

*A note from the 2011 president,  
Marsha West*

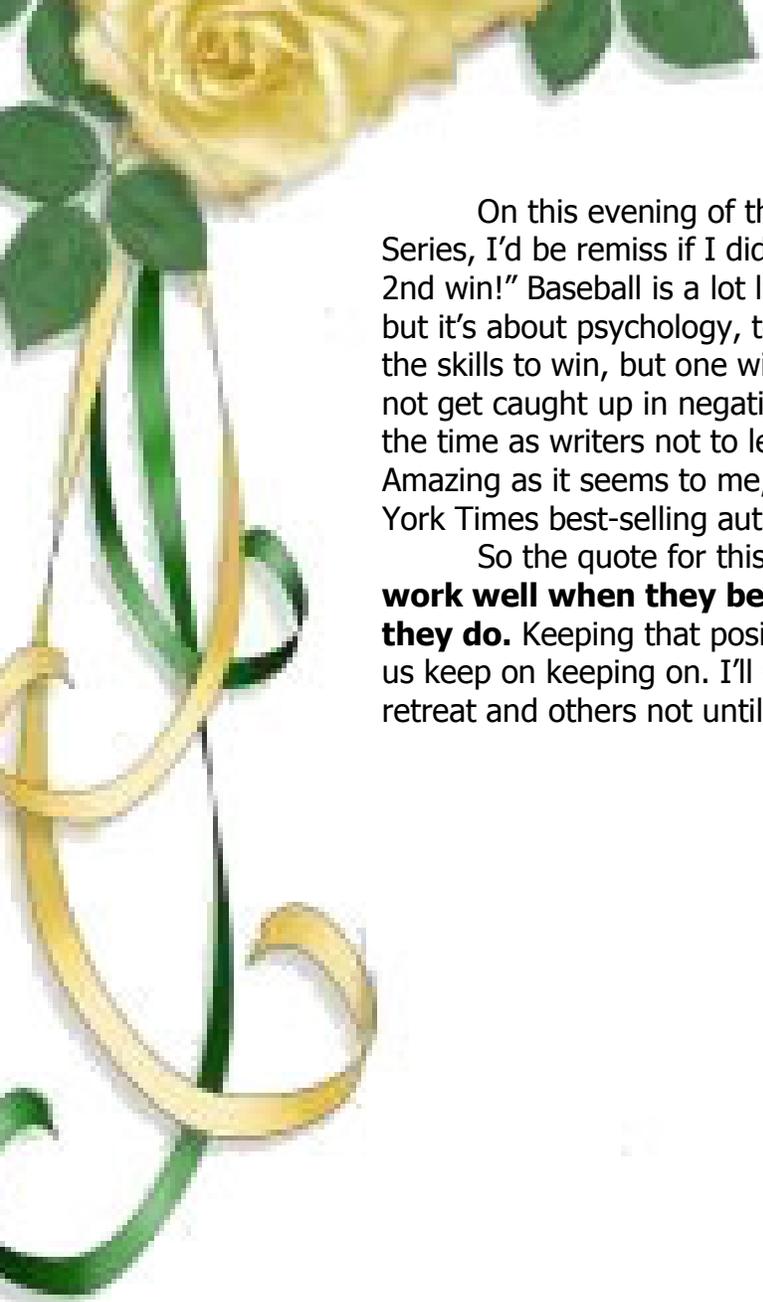
Fall is my favorite time of year. Unfortunately, I haven't found many of those cool, breezy days I love—when you need a light jacket, the wind sends your hair swirling around your head and into your eyes, and the leaves rustle like someone whispering "hush." On most of our trip to New England, we found hot, muggy temperatures suited best for short sleeves when I'd packed only long sleeves. Good excuse to buy a t-shirt with VERMONT written across the front. A friend recently sent me a news article about why leaves turn red. "Tree-ologists" have theories that explain the yellow and orange, but not the red.

I guess writing is a little like that. We've heard the experts tell what makes a great author or how you ought to write a book, but it's all just theories. In some cases, nothing more than opinion, with one person's opinion as good as anyone else's. Well, with the exception of a publisher whose opinion counts, because they will buy your book or not. Julia Quinn, our October guest, (and I'm sorry many of you missed her) spent time debunking many of the rules we try hard to live by in the writers' world. "Know the rules, but know when to break 'em." Advice I've heard from others, too.

Any of you who attended our retreat at Deer Creek a couple of falls ago will remember Rosemary and Candy focusing on the importance of believing in ourselves. If we don't, why should anyone else? We have to remember that when an agent or editor tells us they don't like dates and times at the beginning of scenes. We've all read plenty of published books that use that technique. It's all about finding the editor/agent who likes what we write. Failing that, we can jump into the indie publishing ranks.

Same goes there, too. I've read what I thought were really well written indie books, and some not so much. Those that come out from the big New York publishers are the same way. Some great, others we could take or leave.





On this evening of the fourth game in the World Series, I'd be remiss if I didn't say, "Yeah, Rangers on the 2nd win!" Baseball is a lot like writing. Players need skills, but it's about psychology, too. Either of these teams have the skills to win, but one will be stronger psychologically and not get caught up in negative thinking. We have to fight all the time as writers not to let negative thinking trip us up. Amazing as it seems to me, big name, multi-published New York Times best-selling authors also have doubts.

So the quote for this month is anonymous: **People work well when they believe they are good at what they do.** Keeping that positive vision of our writing will help us keep on keeping on. I'll see some of you in Irving at the retreat and others not until December.

