

*A note from the 2011 president,
Marsha West*

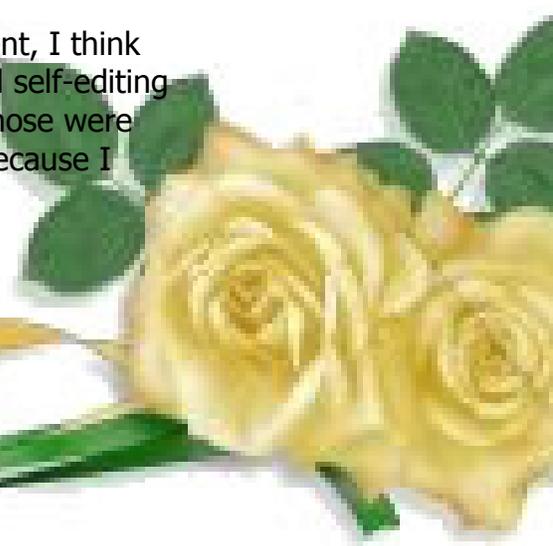
As I write this, the NT members who are attending the RWA convention in NYC are going into overdrive to finish getting ready for the trip. The first conference I attended was in Dallas a few years ago when I hadn't even joined NT yet. The second was last year in Orlando. I encourage you to save up to attend a national conference. Not certain when the next time we'll meet in Dallas is, but if you don't make it to one before then, certainly Dallas is an achievable goal.

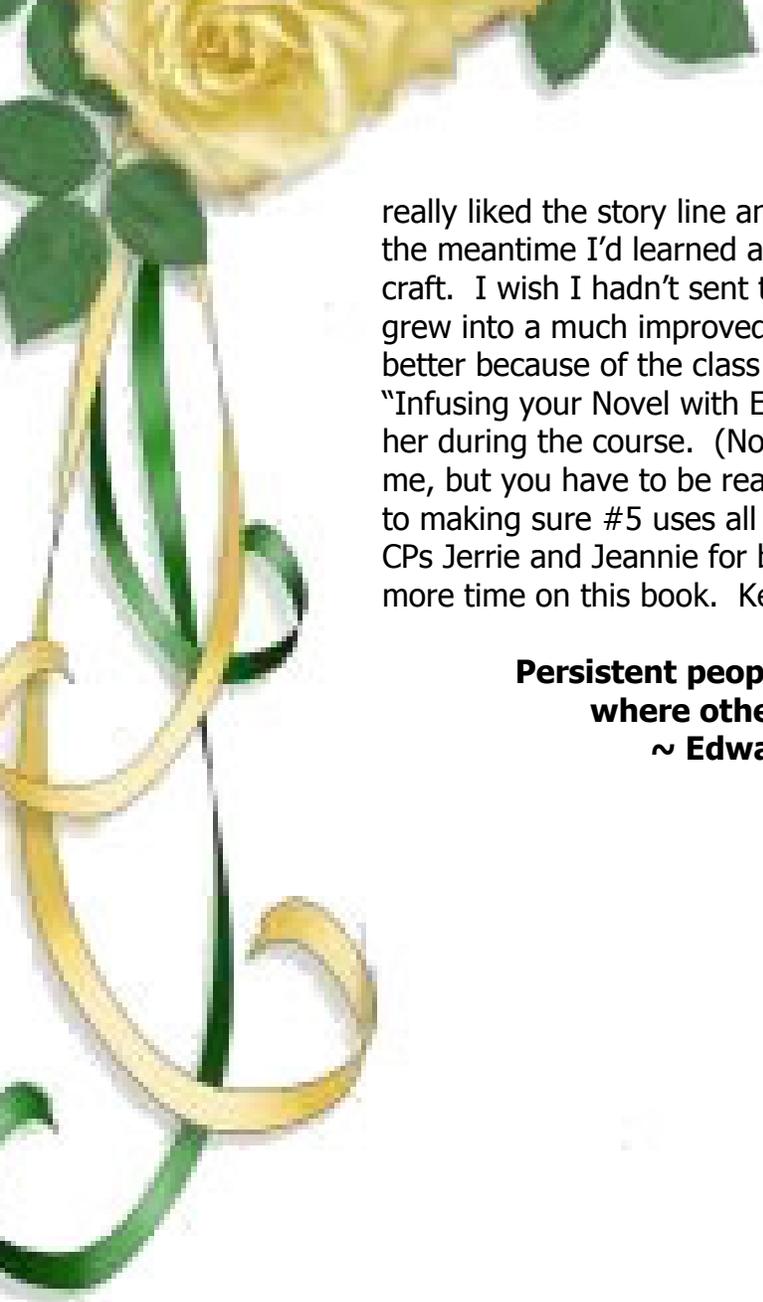
Thanks to Kim Campbell, our president elect, for helping keep everyone connected for this trip. Thanks to Barb Han and Wendy Watson for coming up with the great NT basket—a purse in the shape of a saddle including its own stirrups. Very clever! And thanks to everyone who contributed gift cards, money and cool stuff to stuff the purse. I'm sure it will help raise lots of funds for literacy.

On to my writing journey, which has been rocky over the past year. I believe I'm finally climbing out of the pit. Not a nice place to have been. The good thing is I used the past tense in that phrase. Because of lots of soul searching, several very good online classes, a conference or two, and some blogs I've read, I do believe I'm going to come out on top.

Let me share something I wish I'd known in the early days of writing. (I've completed five novels and have a 6th marinating.) I believe I queried way too early. We pretty much have to do contests and get the stuffing knocked out of us. Even with good CPs, you can send pages before they're ready and get the stuffing knocked out of you. I'm not bashing contests. I think they're a necessary evil—sometimes being wonderfully helpful and other times . . . not so much.

But before you push send to query an agent, I think you have to have gone through every last helpful self-editing checklist you've got. (I didn't even know what those were when I first queried.) I rewrote my third book because I





really liked the story line and the characters and because in the meantime I'd learned a heck of a lot more about the craft. I wish I hadn't sent that book the first times I did. It grew into a much improved book. But now, it could be even better because of the class I just took: Linda Style's "Infusing your Novel with Emotion." I learned a ton from her during the course. (Not that others hadn't tried to tell me, but you have to be ready to hear.) I'm looking forward to making sure #5 uses all of her strategies. Thanks to my CPs Jerrie and Jeannie for being willing to hang in there one more time on this book. Keep on writing.

**Persistent people begin their success
where others end in failure.
~ Edward Eggleston**

