

# North Texas Romance Writers of America

## HEART to HEART

Founded March 1983

Chapter 33, Region 5

July 2010

Volume 29, Issue 6

### WRITTEN WORDS

#### RISING STAR AWARDS MOST PAGES WRITTEN in JUNE

- Heather Long - 185 pages
- Michelle Kopra - 150 pages
- Jean Marie Brown - 125 pages
- Jeannie Guzman - 121 pages
- Ron Campbell - 112 pages

#### STAR AWARDS MOST PAGES EDITED in JUNE

- Clover Autry = 1,270 pages
- Nikki Duncan - 1,031 pages
- Heather Long - 890 pages
- Beth Shriver - 310 pages
- Jean Marie Brown - 276 pages

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Join Us July 17th

When Barnes & Noble  
Community Relations

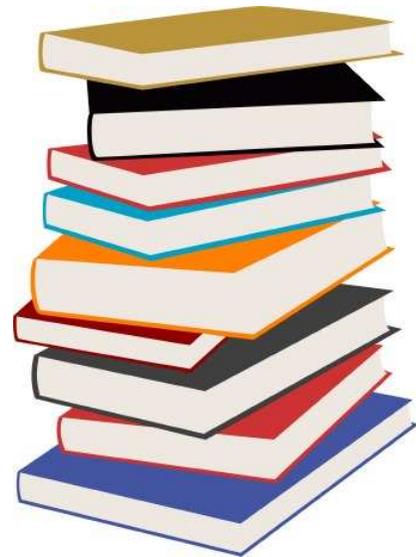
Manager

Georgette Radford

Explains

“Everything you ever  
wanted to know about

Booksellers”



Marsha West writes about contributing  
to NTRWA page 8



NTRWA  
President  
GINA  
NELSON  
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Don't forget to  
contribute to the  
NTRWA basket

Page 4

## The President's Corner

*"Planning to write is not writing. Outlining...researching...talking to people about what you're doing, none of that is writing. Writing is writing."* *E.L. Doctorow*

This month I'm writing my column from my parents' home in Pensacola, Florida. Through the plantation shutters next to my desk, I spy many of the things that represent home to me: white rocking chairs on an expansive screened porch, healthy ferns and blooming palm trees, ducks waddling on the boat dock my children painted last summer, and a canal filled with an array of boats.



If you'll pardon the vacation analogy, I can't help but think of the writers in our chapter as I gaze at the different boats docked along our canal. The folks across the water have a power cruiser--feisty, quick, equipped with a small cabin for brief respites from the sun; further down there's a party boat--comfortable, unhurried, perfect for a sunset on the bay; another canal neighbor owns a fishing boat with a tall tower--aggressive, fast, no shade provided 'cause it's all about the catch; and way down the channel rests a sailboat with a forty foot mast--majestic, powerful, outfitted with luxurious accommodations for far-flung adventures.

It's easy for me to admire each vessel because I can clearly see how the differences in their structure and appearance fulfill the needs of their owners. Too bad I can't always do the same with my writing. Often I compare my skill, voice, and genre with those of my friends, critique partners, and the published authors in our chapter--even though I *know* that's creative suicide. As much as I'd like my voice to growl with no-holds-barred aggression, I'm aware that it merely barks with Southern cynicism. Believe me, I don't consciously strive to write like someone else; but I am guilty of writing stories I think are marketable to the point that I edit out my own voice. And has anyone else out there started writing a manuscript you thought was stark and literary, say something like "Girl with a Pearl Earring," only to realize that, in fact, you've written something that resembles "Fried Green Tomatoes" instead?

Perhaps the salt air has cleared my head. Whatever the reason, I've started my vacation with a change in attitude. I still aspire to write with a fresh, no-holds-barred style; but I've made myself a few promises. I will continue to hone *my* skills and voice. I will bring to my writing what only *I* can bring--my history, experience, and point of view. And, finally, I will *enjoy* the writing, 'cause that's what the ride is all about.

**Gina Nelson, President**

*"When genuine passion moves you, say what you've got to say, and say it hot."*  
*D.H. Lawrence*

## June Minutes

**CALL TO ORDER:** A regular meeting of the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on June 19, 2010 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The president and secretary were present. The meeting was called to order at 10:33 A.M. The minutes of the April and May meetings as posted in the May and June Newsletters were approved.

### **OFFICER REPORTS:**

**President Gina Nelson reported:** First sale pens have not arrived so they will be presented later. She presented Beth Shriver with a picture of her cover encased in glass.

**Treasurer Ron Campbell reported:** Ron presented a treasurer's report, which will be filed for audit.

**Program Director Kym Roberts reported:** Next month's workshop will be presented by Georgette Radford of Barnes & Noble, who will speak on the business of selling books.

**Membership Jeannie Guzman reported:** As of today, we have 76 members. In attendance, we had 1 new member, Jamie Webb, who writes contemporary romance and 1 visitor, Alana Autrey.

### **COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:**

**Newsletter Editor Jean Brown reported:** Newsletters were available at the meeting for those who didn't receive them.

**Bead a Book Nikki Duncan reported:** Beads were presented to those who had earned them.

**Audio Librarian Nikki Duncan reported:** She has tapes from national conference workshops to lend.

**FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Angi Platt has been "kicked out" of PRO. She presented a picture of the cover of her book, *Hill Country Hold Up*.

The business meeting was adjourned at: 10:55 A.M.

*Submitted electronically by Carolyn Williamson, Secretary*

# National Conference Raffle Basket

As most of you know conference is almost here and the creation of our NTRWA National Raffle Basket is underway! NTRWA members have always been very generous in making each basket a stand-out at conference.

This year our theme is "Texas Proud." How could we not be proud? Texas has some of the most talented romance writers, published and unpublished.

That's why this year we thought what better way to showcase our talented writers than asking each published author if they could donate a book (autographed copies, of course) for our basket.

We're asking the rest of our to-be-published writers to donate gift cards (from national stores and in small increments) and/or Texas memorabilia to fill our baskets to show our fellow romance writing members how proud we are to be Texans! (I'm also talking to non-Native Texans who moved here as soon as they could).

You can bring your donations to our meeting. If you're unable to attend please notify me or one of our board members and we'll find a way to collect your contribution.

Thank you all for your generosity!

**Delores Schaeffer,**  
Hospitality Chair , [Hospitality@ntrwa.org](mailto:Hospitality@ntrwa.org)

## Don't Forget to Mark Your Calendar for These Upcoming Meetings

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 Nancy Connally

Written by Kim Quinton

A fan of air-conditioning, automobiles, and Dr. Pepper, Nancy suffers no illusions -- she would not have enjoyed living in 1880s Texas. What she does enjoy is creating characters, plunking them down in those fascinating years, and sitting back for the ride. In pursuit of the historic details she weaves into her characters' lives, she gets to visit obscure sites, read century-old newspapers featuring outlandish ads, and is usually excused for not having a clue about current events. She considers joining NTRWA one of her best writing decisions.

## **Where were you born and raised?**

I'm a native Texan, born in Fort Worth and raised not too far west of the city limits.

When did you decide you wanted to be a writer?

Even though I'd been writing stories -- and using reams of expensive notebook paper - from about sixth grade, it didn't occur to me that I might be a writer. Then, in ninth grade, I had a creative writing project. I was one of the few in the class who totally enjoyed that assignment. After that I participated in a UIL competition, became editor of my high school paper, and hoped maybe someday people might pay to read what I wrote :-)

## **Do you write full-time or do you have a day-job also?**

I guess I write full-time. I stepped away from freelance non-fiction writing about a year ago to focus on fiction. However, I'm tempted to give a little time to freelance again because it was nice to deposit those checks in the bank account.

## **What do you write?**

Fiction-wise, I write western historical romance (two of those) and contemporary western romance (three of those). They all take place in the parts of Texas I know best.

## **Are you working on anything now?**

Yes, I am. I'm editing my second completed western historical. I'm also in the research/plotting stage for the third one.

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

Hmm. Long ago, after I read the Mary Stewart trilogy about Merlin, I wrote a story about a boy who had magical powers in a make-believe land. Wonder where I put that?

Continued on next page

## Spotlight on Nancy Connally

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

My to-be-read stack resembles the Leaning Tower of Pisa. It seems like I read one book and replace it with two. I used to read every mystery I could get my hands on. Then I went through a biography and Civil War fascination. Now I enjoy reading anything historical about Texas or the West before 1900, humor, stories based in small towns, and sometimes books about writing.

Oh gosh, favorite authors has to include Elmer Kelton, Bret Harte, and Harper Lee. Romance-wise, my favorites are Jodi Thomas, Lori Wilde, Victoria Chancellor, Tamera Alexander, and Dixie Cash.

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

I don't know that they encouraged me to write, but the first romances I recall reading were Janet Dailey's Calder series. I don't recall reading another romance until years later, when I worked at a local newspaper, and a reporter told me I had to read "Coast Road" by Barbara Delinsky. I didn't read romances again until an editor and several writing friends pointed out to me that was what I was writing :-)

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

First, congratulations on joining such an amazing, supportive, welcoming group of writers. Make yourself into a sponge – talk with other members, ask their opinions and advice, attend the meetings and absorb the info the speakers share. Definitely participate in events like the critique roundtable and the chance to practice pitching your manuscript. Also, give back by getting involved on any level. For example, consider taking the judges' training the group offers and then being a judge for the Great Expectations contest, or writing an article for the newsletter.

### **Helpful tips or mistakes to avoid?**

Definitely read the genre you're writing. Stay attuned to the romance industry -- there are some very good blogs by editors and agents. Find out what contests other writers respect and enter those; the critiques from a good contest are more than worth the entry fee. If you sense you're weak in some area of writing, take online classes through RWA chapters or attend mini-conferences. However, don't be an eternal student in the sense of always taking classes, always learning about writing, and never actually writing. One of the best ways to learn to write is to write :-)

Continued on next page

## Spotlight on Nancy Connally

### **Are you planning to attend the RWA national conference this year?**

Nope

### **What is something that no one knows about you and might be surprised to learn? Hobbies, skills, guilty pleasures?**

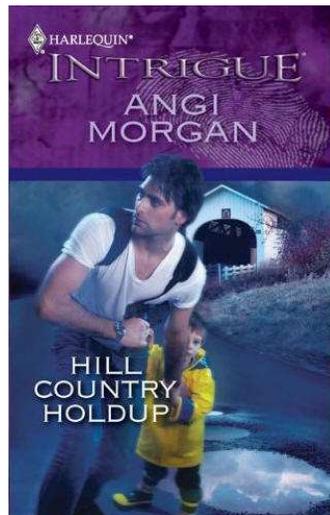
Okay, this is going to sound beyond bizarre but here goes – for years and years I was a shy person. I'll sit back while group members laugh :-). Skill-wise, I'm a good gardener, a decent cook, a failed guitarist, and a devoted animal lover. Get ready for another laugh ... one of my guilty pleasures is having a soft-serve ice cream cone from McDonald's. Even I laugh when I say that.

### **Please list your websites, blog and any other social media contact info.**

An editor friend told me to stick to writing good manuscripts for now, so that's what I'm doing. Hopefully :-). I do book reviews for a website but that's it for web presence. I've filed away a bunch of info from presentations at NTRWA meetings, though, for when I do decide to reach out.

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## Member News!



Please email news about upcoming books, covers, book signings to

**Jean Marie Brown**

[Newsletter@ntrwa.org](mailto:Newsletter@ntrwa.org)

Here's the cover for Angi Platt's debut with Harlequin Intrigue's line. Hill Country Holdup is due out in September.

# The Give and Take of Chapter Membership

**By Marsha West**  
**President-Elect**

I've been a member of this chapter slightly less than three years. In that time I've been the Hospitality Chair for two years and am in the middle of my term as President-Elect. That may seem like kind of a lot of jobs for a relative newcomer. Many of you have been in the chapter for far longer than I and done more. Not too surprising for me personally, because I've always been a joiner and seldom am just a name on the list.

This speaks to how welcoming this chapter is, too. In some organizations, the folks who've been there the longest run things. You've been there when anything ever said by one of the "experienced" people became policy. And we've all heard the phrase, "We've always done it this way," meant to squash any new ideas. To me, NT is different than some organizations I've been involved with in the past. Let me share some of what I've gained in my three-year membership.

Supportive friends—necessary to me coming from the world of education where I was surrounded by people, some of whom I'd worked with for years, admittedly—some friends others adversaries.

Critique partners— I didn't even know I needed them.

Opportunities to keep on learning—not too surprising this is important for an educator. As an ESTJ (according to my Myers/Briggs Type Inventory), I'm constantly seeking input upon which to make judgments. The stuff I didn't know when I started this writing journey would fill volumes. What I know now falls into the category of a short novella. And I would point out the huge chasm between cognitively knowing something and being able to do it. But I'm continuing to grow and get better because of my involvement with NT.

A group of people with common interests - different from number one, because we're a large group. Jeannie announced 75 members at our meeting last month, many of whom don't live in the area, and we don't get to see them on a regular basis. Acquaintances and friends have different meanings to me. That's despite Face Book and their converting of a noun to a verb (friend becoming to friend), which I know puts me squarely in the old folks category. LOL (See I have kept up with some current cultural norms.) Everybody in NT is on his/her own particular writing career journey, from multi-published authors to those desperately trying to find an agent and get published to those who, for whatever reason, write just because they love doing it and aren't seeking publication. (CP alert! I still can write what we fondly call a "Marsha sentence," ) a solid 3 lines or more. We're not "friends" with everyone, but colleagues. I know I can ask a question on the NT Loop and someone will answer it. Maybe

(continued on next page.)

## The Give and Take of Chapter Membership

someone I don't know, but they'll do so because we share a common interest. And when someone has a birthday, lots and lots of folks take a moment to share in that celebration.

Opportunities to work with others—writing is a somewhat solitary endeavor (except for the crazy people running around in our heads demanding to be let out). Oh, wait. Maybe we're the crazy people. Hmm. But I digress. Getting together to pull off something like our Two-Step Conference gives me a sense of pride of accomplishment. Working my first year as a contest coordinator with others in our chapter pushed my learning curve with spreadsheets. Thank you, Marti, for bailing me out so often. Thank you so much, Angi, for setting things up differently last year, so I didn't have to do it again. If you'd asked I would have, and it's really hard for me. We can't count on Angi to chair the contest into perpetuity. Some year someone else will need those contest coordinators again, and I'll very likely volunteer. Hopefully, you will, too. Fortunately, we have lots of people willing to share their expertise.

I've not mentioned anything about what we get from our RWA membership, and this isn't an exhaustive list. I'm sure you, too, could come up with a similar tally of what you've gained from membership in NT. Because we get a lot from belonging to the chapter, there are times NT needs us to give back. All the events and activities that happen do so because a member has stepped forward to take a leadership role. Look on the last page of this newsletter to see our current board members and chairs.

A board position means you need to be able to attend board meetings, which happen about four times a year, usually before or after our meetings. Chairs, like all members, are welcome at those, but don't have to come unless they want to make a pitch about something related to their job. (That's how I got hooked, by attending a couple of board meetings when I was Hospitality Chair.) We have great members, and that's another opportunity to interact with them in a different setting.

Service isn't limited to serving on the board or as a chair. Many of you came forward and did great work on our Texas Two-Step Conference to make it a success. Marti, by herself, couldn't have pulled that off. Neither could the board and committee chairs alone. Thanks to all of you who recently and over the years have helped make NT what it is today.

I know what you're thinking: "This woman is nuts. Why's she talking about officer jobs and service now? It's the middle of summer, for crying out loud. I'm writing. I'm busy with my kids, my job, my family. I don't have time for this."

(Continued on the next page)

## The Give and Take of Chapter Membership

It's okay. Don't stress. I don't need you to do anything right now, except maybe give a passing thought to what your particular skills are and how they can be used for the chapter— sometime—in the future. Thanks to our current president, board members, and chairs. Hopefully, some of those people will be willing to continue in their current or another position, so we're not looking to replace everyone at one time. What a nightmare that would be! Chances are, we'll need some of our members to be willing to step forward, so sometime in the fall, I'll be baaaack.

**Marsha, Pres-Elect**

### Erotica vs. Erotic Romance ©

**By Shelley Bradley (aka Shayla Black)**

Erotica is usually one person's journey of self-discovery through sex that's meaningful to them in a personal sense, but not necessarily in a romantic love sense. Erotica often contains sex with multiple partners, which can be of the opposite or same sex. Whatever propels the main character toward their self-discovery is allowed. Think Black Lace, Nexxus, Spice, etc.

Erotic romance, simply put, is a romance with a lot more frequent and graphic sex. But the focus is on the hero & heroine and their growing relationship, which is often expressed in the bedroom. The sex between them may begin as a result of pure lust, but should morph into love, and each encounter should show the growing closeness between them. In these books, you might see elements of BDSM, ménage, etc., but at the end of the day, the hero & heroine (or committed triad in a pure ménage book) are together permanently because they have expressed love for each other.

Make sense?

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### **YOUR STORY COULD BE HERE!**

**HEART to HEART** is looking for original articles written by NT members. If there's a topic that you feel passionately about or want to explore, please consider writing about it for the newsletter. All stories are posted on the RWA™ Editors' Loop, and hopefully other member chapters will pick them up. If you're interested contact Jean Marie Brown at [Newsletter@ntrwa.org](mailto:Newsletter@ntrwa.org)



newsletter@ntwra.org

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Grapevine, TX 76051

NTRWA Monthly Meeting  
Third Saturday of the month  
Doors Open 10 a.m.  
La Hacienda Ranch  
5250 Highway 121 South\*  
Colleyville, TX

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