



# North Texas Romance Writers of America

## HEART to HEART

Founded March 1933

Chapter 33, Region 5

August 2010

Volume 29, Issue 7

### WRITTEN WORDS

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

- Candy Havens - 420 pages
- Heather Long - 359 pages
- Misa Ramirez - 250 pages
- Michelle Kopra - 190 pages
- Ron Campbell - 125 pages

#### SPUR AWARDS MOST PAGES EDITED in JUNE

- Candy Havens - 630 pages
- Nikki Duncan - 450 pages
- Lee Swift - 365 pages
- Heather Long - 275 pages
- Shelley Bradley - 265 pages

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## Join us on August 21st for Shelly Kaehr

Becoming the Master of Your Own Website

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NTRWA  
President  
GINA  
NELSON  
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Please email news about up-  
coming books, covers, book  
signings to

Jean Marie Brown

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

## The President's Corner

*There's nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and open a vein.*

~**Walter Wellesley "Red" Smith**

*Every writer I know has trouble writing.* ~**Joseph Heller**

Every year at this time, swimmers from North Texas converge on one of our local natatoriums to kick and paddle their extremities off, competing for medals and trophies and team bragging rights. After attending this meet for several years, our family is down to just one competitive swimmer, my strong and graceful sixteen-year-old. Without my three boys to chase I find myself watching from the sidelines with a new perspective.



Yet again, I see myself and the writer's world reflected. This time it shimmers in the smiles, pouts, and frustrated expressions of the competitors. I smile with the younger ones who are so proud to finish, win first in their heat, or make it to the consolation final. I squirm with recognition when grim-mouthed athletes respond to their sympathetic parents with terse words and downcast eyes.

Throughout the years we've repeatedly asked our boys to concentrate not on how they *finish*, first, second, or eighth place, but on their *time*. All competitive swim parents do the same. That way, even if they finish sixteenth out of a set of twenty athletes, they can focus on something positive. Did they swim their event with a better time than the last time they competed? Are they making *progress*?

You guessed it. *Progress* is exactly what we need to focus on in our writing careers as well. Progress can be measured by our actions. Are we completing manuscripts, entering contests, meeting with agents and editors, and submitting? Perhaps we're already doing those things. Progress can be measured by honing our skills. Are we working to improve our characterizations, descriptions, dialogue, and conflict? Okay, let's say we're doing those things as well. Are we accountable to a critique group? Setting goals, both short and long term?

So many others before me have said the same thing, control what *you* can control in this business. You have no power over whether or not an agent chooses to represent you or if an editor offers you a contract. You do have power over your writing and progress. This month I want to encourage all of us to recognize our own progress, pat ourselves on the back for how far we've come, and toughen our commitment to improvement. And, of course, enjoy the writing.

***Gina Nelson, President***

*I'm not a very good writer, but I'm an excellent rewriter.* ~**James Michener**

### Meeting Notice

The Board of Directors of the North Texas Romance Writers will hold a regular meeting on August 21, 2010 at 1:00 PM at La Hacienda Ranch in Colleyville, Texas. The meeting will follow the regular chapter meeting. All members are invited to attend."

## July Minutes

**CALL TO ORDER:** A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on July 17, 2010 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. President-Elect Marsha West presided in the president's absence. The secretary was present. The meeting was called to order at 12:00 PM. The minutes of the June meeting as posted in the June Newsletter were approved.

Board Absences: Gina Nelson, Jean Marie Brown, Jeannie Guzman

### **OFFICER REPORTS:**

**President-Elect Marsha West for President Gina Nelson:** presented first sale pins to Linda Graves for *Shimmying Faith* (Whiskey Creek Press), Sheniqua Waters for *Slave Girl* (Red Rose Press), and Angi Platt for *Hill Country Holdup* (Harlequin). Angi Platt was also awarded a glass presentation frame, containing the cover for *Hill Country Holdup*.

**Treasurer Ron Campbell:** presented the checking account balance and the treasurer's report, which will be filed for audit.

**Program Director Kym Roberts announced:** next month's workshop will be presented by Shelley Kaehr on websites, and Wendy Watson will speak on "The Wrong Man" at the September meeting. The NTRWA Writer's Retreat will probably be during the second weekend in November.

**President-Elect Marsha West for Membership Director Jeannie Guzman reported:** as of today's meeting, we have 79 members. In attendance we had 3 visitors, Jo and David Cavender and Grace Roeber. New member Joe Jackson also attended for the first time.

**Pan Liaison Shelley Bradley reported:** the NT PAG (Published Authors Group) will meet on September 18<sup>th</sup>, during the NTRWA meeting.

**Pro Liaison Clover Autry reported:** The PRO Loop will be focusing on query letters next.

### **COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:**

**Writing Incentives Chair Nikki Duncan reported:** She will present beads at the next meeting.

**Audio Librarian Nikki Duncan reported:** She has CDs available from the RWA National Conferences.

**Great Expectations Chair Angi Platt reported:** She would like help with the contest as she has a book coming out in February.

## **FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Shelley Bradley sold 3 of her published books to a publisher in Spain.

Heather Long sold *Prime Evil* and *Remembering Ashley*.

Misa Ramirez sold *Pleating for Mercy* to Kerry Donovan at NAL, which is part of her dressmaker mystery series.

The business meeting was adjourned at: 12:52 PM.

Submitted electronically by Carolyn Williamson, Secretary

## Meetings You Don't Want to Miss!

Sept. 18: Wendy Watson **The Wrong Man**

Oct. 16: Dallas Medical Examiner Reade Quinton

**"Reality is Stranger than Fiction"** (Graphic topics—discretion advised)

### Getting In The Mood

By Jeannie Guzman

It's not what you think. Or maybe it is. I'm talking about getting in the mood for writing. As I sit here in my office, the sun shining through the window and the dogs asleep at my feet, I'm frustrated because I can't quite get in the mood to put words to paper, or on the computer screen. It got me to wondering. What do all those other writers out there do to get in the mood? I have my story boards, the ones with all the pictures and nick-knacks I've collected for inspiration, (by the way, thank you Candy and Rosemary for that idea.) I have my orange candles, (I read somewhere that orange is the color for inspiration.) and the quiet. (It's hard for me to think with background noise.) Even surrounded by my inspiration, I'm easily distracted.

So, here is my question. What do you do, or what don't you do, to get in the mood? I'm not talking about outlines and character sketches; I'm talking your own personal setting. Do you write with a buddy? Do you leave your house and go to the local coffee shop? Do you have a stuffed animal to bounce ideas off of? Do you write only at night, when everyone is asleep? Do you turn your computer on as soon as you wake? Inquiring minds want to know. Email your answers to: [Newsletter@ntrwa.org](mailto:Newsletter@ntrwa.org)

# Spotlight on Susan Harrison

Written by Kim Quinton

## **Can you describe yourself in fifty words or less?**

I am an ex-ballet dancer, school teacher, gymnastics club owner-coach-judge, rock and roll band lead singer, AA reservationist, attorney. I took time out of my busy and varied career to follow my dream of writing, and btw, I was tired of being an attorney.

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

Ft. Worth / born - Hurst, Texas / raised

## **When did you decide you wanted to be a writer? Do you write full-time or do you have a day-job also?**

I've wanted to be a writer since Junior High where I was famous throughout the school for my terrifyingly gory horror stories, a la Edgar Allen Poe.

I write part-time, but do not have a full-time job. I'm just lazy.

## **What do you write?**

Historical Fiction and Historical Romance

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

Romance – *Roses, Blood and Wolfsbane*

Love story set to a background of the werewolf hunts in Gevaudan, France in the 1700's.

Fiction – the story of Margaret of Anjou and the Wars of the Roses – called right now – *Rose of Fury* – or whatever

## **Can you tell us a little about your writing process?**

Bleed off the top of my head and then much editing.

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

Horror

## **Are you published?**

No. The more I write the more I realize that law school killed what creativity I had left.

(continued on next page)

## Spotlight on Susan Harrison

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

Historical Fiction – when I was young I read Jean Plaidy and Norah Lofts. Now it's Alison Weir, who writes straight historicals.

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

No, but I'm sure it was something about Anne Boleyn.

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

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

Keep writing. You do get better by the process. I now know my first book was horrible – I can't believe Harlequin read it and sent me back a rejection in writing – I am so honored.

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

I love the sun! and I still layout tanning, even though I've had some skin cancers removed.

I have traveled a lot – to the point where all the dance club owners in Cancun knew me. I know how to travel throughout Europe in first class while buying the cheapest ticket! I got kicked out of the Vatican by a midget.

Did part of law school at University College in Oxford.

I am an evil stepmother.

I LOVE cats!

I have no hobbies – I ALWAYS intend to make a profit!!!

I am proficient with power tools.

You would have to ask my husband about my skills.

### **Are you a member of any other writing organizations?**

Historical Novel Society

### **Please list your websites, contact info and anything else.**

None yet, and I don't tweet!

# Georgette Radford of Barnes & Noble Reveals Book Business Facts

by Carolyn Williamson

Georgette Radford, Community Relations Manager of Barnes & Noble in Hurst, who spoke to NTRWA at their July meeting, has helped over sixty romance authors with book signings. She recommends arranging one during the first week after the book comes out and mentioning if the author has other recently issued titles to sell at that time.

Radford stated authors should wear colorful clothes instead of adapting a cold professional look. Authors who act friendly sell more books. Even if an author doesn't sell a lot of books at a signing, it is good advertising for the author.

Radford revealed that Barnes & Noble was started by Charles Barnes in 1894 who sold school books wholesale. Clifford Noble joined the business in 1917. When Leonard Riggio took over, he changed it to retail and opened the first retail bookstore in New York in 1932. He fostered tremendous growth because he made the store focus on customers. In 1972, the New York City Barnes & Noble was the largest retail bookstore in the world. Under his leadership, Barnes & Noble became worth \$225,000,000 by 1980. Now Barnes & Noble has 777 stores in 50 states and 636 college bookstores.

## www.AreYOUOnline

By Kym Roberts

Anyone who is serious about writing as a business must have their own website. But what if you can't afford to pay the big bucks to get it done?

Already got a site you want to jazz up? At our next meeting Shelley Kaehr will show you how easy it is to upload book trailers, scrolling banners and all the other bells and whistles you'll need to make your site look great. She'll even take us behind the 'veil' of html code so even a complete novice can work with it....

Through the years, our guest, Shelley Kaehr has built more webpages than she'd care to admit. In this class, she will demystify the art of webbuilding by showing you how to get a site completely up and running in an afternoon without having to go bankrupt or pay someone every time you need to make a minor change. Shelley says building and maintaining the site is easy and in this hands on class, she will walk you through the steps from A-Z so by the end of our time together, you will have your very own website up and running! Shelley will be showing us how to build a site on GoDaddy, one of America's premier webhosting companies.

Shelly Kaehr, aka Leah Leonard and Annette Shelley, is author of over twenty non-fiction books and recently sold her eleventh fiction novel to Parker Publishing. Visit her online at [www.shelleykaehr.com](http://www.shelleykaehr.com), [www.leahleonard.com](http://www.leahleonard.com) and [www.annetshelley.com](http://www.annetshelley.com).

# COMMA CONUNDRUMS

*The following was published in the June issue of Midwest Muse, newsletter of Midwest Fiction Writers (MFW).*

By: Barbara Longley

Ever find yourself in a comma conundrum? Unsure how to punctuate that complex or compound sentence? While I studied for my masters in education, I took training in the University of Kansas Sentence Writing Strategies. The formulas they provide for punctuation have been very helpful for me, and I hope you'll find them helpful as well.

First, let's lay some foundation: A simple sentence is a sentence that has one independent clause. An independent clause (I) is a group of words that form a complete statement and contains a subject and a verb. (S,V)

There are four basic formulas for simple sentences:

SV - He came into the room. (one subject, one verb)

SSV - He and I spoke simultaneously. (two subjects, one verb)

SVV - Andy raised his hand and answered the question. (one subject, two verbs)

SSVV - Fred and Ethel left the restaurant and drove home in a hurry. (two subjects, two verbs)

(These are very simple examples because we all get this part.)

COMPOUND SENTENCES: A compound sentence has two or more independent clauses. The independent clauses are joined by a semi colon or by adding a coordinating conjunction and a comma. (Notice I did not place a comma before the "or" above . . . *by adding a coordinating conjunction and a comma* . . . is not an independent clause; no comma is needed in this case.)

Coordinating conjunctions: Remember the FANBOYS? For, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.

There are two formulas for compound sentences:

I,cI (independent clause, coordinating conjunction independent clause.) AND I;I (independent clause; independent clause)

~~~~~

I,cI (independent clause, coordinating conjunction independent clause)

"I'd like to invite you to dinner, but I don't have any food in the house." I,cI

*I'd like to invite you to dinner.* This is a complete sentence and can stand alone. *I don't have any groceries in the house.* This is also a complete sentence and can stand alone. The two independent clauses are joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

He believed her, and the tension in his body eased. I,cI

# COMMA CONUNDRUMS

"May I take your order now, or do you need a few more minutes?" I,cI

~~~~~

I;I (independent clause; independent clause)

I hope you brought the hamburger buns; I forgot to stop at the store on the way home. I;I

I'm hungry; let's eat. I;I

Wrap up the leftovers; I don't want them to spoil. I;I

~~~~~

COMPLEX SENTENCES: A complex sentence has one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. A DEPENDENT CLAUSE (D) is a group of words with a subject and verb that cannot stand alone. (Because somebody stuck a subordinating conjunction onto it.)

Subordinating conjunctions are words that show the relationship of the dependent clause to the independent clause:

After    even if            since    although        even though    so that                    as        if  
          than

as if    in order that    though                    as long as    just as            unless

as soon as    like    until    as though    once    when            because                    pro-  
vided

whenever    before            rather than    while

If the dependent clause comes first, you need to add a comma. D,I

You don't need to add a comma if the independent clause comes first. ID

"I'll wash the dishes if you will dry them." ID

"If you will dry them, I'll wash the dishes." D,I

"If I win the bet, you have to buy dinner." D,I

"You have to buy dinner if I win the bet." ID

"While you're up, get me a beer, babe." D,I (Hah! In your dreams, bucko.)

"Please get me a beer since you're up anyway, honey." ID (Okay, maybe—since he asked nicely.)

~~~~~

## COMMA CONUNDRUMS

COMPOUND-COMPLEX SENTENCES: A compound-complex sentence has two or more independent clauses and at least one dependent clause. There are six formulas to learn. READY?

D,I,cI (dependent clause, independent clause, coordinating conjunction, independent clause)

If you want something done right, do it yourself, and you'll never regret it. D,I,cI

ID,cI (independent clause dependent clause, coordinating conjunction independent clause):

Do it yourself if you want something done right, and you'll never regret it. ID,cI

I,cID (independent clause, coordinating conjunction independent clause dependent clause):

She placed her hand over his, and his heart soared just as he thought the evening couldn't get any better. I,cID

D,I;I (dependent clause, independent clause; independent clause):

"If you don't stop what you're doing, I'm going to lose my cool; stop it." D,I;I

ID;I (independent clause dependent clause; independent clause):

"I can't help it if you don't feel the same way about me; I want you." ID;I

"Take me; I'm yours even if it means you win." I;ID (independent clause; independent clause dependent clause)

As you can see, I kept the examples pretty simple, and this is the short version. I hope this helps you as much as it has helped me.

A few more things: When using someone's name it isn't necessary to use a comma unless you are addressing a person.

Thomas has a really bad haircut.                      vs.              That's a really bad haircut, Thomas.  
Thomas, go get a haircut.

The duke has retired for the evening. Your grace, will there be anything else you need before you retire for the evening?

Comma used for a series of things:

Standard American English: He brought bread, eggs, ham and cheese.

Oxford style: He brought bread, eggs, ham, and cheese. (This is an Oxford comma before the and. It is correct, and it is a style choice. When you're judging in a contest, don't mark it as incorrect.)

## COMMA CONUNDRUMS

COMMAS FOR PAUSES: If you really examine this concept, you'll realize most conversational pauses happen when a D precedes an I or a compound sentence is used. If you find yourself using commas frequently for the pause effect, take a moment to really look at the sentence structure. It's like telling instead of showing. One of the things we love about reading is that we can interpret what the writer gives us based upon our own unique field of experience. You don't really need to tell your readers where to pause; let it happen naturally. Use an action tag here and there for effect.

Another valuable tool is the read aloud. Have a trusted friend read your work aloud for you. If they stumble and halt, if it's impossible to read your text effortlessly, chances are you've overdone the commas and made it difficult for your readers to navigate through your writing. Keep it simple, and use words that have an impact.

Thanks for reading this. I'm not any kind of punctuation guru; that's for sure. I just like to share tricks of the trade that make my life easier. Happy writing.

*Ms. Longley holds a Masters in Education degree from the University of Minnesota. She has taught at the elementary level for fifteen years, and currently teaches Title 1 for the FAIR School Downtown, a performing and fine arts magnet located in the heart of the theater district in Minneapolis. Barbara has two grown children and lives in Saint Paul, MN. She writes paranormal and contemporary romance.*

### Member News!

## CONGRATULATIONS !

### ANGI PLATT

2010 Golden Heart® Winner for  
Best Contemporary Series Romance: Suspense/Adventure Manuscript

*See Jane Run*



newsletter@ntwra.org

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2100 W. Northwest HWY  
Suite 114-1081  
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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