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Chapter 33, Region 5

May 2010

Volume 29, Issue 4

WRITTEN WORDS

RISING STAR AWARDS MOST PAGES WRITTEN in April

- Jean Marie Brown - 157
- Lee Swift - 110
- Nikki Duncan - 100
- Shelley Bradley - 90
- Roni Griffin - 75

STAR AWARDS MOST PAGES EDITED in April

- Nikki Duncan - 676
- Lee Swift - 212
- Angi Platt - 200
- Shelley Bradley - 140
- Carolyn Williamson - 100

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Join us on May 15th for our annual Roundtable Critique

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The President's Corner

Very early, I knew that the only object in life was to grow. ~ Margaret Fuller

It is not true that people stop pursuing dreams because they grow old, they grow old because they stop pursuing dreams. ~ Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Friends, it's time to slough off the heaviness of winter and lift our heads toward the sun, shake off the winter doldrums and burst forth with renewed vigor and creativity.



North Texas Romance Writers provides wonderful opportunities for you to grow as a writer and as a creative being. That's one of the reasons I'm proud to be a member and to serve as your president this year.

On May 15th we will host our annual Critique Round Table. Many of our published authors have volunteered to critique your ten page submissions and meet with you one on one to offer their feedback. The deadline for your submission was Friday, April 30.

Each day you wait to become an RWA PRO member you miss out on another brilliant workshop from our PRO Liaison, Clover Autrey. This week our PRO members continue to labor on a synopsis for their current work in progress. Not only do they benefit from Clover's expertise, but they gather encouragement and tips from the other members on the loop. All it takes for you to turn PRO is for you to submit your completed manuscript to an agent or editor. With the popularity of email submissions, you can complete this task in only a few keystrokes.

More remarkable programs to help you grow are just around the corner, thanks to the dedication of our Program Director, Kym Roberts. Judi McCoy will join us in June to present *5 Easy Steps to Self-Editing*, followed in July by *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Book Sellers* presented by Georgette Radford of Barnes and Noble, and in August Shelley Kaehr presents *Website Building*.

All of us need a bit of encouragement to grow as writers and artists. Won't you take advantage of the many ways in which North Texas RWA nurtures its members?

Gina Nelson, President

The two most engaging powers of an author are to make new things familiar and familiar things new.

~ Samuel Johnson

April Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on April 17, 2010, at the La Hacienda Ranch Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. President-Elect Marsha West presided due to the absence of the president. The secretary was present. The meeting was called to order at 11:50 A.M. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as corrected. (Marty Tidwell should have been listed as the North Texas Two Step chairperson).

Board Absences: Chris Keniston, Gina Nelson, and Jeannie Guzman.

OFFICER REPORTS:

President-Elect Marsha West reported for Treasurer Chris Keniston: The checking account balance was reported. A note was added that all conference expenses were not completed. A final report will be given next month.

Program Director Kym Roberts reported: Next month's workshop will be the Critique Round Table, with published authors critiquing twenty pages. The deadline to e-mail pages to Kym is April 30, 2010. Members should submit pages in Word or rich text format, and include the title and genre.

Jerrie Alexander reported for Membership Director Jeannie Guzman: As of today, we have seventy-four members. We had two visitors in attendance: Jamie Webb and Renee Jones.

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:

Bead a Book Chair Nikki Duncan reported: She recorded pages written and edited and will bring beads to the next meeting.

PRO Liaison Clover Autrey reported: She encouraged all members who are not PRO to sign up because they get a preferred date, (May 17 this year) to sign up for editor and agent appointments at national conference. They get to be on the PRO loop and the NTRWA PRO loop. She has application forms. Members need to send a finished manuscript and proof of submission to an editor or agent (copy of postal receipt or rejection letter will do) and to RWA headquarters.

PAN Liaison Shelley Bradley reported: Eight published authors were present at today's NT PAN meeting. As the yahoo group loop is not working, she will try to arrange a chat room. The published authors will meet again in September.

Great Expectations Chair Angi Platt reported: She will be chairperson again in 2011, and Wendy Watson will assist her.

The business meeting was adjourned at: 12:15 p.m.

Submitted electronically by Carolyn Williamson, Secretary

NOTICE OF BYLAW AMENDMENT

To be in compliance with National Romance Writers of America's directive regarding the definition of PAN, North Texas will need to approve the following bylaw amendment to keep our chapter non-profit status.

It's the board recommendation that we continue our PAN and PRO designations in the bylaws and utilize the term Published Author Group (PAG) to encompass our entire published authors in the Policies of NTRWA. Discussion and voting will take place at the May meeting. Questions and discussion can also take place on the NTRWA YahooGroups loop.

BYLAW CHANGE: 4.8.1. PAN. Membership in this chapter's PAN group shall be open to any General member who has attained the status of PAN as defined by NTRWA©.

DELETE: NT (North Texas)

REASONING: To come in compliance with national RWA© policy.

Thanks,

Angi Platt
Bylaws Chair

Mark your calendar for these Upcoming Meetings

June 19: Judy McCoy 5 Easy steps to self-editing or Ask me anything about the writing business

July 17: Georgette Radford with Barnes and Noble Everything You Wanted to Know About Book Store Sales

Aug. 21: Shelley Keahr Website building

Sept. 18: Wendy Watson The Wrong Man

Oct. 16: Dallas Medical Examiner Reade Quinton "Reality is Stranger than Fiction" (Graphic topics—discretion advised)

Spotlight on Roni Griffin

Written by Kim Quinton

Roni lives in the Grand Prairie with her husband and her rambunctious two-year old son. Although there nothing she relishes more than time with her family, she looks forward to daily naptime when she gets two quiet hours to enter into her imaginary world of snarky heroines and bad boy heroes. Before taking the leap into stay-at-home motherhood and full-time writing, Roni worked as a corporate recruiter and as social worker, including positions as a therapist for mentally-disturbed teens and as a birthmother counselor for a domestic adoption agency. Although the work was rewarding, she's happy to no longer be traveling all over Texas with two-day old infants in tow. Roni is the 2010 winner for Contemporary Series in the Great Expectations Contest



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Where were you born and raised?

I was born and raised in New Orleans. After getting married, I moved to Austin, then eventually Dallas to follow my husband's job. I love Texas and plan on staying here, but I do miss my family, LSU football games, and the crazy cheap seafood.

When did you decide you wanted to be a writer? Do you write full-time?

I was always a reader, so writing seemed a natural outgrowth of that. At fifteen, when things weren't going so hot in my own quest for love (most likely because the idea of talking to a boy sent me into full-scale hyperventilation), I decided to write my own romance. I completed a cringe-worthy 50k word novel about a girl who started her own matchmaking agency. The hero had a significant resemblance to Joe McIntyre of New Kids on the Block. Not sure how that happened.

My full-time job is mom right now, so I'm still trying to master the art of writing a love scene while my toddler is climbing on me. But I do make time to write and blog at least five days a week.

What do you write?

My completed romance is a category-length, sexy contemporary and currently I'm attempting a full-length erotic romance. I also have a completed YA romance under the bed.

(con't on page 6)

Spotlight on Roni Griffin

(continued from page 5)

Congratulations on winning the 2010 Great Expectations Contest in the Contemporary Series category! How did it feel? What has happened since winning?

I was beyond excited to place first in the contest. This is the first year I've entered anything, so I had no idea what to expect. Since winning, I've sent a follow-up to the editor at Harlequin Blaze because they already had requested my full a few months ago. I also found out that I finaled in Passionate Ink's Stroke of Midnight contest, so the Spice editor will be seeing my pages as well. But basically, I'm just biting my nails, waiting, while I write the next book.

Any advice to writers entering contests for the first time?

As for advice on contests, I'm still pretty new to this, but I would definitely recommend them to other writers. There is nothing like getting unbiased feedback on your work to gauge where you're at. And if you final, getting in front of an editor or agent is a golden opportunity.

Do you have an agent? Are you looking for one? Has the contests helped with the search?

I do not have an agent. I would love one, but am not actively searching right now. Most agents I've researched don't seem to represent category romance unless you already have a contract in hand. So, if I'm lucky enough to sell my book, then I'll go on the agent hunt.

Is there any genre you haven't written that you want to try?

My current WIP is an attempt at a new area for me. Although my category romance is steamy, I didn't fully make the jump into erotic romance until this new manuscript, so we'll see how it goes. Regardless of the subgenre, I know I will always have a major romantic element in anything I write.

Are you published? Do you have anything due for publication this year?

Nope.

Most writers are readers first. What do you read for pleasure? Do you have any favorite authors?

My favorites to read are contemporary, paranormal, and erotic romances and young adult. But really, I enjoy a lot of different things. The only books you won't find me reading are literary fiction and high fantasy, so I'm a useless conversationalist at high-brow cocktail parties and Lord of the Rings conventions. (con't on page 6)

Spotlight on Roni Griffin

(continued from page 6)

Do you remember the first romance you read or perhaps ones that encouraged you to write?

The first romance I read was the Flowers in the Attic series by V.C. Andrews. I stole them from my mother when I was in 8th grade and still remember that the second book had the first love scene I'd ever read—it's still imprinted on my brain. But the book that made me want to be a writer was A Wrinkle In Time by Madeleine L'Engle.

What advice would you give to new writers joining the group?

I'm pretty new to the group still, but have received a very warm welcome. I guess my best advice would be to attend the meetings. Don't just join to be able to put the name of the group in your query letter. The true benefit of the group is getting to know the other writers and hearing the great speakers every month.

What's the next goal you are working toward?

I'd like to finish my current WIP in the next two months and get it to my critique group. It also wouldn't hurt my feelings to sell Wanderlust (the manuscript that won the contest). J

Please list your websites, contact info and anything else.

I blog five days a week about writing here: <http://fictiongroupie.blogspot.com>

I tweet: www.twitter.com/ronigriffin

And I have a website: www.ronigriffin.com

THANK YOU!!!!!!

Member News!!!!

Leanna Ellis sold a book to Sourcebooks for an Amish/vampire story. The series is called Plain Fear, the first book is Forsaken. It's the story of Hannah Schmidt, a young Amish woman mourning the mysterious death of her beloved Jacob, now a vampire, who must choose between two brothers, between good and evil, between a lasting love and the damnation of her soul.

<http://www.leannaellis.com>

ONCE IN A BLUE MOON is in stores now!!

FACELIFT October 2010

(con't on page 8)



Member News

(con't from page 7)

Beth Shriver will sign her devotional "Peace for Parents of Teens" on Saturday May 22, 2010, from 2 - 4 p.m. at the Barnes & Noble located in the Shops at Highland Village. WWW.BETHSHRIVERWRITER.COM

Roni Griffin's manuscript, *Wanderlust*, finalized in Passionate Ink's Stroke of Midnight Contest in the Contemporary category.

Lure Readers into Living Your Story with Deep Viewpoint

by Carolyn Williamson

Ever wonder why you seem to be able to 'get into' a romance novel easier than a mystery or a mainstream novel? It's because many romance authors make good use of viewpoint to draw their readers in.

Almost immediately in a good romance you are drawn into the life of a heroine or hero. You don't have to read several paragraphs setting up the time period, detailing the location or introducing you briefly to three or more characters who might or might not be a murderer. While you can start a chapter with a brief paragraph to set the scene, you need to move into the character's viewpoint right away. Even a crowded scene is better experienced by reading the impressions of someone who is there.

When done right, the reader will soon know what the heroine or hero is like, what they want, and what obstacles face her or him. For a heroine you are challenged to hope she gets what she wants and wonder how she's going to react to the hero who seems to be working against her.

So, how can you do this well in your story? Start on the day that is different as Dwight Swain, University of Oklahoma writing professor, always said. Throw your heroine or hero a curve that forces them to do something and show the reader how that affects the main character.

Let's start with the heroine. By using third person viewpoint, you can get right into her thoughts and show how a problem affects her physically and mentally. Show what goes through her mind as she tries to figure out what to do next.

If you stick to her viewpoint for several pages at first or even a whole chapter, the reader becomes attached to her and hopefully starts to feel as she does and worry about her problems. When your first chapter is well done, the reader can see the hero through her eyes, hear his husky voice and perhaps smell his captivating aftershave. If he is trying the heroine's patience, the reader can feel her indignation as you show how he affects her physically and mentally. The reader can follow her thoughts and wonder if her plans for dealing with the hero will work out. (con't on page 9)

Luring Readers

(con't from page 8)

After you have spent time enough for the reader to identify with the heroine, you can shift from her viewpoint to his and show the story from the hero's point of view. This way the reader can start to identify with the hero and see how he feels. Be careful to stay in character and only mention what a guy would notice and use thoughts a male would be likely to have. He won't know what style or color her dress is. He'll only notice it's blue and clingy--unless of course he's a fashion designer.

So when do you shift viewpoints? For each scene pick the character most likely to be strongly affected by what's happening. After the scene, if you wish, you can show how the scene affected the other character, but don't repeat the happenings. You could do this with a love scene by staying in her viewpoint during the love scene and then afterwards switching to the hero's point of view to show how the love scene affected him. This works well by starting a new chapter with the hero's viewpoint.

To change viewpoint, mention the other character's name and have him or her do or say something. Then you can show that character's feelings and thoughts colored by his or her attitude. For example after the heroine and the hero have an argument, you can show the sick feeling in his stomach, his bewilderment at what she said and how she acted. Or maybe the hero had a fight with another man. You could say, "Mark touched his face. The bruise on his cheek felt raw. His stomach felt as if someone were sticking needles into it. He could hardly see out of one eye, but he could feel the blood dripping from his knuckles." The reader will know you have shifted into Mark's viewpoint and know how awful he feels.

Wise use of viewpoint will help the reader live your story along with the hero and heroine and really get "into" the story while reading it.

Note: Carolyn Williamson, author of There IS Life After Lettuce, a cookbook for heart patients, diabetics and dieters, has presented talks on viewpoint at two RWA chapter conferences.

The following article appeared in the April issue of The Jasmine, the newsletter for the Lowcountry Romance Writers in South Carolina.

Gerunds and Clauses and Verbs, Oh My!

by Nancy K. Schneider

Taking Kat Duncan's grammar class, "Get Grammar" through the Fantasy, Futuristic, and Paranormal Chapter of RWA, was not only challenging, the experience was eye-opening. {Gerund} I now have a plethora of new tools to add to my writing toolbox.

(con't on page 10)

Gerunds and more....

(con't from page 9)

I learn from example. Give me a bunch of cold rules and my mind shifts into overload. Give me examples, including how and why they're what they are, and I absorb like a dry sponge.

Kat Duncan is a gifted teacher. She uses concrete examples and gentle correction. After succinctly describing and showing how to properly, and effectively, use those scary participial phrases, she would give us assignments.

Biting the bullet, I moaned and groaned while doing the work. {Present Participial Phrase} See, it's easy!

To give in was unacceptable. {Infinitive Phrase} So I dug in and went to work. Even though I was confused at times, Kat steered me in the right direction. {Adverbial Clause}

She exposed our errors and turned them around, helping us to understand our mistakes. Her thought provoking simple suggestions helped clarify and connect types of grammar with writing techniques. Such as, "Think about what you want your reader to know or experience."

I learned to replace phrases such as "determined not to let" with "refused." Simple and direct, yet paints a vivid picture. Or, to replace bland words such as "he walked away" with "he disappeared."

Kat is also responsible for helping me overcome "Adverb Fear!" Believe it or not, adverbs can be our friends. Alone or used as a phrase, they tell us how or why something was done.

Okay, now your inner-editor is screaming, "Don't tell, show!" Would any writer want to be responsible for an endangered species eternal demise? Of course not.

Non 'ly' adverbs can show. Again, I'll show by example.

Hands clenched, he glared at the woman.

Every time she tried, tears blurred her vision.

Get the picture? Don't be afraid to start with an adverb or adverbial phrase. Let's not kill off the adverb.

I've only scratched the surface; there's so much more. {Elliptical clause} My plan is to arrange all Kat's notes, suggestions, and concise directions into a personal reference manual. Without reserve, I would recommend Kat Duncan's class.

To not complete my writing goal is out of the question. {Infinitive Phrase}

Nancy K. Schneider writes romantic suspense. She lives in western Pennsylvania and is a member of the North East Ohio, Low-country, and Western New York chapters of RWA with PRO status. In 2009 her short story, Dickens Déjà vu, was a finalist in the 'Scare the Dickens Out of Us' ghost story contest, sponsored by Friends of Clark Library in Lockhart, TX, and her current manuscript, Deadly Reflection, took first place in Cleveland Rocks Romance contest's 'First Declaration of Love' category.



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NTRWA Monthly Meeting
Third Saturday of the month
Doors Open 10 a.m.
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