



# Heart to Heart

## October 21, 2006 Meeting

By Shannon Canard

### NTRWA presents

#### Creating Memorable Characters

By Sandy Blair

An author's objective is to sell and to keep selling. Creating Memorable Characters focuses on developing the deepest POVs possible, identifies common POV pitfalls that distance readers, and offers tricks for preventing lagging scenes so that your writing wrenches as much emotion as possible from the reader while frequently taking them by surprise.

Sandy will cover: dialogue, introspection, motivation and goals, pacing, tonal consistency and love scenes.

Sandy Blair is the winner of the 2003

RWA Golden Heart and 2004 National Readers Choice Award for Best Paranormal Romance. She is also the 2005 Write Touch Readers Award winner for Best Historical, the 2006 Golden Quill winner for Best Anthology, a recipient of Romantic Times BOOK Reviews' 4½ star Top Pick rating and nominated for a RITA.

She loves writing about Scotland's past. The third novel in her Highlander series, A Thief In a Kilt, will be released this November. Currently contracted to write two more Highlander novels, Sandy is the President Elect of DARA and resides in Plano with her tall Scot husband.



November: Fall Writers Roundup  
December: Holiday Party

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*Writing is the only profession where no one considers you ridiculous if you earn no money.*  
*Jules Renard*

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# President's Corner

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By Sherry Davis

Fall is here!

Finally, a break in the weather and just in time for our Fall Writers Roundup next month on November 3 & 4. I hope to see you all there. We have a great lineup of inspiring and informative workshops, not to mention an agent and editor taking appointments. This is a great opportunity to find out more about the Knight Literary Agency and Avon Books.

Just a reminder, our Writers Roundup will take the place of our regularly scheduled November meeting. We will not meet at La Hacienda on the third Saturday of November.

Congratulations to all those who met their writing goals this month. Praise for those who qualified for PRO status. Kudos to those who submitted manuscripts. Commiserations to those who received rejections. (Don't worry, you're in good company.)

On this note, let me just say, writers are a courageous breed.

It takes a good deal of mental strength to send out a project you've worked on for months, sometimes years. Putting one word behind the other to create a well-crafted story from a tiny kernel of an idea that kept you awake at night is no light task. And when it's complete, you give your book a kiss for luck and send it out into the world. You wonder. You worry. You wait, like an impatient parent to hear good news.

You navigate the interim with other projects. But in the back of your mind is the anticipation of "The Call" nestled snugly with the dread of a form rejection.

Some count the sacrifices made, big and small, time away from spouses, children, parents, friends and the like to spend time

alone with the computer and a blinking cursor which seems to mock our attempt at brilliance.

But others understand a writer's life can be very much like their stories. We are, in a way, the characters we write about. Characters must make sacrifices before they find the final piece of the puzzle, before they learn what they need to trump the bad guys, before they can achieve a truly happily ever after. Writers must sacrifice a piece of themselves in order to connect with their readers.

I've learned from the submission process that every rejection is a little sacrifice. It requires a conscious decision on my part to move forward. Revise. Keep writing. Resubmit.

I've also learned from those who've sold that every sale is also a type of sacrifice, a bittersweet celebration of turning over a project they care deeply about to an editor/publisher who will hopefully love the story as much as they do and send it out to readers who will find the gold they've woven into the words.

We all come to writing for different reasons. Some stay. Some go. Some get published. Some don't. Whatever the outcome, if you stick with it for any length of time, you learn to embrace the process.

Yes, writing is about sacrifice. But it's also about creativity, hope and generosity of spirit.

Most NYT Bestsellers didn't get where they are without a few rejections. Most found their courage through the fellowship of other writers. They celebrated the minor victories along the way. And they gave back, reaching out to other writers along the way and reaching up, over and around when it was time to reevaluate their careers and move in a different direction.

*Continued on page 4...*

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## 2006 NTRWA Board Members & Liaisons

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◆ President

Sherry Davis  
csadavis@swbell.net

◆ Membership Director

Carolyn Williamson  
carolynwilliamson@charter.net

◆ Newsletter Editor

Jen FitzGerald  
jen@stormsedge.com

◆ Vice President/Programs

Shannon Canard  
shannon\_canard@hotmail.com

◆ Recording Secretary

Paula Wachter  
paula\_wachter@comcast.net

◆ PAN Liaison

Juliet Burns  
julietburns@gmail.com

◆ Treasurer

Tara Waldie  
waldie@flash.net

◆ Publicity Director

Angi Platt  
angiplatte@aol.com

◆ PRO Liaison

Sandra Ferguson  
sandraferguson@sbcglobal.net

# To Write or Not to Write

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By Karen Whiddon

Recently I learned two writers I'd once known well have both stopped writing. Both feel they have nothing new to say, no new stories to tell. Criticism and rejection have gotten them down. So they gave up, tossed in the towel, let the dream go. No more believing in their talent, in their stories, in the power of the words they chose to put on the page. I was shocked. Horrified. Though I'm no longer close to either of them, I wondered by what process they had come to this decision.

Quitting writing. Could you ever do this? I couldn't.

When I heard this news, I was reminded of the story of a man who wanted to be a pianist. He trained and trained and finally one day got his big opportunity to play before a master, who'd promised to evaluate him. So he climbed up on the stage, sat down before the piano, and played his heart out.

When he'd finished, the master came

to him and told him he had no talent. He said the man needed to give up, find another occupation, and forget his dreams. With a heavy heart, the man took the master's advice and quit piano. He went on to become an accountant.

Years later, he ran into the master again and asked him the question he'd always wanted to know. "How did you know, after hearing me play one song, that I wasn't destined to succeed as a pianist?" he asked. "What was it about my playing?"

"It wasn't about your playing," the master said gently. "I tell everyone the same thing. The ones that want it badly enough, ignore me. Sometimes they go on to greatness. You just didn't want it badly enough."

He didn't believe in himself.

Yes, I know writing for publication is hard. Sometimes it seems there's always one more thing to learn, one more talent to polish, only to receive yet another in an endless slew of rejections.

In the beginning, writing wasn't like this. Telling stories was fun. For some of you reading this, putting words on paper may still be a simple pleasure. The creation of a world, of two people and an entire cast of characters, and bringing them together can be a joyous process, when you let everything go except the words on the page.

For others, like the writers I mentioned earlier – discouraged, downhearted – writing is frustrating. A chore, and one that easily can be avoided. Some have stopped writing all together, choosing to forget the time when they had fun with the story and the people. There are too many rules, some say. Too many constraints. Too little time, too little faith – the reasons are endless. Some of them are even valid.

But not if you want to tell the story badly enough.

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## Administration

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**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 for September 16, 2006

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By Angi Platt

Sherry Davis called the meeting to order at 12:30.

Gina Nelson presented the Spotlight on Kim Campbell.

Sherry Davis stated that Ron Campbell had written the most new pages and Nikki Duncan had edited the most pages.

A motion to accept the August minutes as printed in the newsletter was made by Ron Campbell and seconded by Nikki Duncan. The minutes were approved.

Sherry Davis mentioned that RWA conference CDs were received and Jen FitzGerald would make copies,

having them ready at the next meeting. Shannon Canard reported that the Writers Roundup is open for registration and Sandy Blair will be the October Speaker. Carolyn Williamson reported NT has 77 members. Recently joining were Linda LaRoque and returning member Wanda Raine. One visitor was in attendance.

Rosemary Clement-Moore moved and Mindy Obenaus seconded to accept the Treasurer's report as read by Angi Platt. The board added three line items to the 2006 budget: Contest Final Round Postage; Meeting Copies and Postage; and software. Patricia Vermeire moved

and Gina Nelson seconded to accept the amendments to the budget as presented. The motion passed.

Angi Platt gave a Website update. Be certain to look at the .ORG not .COM web address and send updates at any time.

Congratulations to Chris Keniston for achieving RWA PRO status. PAN Liaison Juliet Burns and Newsletter Editor Jen FitzGerald were not present. Patricia Vermeire reported that the Nominations/Elections Committee would be contacting people to fill the 2007 ballot.

The meeting adjourned.

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## President's Corner Continued

*Continued from page 2...*

When the tide comes in, all boats rise. I'm not sure who said it, but it's true. NT is making waves, thanks to every member who's given back this year. Thank you to all the board members and volunteers who work behind the scenes without complaint or expectation of personal reward. Thanks to all the speakers who've given us inspiration and knowledge to reach for the

dream. It is your sacrifice which has made us all stronger.

Cheers to the tide coming in.

Happy Writing,  
Sherry Davis  
President

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## 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).

Romance Writers of America  
16000 Stuebner Airline Drive  
Suite 140  
Spring, Texas 77379

[www.rwanational.com](http://www.rwanational.com)

Phone: 831-717-5200

FAX: 831-717-5201

[info@rwanational.com](mailto:info@rwanational.com)

## Tanya's Top 5: First Kisses

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The following article appeared in the July 2006 issue of the Galley, Georgia Romance Writers' monthly online newsletter. Permission is granted to sister RWA® chapters to reprint with credits to author and chapter.

by Tanya Michaels

According to some tales, a heartfelt kiss is magical enough to end spells and break curses. But even if you don't write paranormals, describing a kiss just right is extremely important. If the book is a steamy romance, the kiss is usually one of the first preludes to the love scenes that will take place throughout the book. If the romance is traditional, a kiss might be the only part of the physical relationship the reader ever sees. Since I've been reading several romance novels a month for almost the last two decades, there's no way I could list all the great first kiss scenes I've read! But here are five examples that illustrate different approaches to the first kiss and how you can make essentially the same act unique to different circumstances, subgenres and characters.

1. [A Kiss to Remember](#) by Teresa Medeiros (Bantam Books, July 2001) With a title like that, this British-set historical by New York Times bestselling author Teresa Medeiros is the perfect starting place! In many books, shows and movies, there's tension built from the audience (and the characters) anticipating that first kiss. In this story, however, the author has taken the unusual step of placing the kiss very early in the story. . .before the characters have even spoken to each other, in fact. The resulting tension comes from the reader wondering when the heroine will learn who the handsome stranger is and how she'll react. Then there's the question of consequences. Although it wasn't a premeditated deception, the heroine lied immediately after their kiss. What will happen when the hero finds her out? In this case, the first kiss is almost the inciting moment, contrasted with later kisses that reflect the increasing emotional stakes—infatuation, betrayed fury, tender forgiveness, and, last but certainly not least, love.

2. [A Summer Sentence](#) by Carolynn Carey (Avalon Romance, August

2005) This debut novel, which has won and been nominated for numerous awards, is a great example of creating chemistry between characters even in a "sweet" line. There are no sex scenes in Avalon books, but there should still be a believable attraction and romantic development. The kisses in this book are surrounded by humor and banter that show the characters' developing relationship but keep the sexual tension from getting inappropriately heavy. To convey a potent first kiss between the hero and heroine, the author relied on sensory details—such as taste—and very specific imagery, making a powerful impression without using body parts or PG-13 prose.

3. [Anticipation](#) by Jennifer LaBrecque (Harlequin Blaze, January 2006) At the other end of the scale from Avalon novels are "red-hot" Blazes from Harlequin. Conventional wisdom for building sexual tension has been to make the characters wait—

*Continued on page 8...*

## Many Happy Returns...

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Diane O'Brien Kelly, October 2  
Miskey Hart, October 7  
Angi Platt, October 8  
Jaci Kenney, October 11  
Karen Kelley, October 17  
Judi McCoy, October 22  
Leanna Wilson, October 24



# Everything I Know About Plotting, I Learned From Watching Star Trek

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The following article first appeared in the September 2006 edition of the Writer's Saddle newsletter and may be used with proper credit. Kellie Finley, the Writer's Saddle Editor.

By Donna Ann Tunney

Okay, I admit it. I'm a plotter. One of those anal writers who have the whole book figured out before they write a word. And, yes, after years of therapy, I can publicly state: "I.am.a. Trekkie!" (Previous sentence to be read in the staccato style of William Shatner.)

Could it be that these two truths are related? And if so, just how many plotting devices did I learn while watching that breakthrough '60s show?

## 1) START WITH A BANG: THE TEASER

An episode of Star Trek usually begins with a brief glimpse of the familiar--the bridge of the Enterprise. But that world is soon turned upside down. Captain Kirk mysteriously vanishes! A giant hand reaches out as if to crush the ship! An alien vessel attacks!

Whatever the occurrence, the purpose of the teaser is to grab the viewer with the external conflict of the story. The teaser is always short and ends with a dramatic climax (accompanied by melodramatic music, just in case you didn't get it).

Lesson #1: Jumpstart your story. Enter with conflict. Any back story you need to tell the readers can be worked in later.

## 2) ADD A SIDEKICK

Kirk has two--Spock and McCoy. He always has someone to talk to so that we can learn what he's thinking and feeling. Sometimes, Kirk is taken away from his friends. (Remember when they made an exact duplicate of the Enterprise on the planet Gideon?) Even then, Kirk has his Captain's Log to record--so we still know what's on his mind.

Lesson #2: Give your hero a sidekick and, presto, you've got secondary characters. If your hero is a loner, give him a pet he can confide in, or a journal he can write in. Then, instead of always using internal thoughts, you have other options for conveying information.

## 3) WHEN EXPLORING STRANGE NEW WORLDS, KEEP A FEW CARDS UP YOUR SLEEVE

Every week, our heroes discover something new and different. Once the external conflict is identified, they investigate it in order to determine a solution. A course of action is chosen and implemented. But things don't usually work out as planned. In the last half-hour of the show, new information (even a new character) pops up to affect the outcome.

Lesson #3: Your hero is on a mission, confronted by a situation he's never had to deal with before. Keep him (and your reader) guessing. Bring out a few surprises along the way.

## 4) MAKE 'EM SWEAT

Whether it's a giant amoeba in space or a disease that causes the crew to run amok, the stakes are high. The Enterprise will be destroyed! An

entire solar system is at risk! Billions of people will die! Whatever the external problem is, it's always a matter of life and death. But that's not the only battle.

Kirk, Spock and McCoy often clash in their opinions. When they are in agreement, a paper-pushing bureaucrat shows up and threatens to take command of the ship. And, right in the middle of all this, Kirk is in an emotional dilemma about which of his friends he should send on a suicide mission. External conflict, inter-personal conflict and internal conflict--Star Trek has it all.

Lesson #4: Give your characters different layers of conflict. And make the stakes high. Although your hero may not face disaster on an interplanetary scale, he should feel that way. Whatever happens is going to change his life forever.

## 5) TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

In twenty-four hours, the organism will multiply! In less than two hours the ship's power will fail. The crew of the Enterprise is always performing under the gun.

Lesson #5: Give your hero a time limit to accomplish his goals. It's a great way to increase dramatic tension and give your story pace.

## 6) WILLING SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF

Spock scans the area with his tricorder and detects a humanoid behind a bush. Our Vulcan friend never explains how the tricorder operates. It's irrelevant. It just works.

*Continued on page 9...*

# Spotlight On... Mary Karlick

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By Gina Lee Nelson

***Good morning, Mary. What's up with you and your writing these days?***

Hmm. Well I just quit my job at Navarro College, where I taught nursing, to go back to the real world of nursing in Labor and Delivery. I write YA and I received my first personal rejection from Lucienne Diver after she requested my full. It was very positive and she gave me a few suggestions on how to beef up my manuscript. Christine Hogrebe with Jane Rotrosen has it now. I'm expecting that refusal any day! Currently, I'm working on one about college students going to school in Rome.

***Congrats on the request for the full and on the first rejection. That's great that Lucienne Diver gave you suggestions! Was the request through a conference?***

Yes. It was through DARA's *Dreamin' 'N Dallas Conference* back in April.

***So, how long have you been writing fiction? Have you always written YA?***

I've written most of my life. I used to send Carol Burnett poems hoping she'd read them on the air. I must have sent a dozen. I guess the replies from the Carol Burnett show were my first rejections! Anyway, I started writing in earnest in '96 shortly after my mom died. My mom had cancer and a few days before she died, she

told me that she had no regrets. She encouraged me to always follow my dreams. I told her the only regret I had was that I never learned to type, because I'd always wanted to be a writer. She lay on her bed so weak and frail and sat up and said, "That's the stupidest damn reason I've ever heard for not following your heart. Don't you think by the time you finished the book you'd know how to type?" We laughed so hard I thought she was going to croak right then and there. She had a wonderful sense of humor. Anyway, after she passed I sat down and wrote my first manuscript. Judi McCoy is the only person who has seen it in its raw form. It was a fantasy and I didn't know it at the time, but it also was a YA. It was terrible. I used the word "suddenly" twenty-five times on the first page!

***What a wonderful story. Who are your favorite authors? Who has influenced your writing?***

I love Jude Deveraux, and of course Nora, Gerilyn Dawson, Judi McCoy, and Ken Follett -- just to name a few. But I think the writers who early on made me want to write were Jane Austin, C.S. Lewis and Pierce Anthony.

***Tell us a little about yourself, where you're from, family, etc.***

I was born in Dumas, Texas and spent my early years in Amarillo. When I was fourteen, I moved to Taos Ski Valley to go to school. It was awesome. I lived with two other

kids and my tutor. We went to school half the day and skied the other half. I met my husband on October 30, 1980, when I asked him to dance. I didn't know it at the time, but he was on a date with another girl. I don't know what happened to the girl, but we danced the rest of the night and he took me home. We were married on October 30, 1982. We both graduated from Texas A&M. WHOOP! We have two daughters, Kate 22 and Mandy 21. The girls live together and are both seniors at The University of Dallas. Kate is a philosophy major with minors in Latin and Greek. Mandy is a sculpture major. We live in Waxahachie and have two horses -- make that one horse and a very flashy pony named Harry Potter, one dog and one cat.

***What do you consider your greatest accomplishment?***

Hmm, that is a hard question. Snagging the worlds' greatest husband and raising two awesome girls would be a given. So, I guess it'd be learning to connect so closely with my horse I could feel every footfall, each breath, and change his position with a subtle shift in my seat. It sounds easy, but it's taken me years.



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**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](mailto:jen@stormsedge.com).**

## Tanya's Top 5: First Kisses Continued

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*Continued from page 5...*

Blaze authors face an interesting challenge in that they usually need to include the line's trademark sensuality early on, yet still build and sustain sexual tension throughout the book. This *Wrong Bed* tale from a RITA-nominated author successfully meets the creative challenge and completely lives up to its title! Chapters 4, 5, and part of 6 are one thoroughly sensual encounter describing the hero and heroine's first meeting. There's verbal fencing, tantalizing conflict, graphic attraction and some nudity. But limited touching and zero kissing. . .that comes later. By the time the hero and heroine are allowed their first kiss, they're hard pressed to think of anything they've ever wanted more.

4. The Treasure Man by Pamela Browning (Harlequin American, April 2006) When it comes to kisses, authors run the risk of over-using familiar sensations and clichéd actions. In this book, the author avoids that problem by describing mostly what isn't happening. The heroine was infatuated with the hero back when she was a teenager and fantasized their first kiss over a decade before the book even begins. A sense of yearning sets the backdrop for this story; fittingly, the first kiss is more about yearning than physical action. Rather than describe where the hero's lips or hands are, the author tells us where the heroine wishes they were. The first kiss never gets that far in reality, ended by the conflicts heavy between them. Still, it's evocative foreshadowing of their

later physical relationship.

5. Crazy for You by Jennifer Crusie (St. Martin's Press, 1999) This scene is one of my very favorite first-kisses! Crusie doesn't just focus solely on the kiss or even on the hero or heroine—the setting is symbolically important to the story, with them on a couch that had been in the heroine's family ever since the hero was involved with her sister. The background music is key to the characters' conflict. That conflict never fades completely, despite them losing themselves in the kiss. Intermingled with all the hot physical sensations are nervousness and emotional uncertainty.

*Continued on page 10...*

## Member News

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Barb Woodward just signed a contract for two books with Ellora's Cave, to be published in 2007.

She also has an offer from a Japanese publisher for her novella, If This Bed Could Talk. They want to offer it as a download on cell phones.

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...

So many people have been writing and adding their name to the list and that's a very good thing. Everyone keep up the good work!

### NEW PAGES ~ Top 5

Ron Campbell, 370  
Gail Shelton/Dayton, 75  
Shannon Canard, 70  
Nikki Duncan, 54  
Sherry Davis, 16

### EDITED PAGES ~ Top 5

Nikki Duncan, 900  
Mindy Obenhaus, 468  
Ron Campbell, 370  
Sherry Davis, 229  
Carolyn Williamson, 219

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



# Everything I Know About Plotting, I Learned From Watching Star Trek Continued

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*Continued from page 6...*

Lesson #6: Don't feel that you have to explain everything. Tell the story.

## 7) AND NOW, A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR

Have you ever noticed how the show builds to a big, dramatic climax right before a commercial break? Why? To keep you from changing the channel, of course.

Lesson #7: Incorporate a moment of crisis or a question at the end of your chapters to keep your readers glued to your story.

## 8) SMILE, THOUGH YOUR HEART IS ACHING

Captain Kirk opens a hatch and hundreds of tribbles fall on his head. When trying to escape from gangsters on the planet Iotia, he creates an elaborate and hilariously contradictory card game. Even in the most dramatic episodes, there's usually a touch of levity.

Lesson #8: Add a dash of humor. It provides a break from tension and

makes the serious moments seem more dramatic.

## 9) THE BARE FACTS

Have you ever counted the number of times Captain Kirk appears without a shirt? Or how often he gets lucky? Have you ever wondered how some of the female characters managed to stay inside their skimpy costumes?

Lesson #9: Sex sells.

## 10) NO PAIN, NO GAIN

Kirk is willing to sacrifice his life to save his friends and vice versa. All three heroes would willingly die in order to save the ship or the universe. But sacrifice isn't always about physical death. Sometimes it's a willingness to give up old beliefs for new ones. Whatever the sacrifice, it's a real one, and an integral part of the resolution.

Lesson #10: For characters to truly grow and change they have to make a sacrifice of some kind.

## 11) THE MORAL OF OUR

STORY IS...

Absolute power corrupts absolutely. The good of the many outweighs the good of the few. Good triumphs over evil. Star Trek always has a moral lesson or theme of some sort.

Lesson #11: Although a blanket theme for romance could be: "Love Conquers All", there's room to explore other themes along the way.

## 12) RESOLUTION: THE TAG

The short tag at the end clears up any loose ends. No need to dwell on this part. There are other missions, other conflicts that need to be solved.

Lesson #12: Once the story is over, it's over. And, as Kirk says in *The City on the Edge of Forever*, "Let's get the hell out of here."

*Donna Ann Tunney is a member of the Calgary Association of RWA (CaRWA).*

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## NT Book Club News

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Join the NT Book Club the first Thursday of each month, 7:30 pm, at the North Richland Hills Barnes & Noble. Each month, the group meets to discuss a previously selected book. The company is great, the books are usually good, and the discussion

is always lively. Check out the selections for the next few months. If you see something that piques your interest, please feel free to read the book and join everyone at B&N.

October 5th~ **Smitten** by Janet Evanovich

November 2nd ~ **Give Him the Slip** by Geralyn Dawson

December 7th ~ **Santa Baby** (anthology) by Jennifer Crusie, Lori Foster, & Carly Phillips

## To Write or Not to Write Continued

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*Continued from page 3...*

I wrote for nine years, off and on, before finally selling to Kensington Precious Gems. I was ecstatic, though hurt beyond belief when the brouhaha started in RWA over the validity of work for hire contracts as opposed to royalty contracts. I went on to publish five books with PG before the line closed and to this day, nine years later, I still get foreign royalty checks from them.

After Precious Gems, I tried and tried to break into Harlequin/Silhouette. Rejection after rejection – until I threw up my hands in frustration. But I didn't quit. No. I decided to write a story just for me. This was before paranormal was big. Very few publishers would take a chance on them. Yet I wrote a story that had been calling to me, a paranormal time-travel with faeries and magic and an alternate reality. There weren't many places I could submit this manuscript, but I sent it out to Dorchester and they bought it.

I cried.

Validation. I was a “real” author now, with a royalty paying contract. Powerful Magic came out in November 2001, sold out, and was reprinted in November 2005. My fifth Faerie book Missing Magic, a contemporary para-normal, will be out from Dorchester in November 06.

Still, I kept trying to break into Harlequin/Silhouette. I wrote and got rejected, wrote and got rejected.

Then – lightning! Again, the book that finally sold was a book I wrote from the heart, a story I wanted to tell. Leslie Wainger was excited and ecstatic to find a female werewolf in a Silhouette Intimate Moments. She liked it so much, she gave me a two book contract with a second book to be determined by me! Since then, I've done two more “Pack” books for Intimate Moments, a “Pack” novella for Signature, and a continuity romantic suspense for IM. Two more “Pack” books will be out from Silhouette Nocturne in 07 as well as another IM.

All because I wanted it so badly. Even when the weather was beautiful and I wanted to be out on the boat, or swimming in the pool, I plunked my butt in the chair and wrote. And wrote and wrote and wrote. Just like another NT member said, practice is key. Writing despite the self-doubt and disappointment, writing because you have something to say, a story to tell.

So do you give up, get discouraged, and get out? Or do you continue to tell your stories because you love the process, hoping one day someone else will love them too?

The decision is up to you. I'm hoping you keep on plugging.

Karen Whiddon has sold eighteen books since 1997. Her fifteenth novel, Missing Magic, will be out from Dorchester in November 2006. Cry of the Wolf and Touch of the Wolf, both “Pack” novels, come out in January 2007 and March 2007. Check out her web site at [KarenWhiddon.com](http://KarenWhiddon.com)

## Tanya's Top 5: First Kisses Continued

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*Continued from page 8...*

In fact, they're still debating whether or not the kiss is a good idea even after they've already started. Sometimes characters are caught up enough in the moment to temporarily abandon their GMC and worry about the aftermath later. Here, the underlying problems and goals actually come to the forefront

and heighten everything that happens between Quinn and Nick.

So there you have it—five great examples of first kisses and a couple of reading recommendations to make your summer a little bit hotter!

Tanya Michaels writes romances for Harlequin American and women's fiction for NEXT and NAL Accent—you can learn more about her books at [www.tanyamichaels.com](http://www.tanyamichaels.com). She made her first sale in 2001 and got her first kiss in 1989.

# The Truth About Publishing Myths ~ Myth #9

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By Shelley Bradley

9. Your editor will come back after getting married or going on maternity leave.

Stop laughing. You've probably heard there's a good chance they won't come back from either of these events.

With my NYC publishers, I've had 3 editors. I lost my first one to a baby. I lost my second to a marriage. I've told my current editor that she's not allowed to either get married or have a baby. She laughed, but I'm sure that if she had the chance to do both, she would. And some come back. My first editor worked when she had 2 children. She drew the line and stayed home after number 3. And took up being an author...a lifelong dream of hers. My second editor would have stayed after her marriage, except her husband-to-be got a wonderful promotion to move elsewhere...and off she went. And

now she's pursuing becoming an author. These things happen.

If you get an editor and they start talking marriage and/or babies, my advice is to start thinking alternate strategy. Not to go behind their back and start asking to be reassigned, but just in case, look at the landscape of other editors around her. Have a back up game plan in mind, someone you and/or your agent can request as a next choice.

When my first editor left, my editor told me in advance about her decision. I talked with my agent, and we asked to be reassigned to a specific editor. Though I ceased writing for that publisher, the request was granted. The second time it happened, we were simply advised all at once that the editor was leaving and I had already been reassigned to a new (my current) editor. We didn't get a say-so, but were assured that if the relationship wasn't working they would accommodate us down the

road. So far, so good.

With many things in publishing, I wouldn't say brace for the worst. I would say to expect the unexpected--both good and not so good. Every day there are surprises of both the thrilling and annoying varieties. That's just the business.

Check out Shelley's latest release from Samhain Publishing, [Naughty Little Secret](#).

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.

## Great Things About Great Expectations

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By Angi Platt

There's a new page on the NTRWA website: What People Are Saying About The GE <http://ntrwa.org/SB--Statements.html> Have you checked it out?

Recently, I sent an email to writers who have finaled or won the Great Expectations Contest, many responded with updates of where they were in their careers and how much they appreciated our chapter's contest.

Here's just one: "Editor feedback is so hard to get and so very helpful when you can get it. The score sheet for the Great

Expectations Contest ([Heiress Unplugged](#), Third, Single Title, 2006) gave me fantastic detailed editor feedback and helped me hone a book that was a totally new direction for me. I've since sold two different books to Silhouette Desire and it's hard to find a downside to selling, but I will miss being able to get unbiased feedback from contests!" *Jennifer Lewis* [The Boss's Demand](#), *Silhouette Desire 2008* & [Legacy of Passion](#), *Silhouette Desire 2008*

Our chapter has a fantastic, first-rate contest, with category-specific score sheets. Try it out this year. Contest information is available on the website or you can contact Angi Platt at 214-727-

3398 to have details mailed directly to you.

If you'd like to judge the GE Contest, please contact Angi: [AngiPlatt@aol.com](mailto:AngiPlatt@aol.com).

Angi Platt was a 2004 Golden Heart finalist with her manuscript [Love On the Run](#) which also recently won the Barclay Sterling Long Contemporary.



Jen FitzGerald  
Newsletter Editor  
7000 Robinhood Lane  
Fort Worth, Texas 76112



NTRWA  
2100 W. Northwest Hwy  
Suite 114-1081  
Grapevine, TX 76051

## Meeting Information

October 21, 2006

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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

Sandy Blair  
presents  
Creating Memorable Characters