



June 2006 Meeting

By Shannon Canard

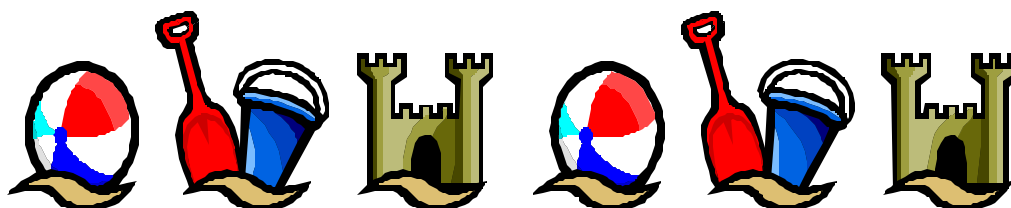
Author Roundtable Critique

In this annual summer workshop, members can take advantage of a one-on-one critique session with a published author. NTRWA members who previously* submitted the first 10 pages of a manuscript will sit down with one of nine participating authors and review what works in that opening hook, what doesn't, and why. It's a great opportunity to polish a book's first pages for submission to an agent and/or editor following the national conference.

This year's distinguished panel of published critiquers include: Cathy Spangler, Juliet Burns, Vickie Taylor, Candace Havens, Rosemary Clement-Moore, Judy McCoy, Gail Dayton, Yvonne Jocks, and Shelley Bradley.

Even if you didn't submit material for critique, members are encouraged to attend. There will be plenty of networking and socializing!

*Members were required to submit, in advance, the 10 pages for critique. The deadline was May 20th.



Everywhere I go, I'm asked if I think the university stifles writers. My opinion is that they don't stifle enough of them. There's many a best-seller that could have been prevented by a good teacher.

Flannery O'Conner

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President's Corner

I can't believe it's June and the year is nearly half over. I guess time really does fly when you're having fun :) And I have to say, NT's meeting day is the highlight of my month. There's nothing like being in the company of other writers.

May's speaker Candy Haven's presented Fast Draft Revision Hell. Her workshop has stoked more than a few creative fires and currently our Tex-Critiquer's loop is a hotbed of activity with members posting new and revised page counts. If you're interested in being a part of this prolific group, contact Gina Nelson at ginan@usrisk.com.

Things are shaping up for our November Fall Writers Roundup. The membership voted to extend the conference budget to include an editor and an agent for our conference. Our VP/Programs Director Shannon Canard is currently putting together a list to query. If you'd like to see someone specific or have a contact, please pass it on to Shannon at scanard@sbcglobal.net.

Congratulations to our Web mistress, Angi Platt, and our website for being named a finalist in the RWA Chapter Website Contest. Winners will be announced at the President's Luncheon during the National conference in July.

There are several changes for the 2006 National Elections and the National Conference. The RWA Board has approved electronic voting for members. Ballots will arrive by email, unless you specify otherwise or don't have a current email on file with the National office.

Cool things:
RWA National Conference will be distributing pre-stuffed conference bags provided by Harper/Collins Publisher.

You no longer need a ticket to get into the goody room :)
Your badge is your entree to every event!

Not so cool things:

Editor/Agent appointments are full, but there is a wait list. Contact Erin Fry at the RWA National Office to get on the list or take your chances each morning at the Editor/Agent check in.

No Friday lunch.

No Pan or PRO ribbons.

First-Timers will receive a ribbon.

Your badge is your entree to every event! Don't lose it.

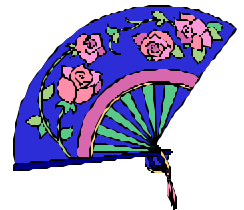
If anyone is looking for a badge holder, see Andrea. Cost is \$5 for the pouch and \$12 for a lanyard. I believe we have around 50 left. They will be available at the meeting on June 17th.

Volunteer! The benefits of networking are invaluable.

PRO Dinner on Friday, July 28th at 7pm in the Imperial Ballroom Salon at the Conference Hotel. You must reserve and prepay. Subscribe to PROsNational@yahoogroups.com for more information.

Well, that's all for now. We have a great line up of authors for our Round Table Critique. I hope to see all of you there.

Happy Writing,
Sherry Davis
President



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PRO-Sistence

By Sandra Ferguson

The art of not giving up, giving in, or refusing to go under can be traced back to cavemen time. Consider if the task of fire building had been abandoned. We'd all still be stuck in the ice age, wearing crudely tanned fur coats (animal activists would be passé), and surviving on Sushi and salads. No breads, no soups, no cake. Brrr . . . it's too teeth chattering to contemplate. Instead our hairy forefathers, or more likely our tired-of-the-same-old-dinner-routine foremothers, kept twirling the sticks until they generated friction. And as all romance writers know, friction equals building tension, which will eventually produce fire. Thanks to our ancestors fire fortitude, we now only eat Sushi by choice.

As cavemen tenacity changed the course of future generations, so too, can your personal persistence or Pro-Sistence alter your future. By adhering to the never-give-up philosophy and following these steps, your publishing possibilities increase dramatically.

Begin by writing your synopsis. You know that pesky little outline is a

required evil for the publishing business. Whether you utilize a computer, pen and pad, or charcoal on your cave wall, it's time to write your synopsis. Carve out the external plot points of your manuscript. Etch in the internal (emotional) turning points for your characters. Imprint necessary details and your synopsis can contain lasting qualities like any pre-historic cave rendering.

Next, finish your book. Are you halfway done and stuck in the sagging middle? Use the fast-draft technique; employ book-in-a-week methodology; give yourself a REAL deadline: before the kids get out of school, before National conference, before the end of the month; then write to the end. If you hope to find your way out of the proverbial cave and into your non-ice-age future, then a completed manuscript is vital. Keep in mind that some agents/editors require finished manuscripts on queries, which leads to the final step of Pro-Sistence.

Finally, consider that agents and editors can't buy what you aren't selling. That's right. Agents can't negotiate representation and editors can't make contract offers if you're not submitting. The dreaded rejection

letter is enough to paralyze the most brave-hearted author. Truth be told, chances are high you'll be rejected--at least once. But to turn the odds in your favor, you must submit. Again, and again, and again. Just as an agent or editor won't spear you with a pointed lance for querying your work, they can't offer you an ancient writing tool and ask you to make your mark on a contract, unless you submit. There is no path to the publishing hall of fame without the ultimate step of submission.

Fumbling in cave darkness is for the unwilling-to-be-published. Come out of the Stone Age and light your own fire of Pro-Sistence by writing your synopsis, finishing your manuscript and submitting. Your publishing potential will be forever illuminated through your persistent efforts.

Sandra Ferguson, a free-lance writer, calls Texas home. Her love of family and the Lone Star state influence her writing of romantic suspense, nonfiction articles and fillers, and anything else she can pen to paper that will pay the bills.

Administration

PAN (Published Authors Network) is the name given to the discussion group intended to meet the needs of writers published or contracted to publish works in the romance genre.

Heart to Heart is published monthly by NTRWA, a non-profit organization founded in March of 1983 by aspiring and published writers of romance fiction.

Heart to Heart welcomes articles for publication in its monthly issues. Articles should contain fewer than 1000 words and pertain to matters of interest to romance writers.

Heart to Heart reserves the right to edit according to space or clarity, and to refuse articles that its editorial staff deems inappropriate for its readership. Deadline for publication is the 25th of each month.

SISTER CHAPTERS: Feel free to reprint articles from our newsletter as long as proper credit is provided for the chapter and the individual author.

Non-RWA organizations please contact the editor regarding reprints.

Meeting Minutes

By Michella Chappell

May 20, 2006

Business Meeting called to order at 12:55 pm by President, Sherry Davis

April Meeting Minutes were posted to the loop

Motion: Andrea Geist made a motion to accept the April minutes as posted to the NT Yahoo loop. The motion passed.

Officer Reports

President - Sherry Davis

Board Recommendations for President Elect – The board is not ready to make that recommendation.

Board Recommendation on moving the elections to October – The board recommended to leave the elections in December

Vice President's Report - Shannon Canard

Notes: Fall Writers Workshop name changed to Fall Writers Roundup

Keynote Speaker for Fall Writers Roundup is Cherry Adair

Discussed change of venue of conference to Ft. Worth Botanical Garden to allow for Agent/Editor at conference.

Nearest hotel is Courtyard Marriott with 20 rooms blocked at \$89.

Do we want to invite an agent/editor?

Agent/Editor discussed for Q&A/appointments/workshops

Use of local agents to cut time and cost

Kim and Ron Campbell offered the use of their home for the Friday night

activity.

Estimated cost for a NY Agent/Editor at FWR \$600 each.

Treasurer recommends doing Agent/Editor next year.

Would need 50 people at \$75 a piece to make money.

Agent/Editor can do approximately 5-6 people an hour, at least 25 people a day each.

Motion: Andrea made the motion to increase the budget by \$1200 for agent and/or editor at Shannon's discretion and increase conference fee to \$75 to cover the increase.

Vote: 13 for/ 9 opposed

Motion: Passed

June: Conference Committee meets next month. Also Critique Round Table.

Membership Secretary - Carolyn Williamson

Welcome and Introduce Visitors: 4 Visitors, 64 Members, Christine Crocker joined at the meeting

Treasurer's Report Tara Waldie Motion to accept the treasurer's report was made, seconded, and passed.

Newsletter Editor - Jen FitzGerald Notes: Article deadline the 25th of each month

Publicity – Angi Platt Notes: Switched hosting companies. Web site is a finalist in the National RWA web site contest

PAN & PRO Liaisons: Absent

Contest Chair – Angi Platt Notes: Contest is finished, just need to send thank you notes to judges & thank you gifts to final round editors.

Continued on page 9...

Visiting NTRWA

Anyone interested in the romance genre is invited to attend NTRWA meetings and workshops.

Visitors may attend three times before NTRWA requires they become members. All members of NTRWA must be members in good standing of Romance Writers of America © (RWA).

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Revision Hell: Getting Through It

Presented by Candy Havens in May 2006

Recap written by Jen FitzGerald

Candy Havens presented her workshop “Revision, Hell: Getting Through It” or “Fast Revision”. This is a follow-up to her “Fast Draft” workshop, which we heard in 2005.

Put your completed manuscript aside for a little while. Candy recommends one to two weeks, if you can.

Read the whole manuscript start to finish. You can fill in plot holes at this point.

Print out your completed manuscript in its entirety. (Jen’s side note from Von Jocks: consider decreasing your line spacing to 1.5 to save a bit of paper.)

Divide the manuscript into 20 to 30 page sections – however many you need for however many days you have.

Put together an accountability group – there should be no more than 5 or 6 of you.

Only focus on that day’s specific pages – make notes in a separate notebook, include notes for possible changes in previous or future sections.

Keep moving forward.

What you are looking for:

Smooth transitions

Are you revealing your characters’ quirks and ticks?

Is there tension and conflict in every scene, on every page?

Eliminate the nice-nice

Read dialogue out loud – in fact, read the whole manuscript out loud at some point. This will help you hear the flow of the whole thing and will allow you to hear if the dialogue sounds realistic

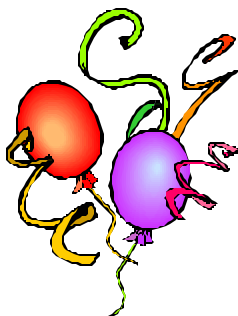
Dialogue: Is it stilted? Is it realistic? Does it move the story forward? Do you use action and picture tags rather than he said/she said? Get rid of every cliché.

Continued on page 10...

**Come out and support our local RITA finalists on
Saturday, June 24th at the North Richland Hills Barnes and Noble, 2 PM**

Authors include: Candy Havens, Stephanie Feagan, Julia London, Vicki Taylor, & Jane Sullivan

Many Happy Returns...



Happy Birthday to...

Terry Harris, June 2

Judy Calvert, June 8

Jen FitzGerald, June 12

Kris Fletcher, June 18

Candy Havens, June 20



NT Pride

By Jen FitzGerald

In my humble opinion, NT is the best chapter in RWA. I don't have real proof to back this up and it's the only chapter I'm in so I really have no basis for comparison.

But let's tally up some things I do know:

- A) Our web site was the best in RWA last year. Chances are it'll be up there again this year.
- B) Our writing contest is one of the best ones in RWA – that's not me, that's entrants saying that. And while our newsletter didn't do so hot in the contest this year, I've done and am doing everything in my power to win next year.
- C) As far as I know, we are the only chapter that has offered an excursion package when the RWA National Conference comes to town. This shows pride in our town.
- D) We have 21 published authors among us.
- E) We have 17 members with PRO status. (Between D & E that's just about 2/3 of our membership – wow!)

Now that may not seem like much, but for a chapter our size, I think it's awesome.

Okay, now the real point of this article is that there's room for improvement in one specific area: our raffle basket for the National Conference.

I was on the Ways & Means Committee – it was hard to get you guys to bring stuff for that basket. (And to be honest, it's hard to get you guys to bring stuff for our regular door prize baskets, but that's another rant.)

This year, I'd like to hear that our basket was the most sought after basket – that it raised the most money for literacy. Will I hear that? I don't know. It's up to all of us. The theme this year is gift cards/certificates.

This is sooooo easy, guys and gals.

First of all, let's think of what kind of gift cards or certificates would benefit a writer. Well, we're all writers, so what kind of cards would we like?

- Barnes & Noble, Walden Books, or Amazon.com – every writer either wants to buy books for enjoyment or books for research
- Starbucks – most people I know are coffee drinkers
- Fast Food – a nice treat or a life saver when it's time for Fast Draft or Book in a Week
- Office Depot, Staples, Office Max, etc... – we all need paper, ink cartridges, envelopes, paper clips, alligator clips, and so on
- Bath & Body Works – great for that reward for finishing your fast draft, revisions, or the complete manuscript – but wait, you say, what if a guy wins this? Well, then, he has a lovely gift to give his wife after he's

ignored her for a week trying to complete his first draft

Well, those are only a few ideas to get you started, but really, the ideas are endless. Come on, you're writers, use your imaginations.

But you're not coming to the meeting in June and who knows what could happen in July, you say. We love the USPS for a reason. The US has the cheapest postal rates in the world, did you know that? Throw that gift card or certificate in the mail. Send it to the chapter; the address is on the newsletter. Send it to either one of our Ways & Means chairs (Mindy Obenhaus or Michella Chappell) or any one of the board members. Board members' contact is also in every newsletter. You could even send that Amazon.com certificate to Mindy or Michella via email.

No excuses.

Let's support literacy and watch how brightly NT can shine in the process.

Jen FitzGerald has been writing for five years. She is the 2006 newsletter editor for her chapter and was the recording secretary in 2005. Her current WIP features a military hero and is being written with Harlequin American in mind.

NT PROs

Ron Campbell
Shannon Canard
Burma Cole
Sherry Davis
Sandra Ferguson
Willie Ferguson
Andrea Geist

Mary Karlik
Diana Loftin
Mindy Obenhaus
Angi Platt
Jackye Plummer
Beth Shriver
Arline Todd

Patricia Vermiere
Tara Waldie
Carolyn Williamson

If your name is not on this list, but should be, please contact Sandra Ferguson at sandraferguson@sbcglobal.net

Spotlight On... Ron Campbell

By Gina Nelson

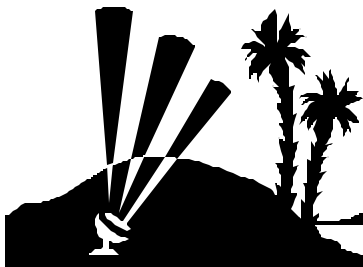
Good morning, Ron. Tell us a little about yourself and how you came to join NTRWA?

I joined NTRWA in April of 2005 with my wife, Kim. She was the one who did the research and picked NTRWA. I had three manuscripts collecting dust and had not written for six years because of a bad experience with a publisher. Kim had always been interested in writing and this was an opportunity to do something fun together. We joined RWA in April and attended the Conference in Reno.

I see from your resume you went to college in Oklahoma. Were you born and raised there?

I was born and raised in Hugo, Oklahoma. I was in a select group of high school students in the nation who worked on state of the art computers. The one I programmed on was at the University of Oklahoma (This was in the old Punch Card days.) I turned down an appointment to West Point, the U.S. Military Academy. My Dad was a funeral director and the mayor. He was very active in politics, statewide and nationally. My Grandfather on my mother's side was from New York and was a Colonel under Patton in WWII.

I attended Oklahoma University, in Norman, Oklahoma, majoring in



engineering. I took a break for U.S. Government Service, got married, had two children and completed my B.S. degree in Accounting with a minor in Economics and Chemistry at S.E. Oklahoma State in 1969.

Your background is fascinating. I'm surprised you're not writing military thrillers. Have you thought about writing one of those? Didn't you recently submit a manuscript to someone in NY? Have you heard anything yet?

My Paranormal Suspense deals primarily with the military, going from the Waffin (the SS in WWII) to Vietnam to today. I added the romance later to qualify it for the romance category. It is the one I recently submitted. I submitted it to get a quick rejection in order to get PRO Status and Agent/Editor interviews in Atlanta. So, it was the one that was rejected and got me my PRO Pin. My current work, *Out of the Dark* (a Paranormal Romantic Suspense set in Wise County), I just entered in the Dorchester Publishing American Title III Contest.

I have four completed manuscripts: a Western - *Boots of Silver*, a Science Fiction - *Dim Red Star*, a Paranormal Romance - *Obedience Unto Death*, and a Paranormal Romantic Suspense - *Out of the Dark*. I have approximately 20 outlines and 10 partial manuscripts to the side for one reason or another.

Why did you start writing romance?

I started writing romance because it sells, and because of the RWA organization that gives the Romance Writer's clout and a voice. Writers in Suspense and

Military Fiction don't have that strong of a voice. While all of my books have a romantic element, I found that the male and female leads are supposed to be introduced in the first chapter with some conflict, etc. In some of my earlier manuscripts, it might have been the fourth chapter before they both were introduced.

Where did you meet your wife, Kim?

I originally met Kim when she worked for Tarrant County. She was married, I was married, there was an attraction. We lost touch. In 2003, after I was divorced, I saw her online. We corresponded in May of 2003 and married in May of 2004.

How long have you been writing?

I've been writing on professional subjects since 1965. I have been writing the Fun Stuff -fiction - since 1980 when I wrote a western in 90 days to enter a contest. From a serious writing stand point, only since 1994.

What is your greatest challenge as a writer?

My greatest challenge as a writer is editing and revisions. I let it sit for a couple of days, go back and read it and YUCK. Or if I like something I wrote, I think "Did I write that?" I also have a problem putting "fluff" in a story. I also have a problem making my stories too complex so that the plot overshadows the characters.

Continued on page 9...

Newsletters are now available in electronic format.

**If you are interested in receiving your newsletter via email,
please contact Jen FitzGerald at jen@stormsedge.com or 817-457-6414.**

Member News

Shelley Bradley sold a proposal to Samhain Publishing.
Naughty Little Secret will be out November 7 of this year.

Shelley Bradley sold a proposal to Ellora's Cave.
Dangerous Boys and Their Toys will probably be out late summer/early fall 2007 under the name Shayla Black.

Candy Havens sold more two books to Berkley.
There will be at least two more Bronwyn books.
Charmed & Dangerous (Sept. 2005)
Charmed & Ready (Sept. 2006)
Charmed & Deadly (2007)
Charmed & ...

Also under the name Shayla Black, Berkley Heat will release Shelley Bradley's Wicked Ties in January 2007.
The follow up, Dangerous and Delicious, will be out in October 2007.

Mindy Obenhaus' entry, Willow Springs, placed second in the "Happily Ever After" contest.
Final round judge is Diane Dietz from Steeple Hill, a publisher she's targeting.

YAY!

Anjalie Gilby received her PRO pin.

Karen Whiddon has been offered a contract for another Silhouette Intimate Moments Continuity. It should be available sometime in 2008.

The Novelist's Secret Weapon written by Gail Dayton for the March 2006 newsletter was forwarded to the Nebraska RWA chapter loop and printed in the WARA May/June newsletter with proper credits.

Tape Article & Review written by Jen FitzGerald for the May 2006 newsletter was forwarded to the Nebraska RWA chapter loop with proper credits.

Get Out of the Way of Your Writing written by Sandra Ferguson for the February 2006 newsletter was forwarded to the Nebraska RWA and the Greater Vancouver chapter loops with proper credits.

Karen Whiddon's December '05 IM, Secrets of the Wolf, also won LoveRomances.com's Reader's Choice Golden Rose Award for Best Category Romance of 2005.

Karen Whiddon's December '05 IM, Secrets of the Wolf, won RT Reviewers Choice Award for best Intimate Moments of 2005.

Good Job!

Judi McCoy is having a book signing at the North Richland Hills Barnes & Noble immediately after June's meeting. (Judi is a long distance member.)

The Industry Matters written by Maya Reynolds (our own Maryann Romano) for the April 2006 Passionate Ink newsletter was forwarded to Heartland Romance Authors loop, Wisconsin Writers Group, Nebraska Romance Writers, Windy City, Spacecoast, and Gulf Coast with proper credits.

Wow, you all were a prolific bunch this past month... Kudos to all of you who wrote and edited and proudly listed your totals, but due to space considerations, only the top five producers will be listed...

NEW PAGES ~ Top 5

Candy Havens, 260
Cheryl Hathaway, 86
Ron Campbell, 85
Sherry Davis, 68
Mindy Obenhaus, 45

EDITED PAGES ~ Top 5

Gina Nelson, 200
Sherry Davis, 112
Ron Campbell, 105
Mindy Obenhaus, 90
Carolyn Williamson & Angela Cavener, 50

Way to go everyone. Keep those fannies in the chair and the fingers on the keyboard!

Minutes Continued

Continued from page 4...

Ways & Means – Mindy Obenhaus & Michella Chappell

Notes: Still need gift cards for the literacy basket for the National Conference

25th Anniversary Committee: Jen FitzGerald
No Report

Audio Library – Jen FitzGerald
No report

Critiques Advisor – Gina Nelson
Notes: Gina invited people to join Tex-Critiquers for Fast-Draft, Fast Revisions, Accountability

Patricia Vermiere expressed concerns that minutes were not published in the May newsletter. Newsletter Editor, Jen FitzGerald, assured membership that minutes would be published as long as they were available by the time the newsletter needed to be printed.

Note: Patricia also felt the minutes should have the date and time on them.

New Business: Will need volunteers for Contest Committee and for Nominations/Elections Committee

Michella Chappell won the National Conference Fee Raffle

Motion to Adjourn: Cheryl Hathaway
Action: Passed

Welcome Visitors and New Members...

Welcome Christine Crocker, who joined our group at the May meeting, and Nikki Duncan, who joined a few days after the meeting.

Our visitors were Margret Strickland and Patrice Stanton.
We were so glad to have you visit with us and we hope you'll come again!

Spotlight On... Ron Campbell Continued

Continued from page 7...

What accomplishment are you most proud of?

Writing: Being published in the San Antonio Business Journal and the HFMA National Journal and having completed four manuscripts. Personally: Four children (one is my stepson) and 14 grandchildren. Professionally: My expert witness work.

Is there anything you'd like to share with our members that I haven't asked?

One thing I have found is a lot of times, romance writers do not understand firearms, their use and proper terms. If anyone in our group has a problem picking the correct modern firearm, say from 1935 forward, I would offer my services in assisting them in getting it correct or in directing them to where the information can be obtained. They can

email me with their questions and how the firearm is to be used in their story.

New to romance writing, Gina Lee Nelson is *still* working to complete her first manuscript, a tender romance set in NYC, her stomping ground for seven exhilarating years.

Speaker Recap Continued

Continued from page 5...

Make sure what's in your head is on the page.

Do you have at least three senses on every single page?

Is there tension on every single page?

Do you have hooks at the beginning and ending of every chapter?

Is there a good balance of dialogue, introspection, and action?

Keep moving forward.

Repeat process or parts of it as many times as necessary

You'll know you're done revising when you are down to making changes that have no bearing on the story as a whole, like the color of someone's shoes, etc.

Let someone else read it. Critique is critical for revision.

Jen FitzGerald has been writing for five years. She is the 2006 newsletter editor for her chapter and was the recording secretary in 2005. Her current WIP features a military hero and will be targeting Harlequin American.

PAN: In the Loop

NT is delighted to present a monthly online session with our authors entitled IN THE LOOP.

On the first full week of each month one of our authors will present a daily article on writing. Anyone who is subscribed to the NT yahoo loop will automatically receive this free monthly post presented by NT PAN members.

June 5th - 9th

Britta Coleman
presents

Making the Most of Your Conference Experience

Due to lack of NT member participation,
In The Loop will be suspended indefinitely.

Jen's Journal

After May's meeting, NT Member (& Tex-Critiquers Coordinator) Gina Nelson was motivated by Candy Haven's workshop (see page 5) and put out the call for anyone needing accountability to sign on. So I did. I'd been wanting to anyway, but just hadn't gotten around to it.

It's been good for me, that accountability. So far I've met my

goal of 1/2 page a day, even over the Memorial Day weekend, which for my family included a barn—uh, shed raising. Some nights it was like pulling teeth, even for those miniscule 13 lines of new words. But I'm doing it. Each evening, I'm a little closer to completing this MS. Of course, when I'm that tired, a lot of what I write isn't that good. But, as I've heard and read a thousand times,

you can't fix a blank page. So I'm getting the words down, half page by half page, at the very least. At the end of a year, I'll have written 182 pages. A few (try 100) short of what I need for the line I'm targeting, but way more than what I might have had otherwise.

To join us on the Tex-Critiquers loop, contact Gina Nelson via the regular NT loop.

The Truth About Publishing Myths ~ Myth #4

By Shelley Bradley

#4 ~ Contracts aren't that hard to negotiate.

Are you laughing yet? Yes, contracts are hard to negotiate. An author without an agent can only begin to guess at the things that can be added, deleted or otherwise enhanced in a publishing contract. No matter how many workshops you attend about deciphering contract language, there's just no substitute for real-life knowledge.

I negotiated one contract by myself. It was 16 pages of legalese. In retrospect, I didn't ask for things I know I could have easily gotten, like more author copies. I tried to fight for clauses that weren't advantageous to me and couldn't get them to budge an inch because as a newish author, I didn't have the clout an agent would. I think I asked for more money, but didn't counter with a specific figure, which is not a good tactic. I could go on, but the point is, most agents negotiate their own boilerplate with many of the print publishers. These frequently automatically entitle you to more author copies, quicker acceptance of manuscripts and proposals, limiting of option clauses, sometimes even better royalties, limitations in electronic, movie, serial, periodical, audio rights, etc. The last few may seem like no big deal, like who would ever make a movie of your book, right? You never know...

Then there are the fun things publishers try to sneak past you. Clauses that say that if the publisher asks you to take a pseudonym at any time, you'll do it, no questions asked. Delaying more payment of the

date, rather than half on signing (of the contract) and half on D&A (delivery and acceptance).

Would you know what to ask for in terms of rights? North American only? World? What about payments for foreign language editions, if you sold World, including non-English? If you don't have an agent who's comfortable selling to foreign markets, you might be better off allowing your publisher to sell them to foreign partners.

And the ever-fun topic of reversion of rights... How long is too long for the publisher to keep your rights? I know authors who have signed their rights away on a book for 10 years, not realizing they might have been able to get 7 or 5 or even 3, depending on the publisher.

What do you do, especially if you don't have an agent or don't want one? You have a few options:

1) Hire an entertainment attorney - They aren't cheap, but a good one will, if s/he does their job right, keep you from getting totally screwed. The down side...they don't have any clout with your publisher and may not be able to get all of the perks a good agent would.

2) Buy some of the great books on negotiating your own publishing contracts and consult the contract reviews completed by the RWR about 5 years ago. These sources will give you some ideas, not only of clauses to amend but some guidelines on what's acceptable, industry standard, norm. The down side...The former sources may not be specific enough to romance publishing, which can be like its own little world. The latter source is getting old and many publishers have since changed

once. And again, you don't have the clout an agent does.

3) Ask other authors - Fellow authors can be a great source of information. They can tell you things their agents (or they themselves) were able to get from the publisher. This is wonderfully specific information and may be invaluable. The down side... Some authors won't be forthcoming about contract clauses. Others may misinterpret what they say, sending you scurrying off to the publisher to ask for the wrong thing. The things you ask for based on other authors' information are only as powerful as that author or author's agent.

There may be more options. But I didn't explore them in any detail after receiving a contract for a trilogy that was upward of 30 pages. The right choice for me was to hire an agent and let her handle these headaches. If you're strictly e-publishing, publishing with a very small press or writing category, you're less likely to need an agent, especially in the beginning, as the contracts are more standard. But think long and hard--and do your research--before you start negotiating.

The author of sizzling contemporary, erotic and historical romances, Shelley Bradley lives in the southwest with her husband and daughter, juggling the many roles in her life: writer, mother, wife and all around laundress. In her "free" time, she is a reality TV junkie, enjoys reading, obsessively studying all things Harry Potter, doing step aerobics and weightlifting, and listening to an eclectic blend of music.



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Meeting Information

June 17, 2006

NTRWA Monthly Meeting

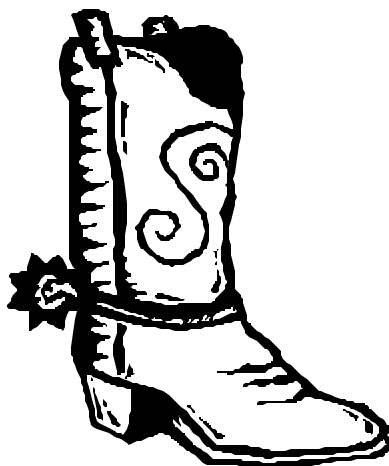
La Hacienda Ranch

5250 Highway 121 South

Colleyville, TX

10:00 ~ 10:30 Meet & Greet
10:30 ~ 10:45 Welcome & Announcements
10:45 ~ 11:45 Workshop
11:45 ~ 12:00 Break/Order Lunch
12:00 ~ 1:00 Business Meeting

Visitors Welcome



Author Roundtable
Critique