. Folks, this is tedious work. At least for those of us who write very colloquially, which I do. (I removed "I know for a fact" from that sentence. Jeez Louise!!)

The good news is I can see the ms tightening up. Going through this process has forced me to search for more specific ways of writing. This is good. (Not good is the extra time I spend writing emails, because my brain is in edit mode, and I keep stopping to fix every problem. Crazy) The word count has both shrunk and expanded. Deleting words like "some" is fast and easy. Other times you have to use more words to say whatever. As I tiptoe through the ms line by line, possibilities to expand descriptions & emotions arise.

I've used this technique before, but never to this extent. I'm anxious to complete the word search and discover what the results are for the finished book. What and who will it sound like when I read the ms out loud?

This year's theme is "Keeping On." The word search exercise illustrates the reality of what those words mean. I'm realistically looking at another week, and boy would I like to stop, call it a day. But I'm close and will keep on





keeping on. Sometimes we have to be in the right place to learn a new idea, guess I'm there.

We are fortunate in NT to have many writers willing to share what they've learned along the way on their writing journey. Please mark your calendars for the 3rd Saturday of the month and come learn with us.

Success can be measured more by obstacles overcome when trying to reach success than plateaus reached.

~ Anonymous

