



NTRWA

North Texas Romance Writers of America

HEART TO HEART

FOUNDED MARCH 1983

CHAPTER 33, REGION 5

SEPTEMBER 2010

VOLUME 29, ISSUE 8

WRITTEN WORDS

RISING STAR AWARDS MOST PAGES WRITTEN

Heather Long:
245 pages

Angi Platt:
147 pages

Kim Quinton:
140 pages

Beth Shriver:
100 pages

Jen FitzGerald:
87 pages

STAR AWARDS MOST PAGES EDITED

Jo Cavender:
650 pages (visitor)

Heather Long:
420 pages

Angi Platt:
350 pages

Marty Tidwell:
290 Pages

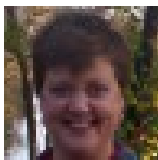
Jeanie Guzman:
92 pages

JOIN US ON SEPTEMBER 18TH FOR

WENDY LYN WATSON THE WRONG MAN



THE
PRESIDENT'S
CORNER:



STAYING INSPIRED AND
AFLOAT IN A BUSY
WORLD

P. 2

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PLATT, PAGES 5-6

MAKING A CASE FOR COUNTING
WORDS — JEN FITZGERALD, PAGES
7-10

MEMBER NEWS — PAGE 4

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody. ~ Bill Cosby

This month I'm writing my column from the bottom of a deep, dry well known as *busyness*. All around me slick, worn stones rise several feet into the air, imprisoning me with important tasks and responsibilities. I'm in no immediate danger for the well is dry, if a bit rank with the smell of desperation.

My children went back to school and so did *I*. Now it's up at 4:45 a.m. and home at 6:00 p.m. It's scrambling out the door, praying they remember their lunch money, and dragging back home, praying they remember how to do their homework. And as a teacher, it's assignments and lesson plans, passes and referrals, meetings, conferences, rehearsals, performances and, oh yes, uninhibited laughter and sticky hugs.



I try to escape this pit of activity to capture fleeting moments of solitude and personal creativity only to slide down to the bottom once again, where I'm forced to watch as puffy clouds of inspiration drift by in a cerulean sky of artistic bliss.

Have I given up? No. I have contest deadlines. I have ideas that will ferment in my brain if I don't write them down. I have a writers retreat just around the corner that demands characters, plots, and turning points. And I have critique partners depending on me.

So what do I do? If I can't work on my writing, I can work on my life so that one day soon, even tomorrow, I can carve out a moment or an hour to create something irreplaceable and uniquely my own.

Gina Nelson, President

Inspiration exists, but it has to find us working. ~ Pablo Picasso

THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

I'd like to thank all the NTRWA members who made my job so much easier this year by donating multiple gift cards and/or who took time from their busy schedules to purchase "Texas Proud" themed items for our National Conference basket.

I'd also like to give a special thank you to our published authors for making our basket even more personal by donating their books.

We are all so lucky to belong to such a generous and giving organization.

Thanks Again!

Delores Shaffer, Hospitality Chair

SEPTEMBER MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on August 21, 2010 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The president and secretary were present. The meeting was called to order at 10:34 A.M. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as posted in the July Newsletter.

Board Absences: Jean Marie Brown

OFFICER REPORTS:

President-Elect Marsha West reported: She bought the RWA National Conference CDs for the chapter.

Treasurer Ron Campbell reported: The checking account balance was reported and will be filed for audit.

Program Director Kym Roberts reported: Next month's workshop will be presented by Wendy Watson on "The Wrong Man." In October, Reed Quinton, a Dallas medical examiner, will speak on examining dead bodies. Members may make reservations for the Writers Roundup retreat by paying \$70 or the full \$140 by August 31st. (Kym must make a deposit on September 1st.) Members may cancel up to November 1st.

Membership Director Jeannie Guzman reported: As of today, we have 83 members. In attendance, we have 4 visitors, Jo and David Cavender, Bob Murray, and Tim Platt.

Website & Publicity Director Michelle Welsh reported: She will include members on the loop after receiving their names and e-mail addresses.

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:

Bead a Book Chair Nikki Duncan reported: She presented beads for pages written and revised.

Audio Librarian Nikki Duncan reported: She has CDs to lend to members.

Great Expectations Chair Angi Platt reported: Holly Blanck will judge this year's single title entries.

Ron Campbell moved that we adjourn. The motion passed.

The business meeting was adjourned at 10:56 A.M.

Submitted electronically by Carolyn Williamson

THE WRONG MAN

By Kym Roberts

With DNA exonerations making headlines across the country, we have to wonder, how does our legal system convict innocent men and women? The leading cause of wrongful conviction is eyewitness error. Yet how do actual witnesses to crimes finger the wrong man? In this workshop (complete with audience participation), we'll explore the psychology of perception, memory, and recall as well as the mechanics of the identification process to uncover the reasons for eyewitness error.

Wendy Lyn Watson writes deliciously funny cozy mysteries with a dollop of romance. Her *Mysteries a la Mode* (*I Scream, You Scream* (October 2009) and *Scoop to Kill* (September 2010)) feature amateur sleuth Tallulah Jones, who solves murders in between scooping sundaes. While she does not commit--or solve--murders in real life, Wendy can kill a pint of ice cream in nothing flat. She's also passionately devoted to 80s music, Asian horror films, and reality TV.

Join us Saturday, Sept. 18, for Wendy's presentation.

MEMBER NEWS!!!

SCOOP TO KILL, the second *Mystery a la Mode* by **Wendy Lyn Watson**, is on the shelves September 7!

Wendy Lyn Watson, *I SCREAM, YOU SCREAM* and *SCOOP TO KILL*; **Nikki Duncan**, *SOUNDS TO DIE BY*; and **Angi Morgan**, *HILL COUNTRY HOLDUP*, will sign books at the Barnes & Noble in Hurst beginning at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 18.



The Fatal Four on Tour! NT member **Wendy Lyn Watson** hits the road with three fellow cozy mystery authors (NYT best-seller Maggie Sefton, Jenn McKinlay, and Hannah Reed), Sept. 30 - Oct. 3. The

Before the official tour gets under way, NTers **Misa Ramirez** and **Angi Morgan** will join Wendy and Maggie for a signing at the Barnes & Noble in Denton on Wednesday, Sept. 29 (time, TBA).

AWARDS AND SALES

Marty Tidwell obtained Kim Lionetti for an agent who compared her to Susan Elizabeth Phillips.

Roni Griffin obtained Sarah Megibow as an agent.

Heather Long sold *Seismic Evil* to Sapphire Blue Publishing.

Beth Shriver sold *Reclaiming Tess* to Desert Breeze.

Kathleen Baldwin's book was published in Japan.

Jerrie Alexander is a finalist in the Toronto Gold contest.

RECEIVING THE CALL... A LONG JOURNEY AND TRUE STORY

By Angi Platt

It was suggested that I write an article about receiving "THE Call" and how winning the RWA Golden Heart® felt. Each--at the time--caused me to soar higher than I've ever been before in my writing career. Everything you can imagine...well, it's better. My road to publication this year has been fast & furious. I got The Call on November 12th and my book will hit shelves September 14th. But that's not the entire journey.



Fellow chapter mate and my friend, Catherine Spangler, has constantly reminded me this past year that I worked long and hard for this whirlwind trip. Over ten years of preparation. Some people call me an inspiration or say that I've given them hope. I just call myself...stubborn.

In 1997 my father was diagnosed with terminal cancer. He died before his 62nd birthday. He worked very hard his entire life - one of the smartest men I've ever known, a self-educated man who read encyclopedias. He'd just found a wealth of friends and was happy to start slowing down and having fun. Driving back from one of our visits with my father, my husband told me that "I was a writer. Life is too short and we never know how long we'll be here." He didn't want for me to wait to pursue my dream of publication. We decided together that I'd stay home with our kids, I'd volunteer...I'd write.

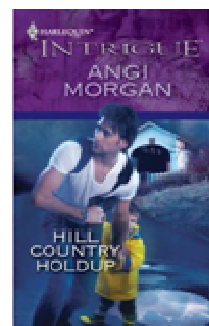
So in 1999 I joined RWA, getting involved with local chapters in 2000. I volunteered, I learned, I soaked up everything anyone would let me overhear. And here's the part of the story most people don't remember. I was requested and asked for revisions several times. I was close...so close I could... Well, you know. Not once, but several times I'd send revisions before an assistant editor moved on (changed lines, publisher, even fired). I had an agent. I was a 2004 GH finalist.

I didn't sell.

I received multiple rejections every year. I'd lost several of my critique partners and writer friends. They had almost all stopped writing. I lost heart and couldn't finish a manuscript. Then I lost my agent. (She couldn't represent someone who didn't have anything to submit.)

RECEIVING THE CALL... (CON'T)

I took two years off from writing with a good reason. We had a foster daughter and she and my youngest both graduated ('07 & '08). I deliberately didn't try to write. I volunteered, stayed active in my local chapters. I'd found a best friend, Amy Atwell, in 2004. She encouraged me, kept prodding me to write something new. I made a friend with Christie Craig who had been trying to publish again for much longer than me. Her encouragement never ceased. And then a revelation--Amy and I knew what was wrong with my finished work *See Jane Run*.



Many have heard that I claimed 2009 as my year. Well...it was time. MY TIME. I was determined to do everything in my power to sell. I put my revision cap on and wrote a column for my chapter newsletter, documenting what I did each month. From January to December, I never let my doubting mind have control. It was MY YEAR.

A new journey is beginning for me. My "sophomore" book has been written, sold, and scheduled for a February 2011 release. *.38 Caliber Cover-Up* is my second book for Harlequin Intrigue®. I have a fantastic editor, a wonderful agent who's interested in my career, and great critique partners. My family's so excited they're busting with pride.

And I have the support of everyone in RWA that taught me, mentored me, and helped me along this long road. Honest truth, cross my heart...I wouldn't have gotten here if I hadn't been encouraged and nurtured along the way. A very sincere *thank you*.

~~Angi Morgan writes for Harlequin Intrigue. Hill Country Holdup, her first release will be on book shelves September 14th, followed by .38 Caliber Cover-Up in February 2011. HCH won the 2010 Contemporary Series Romance: Suspense & Adventure RWA Golden Heart. See Jane Run, also won several other contests, two being the Daphne du Maurier and Great Expectations Contest in 2009. Visit her website: AngiMorgan.com or become a friend on Facebook.

TRACKING WORD COUNT FOR FUN AND MOTIVATION

By Jen FitzGerald

Why track your word count?

Well, you know, so you know how much you've written.

In our chapter, as in many others I'm sure, we recognize those who've been writing. At the meetings we clap and cheer for the five most prolific writers (and revisers) and the one with the most pages gets a little something from the president for his or her trouble. If you've signed up for our writing incentive program, you get beads, too--a tangible way to see your progress. Something to hold in your hand and say, "Look, I've been writing." And on top of that, at the end of the year, the writingest writer gets a pretty certificate and a \$25 gift card for his or her efforts.

Yeah, that's great, but that's once a month and once a year. How can I stay motivated on a daily basis?

Easy as cake. A spreadsheet.

Yep, you heard me.

So how does this work?

Okay, so I've opened a fresh, clean, blank spreadsheet. It's a little daunting, much like that first page before you get story words down, but it's okay. We're going to add some stuff so it doesn't look so...empty.

First we need to determine/decide some things and make a place for them. The things I track are: (Image 1)

- 1) time frame (in my case, from one chapter meeting to the next)
- 2) goal
- 3) words written so far
- 4) remaining balance
- 5) individual days/dates
- 6) writing projects (yes, I work on more than one at a time)

TRACKING WORD COUNT

①	Jul-Aug							
	Word	Day	Sunday	Sunday	Sunday	Monday	Monday	Monday
	Goal	Date	08/01/10	08/01/10	08/01/10	08/02/10	08/02/10	08/02/10
②	16000	Title	original fic	Consequences	Ch. 27	original fic	Consequences	Ch. 27
	Words	End Words	4809	11418	1302	4809	11418	1397
	Written	Beg Words	4809	11418	546	4809	11418	1302
③	12310	Total	0	0	756	0	0	95
	Balance							
④	3690							

Image 1

So now we've got the form created, if you will, and you've been busy writing and diligently recording each day's totals.

How is this motivating except to see how much you haven't written???

Well, the longest journey starts with a single step, but the motivating part is just watching the numbers as you write. The first thing I do is open my spreadsheet and make sure today, whatever today happens to be, is accounted for on my spreadsheet. Usually I set up the next day when I'm done for the day. Remember yesterday's ending total is today's beginning total. (Image 2, blue circles)

Jul-Aug							
Word	Day	Sunday	Sunday	Sunday	Monday	Monday	Monday
Goal	Date	08/01/10	08/01/10	08/01/10	08/02/10	08/02/10	08/02/10
16000	Title	original fic	Consequences	Ch. 27	original fic	Consequences	Ch. 27
Words	End Words	4809	11418	1302	4809	11418	1566
Written	Beg Words	4809	11418	546	4809	11418	1302
12479	Total	0	0	756	0	0	284

Image 2

TRACKING WORD COUNT

Then I open which ever project I plan on working on.

And I write.

And I update the ending numbers as numbers as I go. (Image 3, red circle)
which in turn updates the other numbers (Image 3, yellow circles) due to the magic
that are formulas.

Jul-Aug	Word	Day	Sunday	Sunday	Sunday	Monday	Monday	Monday
Goal	Date	08/01/10	08/01/10	08/01/10	08/02/10	08/02/10	08/02/10	08/02/10
16000	Title	original fic	Consequences	Ch. 27	original fic	Consequences	Ch. 27	Ch. 27
Words	End Words	4809	11418	1302	4809	11418	1661	1661
Written	Beg Words	4809	11418	546	4809	11418	1302	1302
12574	Total	0	0	756	0	0	0	359
Balance								
3426								

Image 3

Now, here's where it becomes fun...see that balance amount? (Image 3, yellow circle, red arrow) That tells me I only have 26 more words, well 27, really, until I slip into the 3300s. Hey--I can write 27 more words. Easy.

So I do. And maybe a few more besides, if I get on a roll.

Sometimes, I look at the end words--1661. (Image 3, red circle)

Only 39 words until I hit 1700. I can write another 39 words. Easy!

So I do.

And so it goes, on and so on and so on. It's easy to write this way and a lot of fun to watch the words pile up.

(And, yes, I added the 534 words of the actual article to my spreadsheet!)

Jen FitzGerald is an active member of her local RWA chapter.

BREAKING OUT OF THE SHELL

By Karen Whiddon

One of the most difficult things for introverts is socializing. A lot of writers are introverts, preferring to hunch over a computer keyboard and live with imaginary people rather than real, breathing humans.

Guilty as charged. With my made-up characters, I don't have to worry that I'm not wearing the latest fashion, or that my hair looks awful, or that I'll say the wrong thing. I suspect (ok, I know) I'm not alone in this.

I try, honestly I do. But being the type of person who'd rather listen than talk, people think I'm aloof and snobbish. And at writer's conferences, sometimes it's worse when you're published. Most times, unless someone asks, I won't mention it. I love to talk writing with other writers, but the instant an unpublished writer learns I'm published, they clam up. I don't know if they assume it's because, being pubbed, that I know everything (I don't), or what.

I have a big secret for you – it never gets any easier.

Sure, the more you write, the better you get. Just like anything, practice improves your game. And I find the more I get edited or critiqued, the more I learn my strengths and weaknesses. I'm more easily able to fix my mistakes on my own. But I still read *How to Write* books. I still attend workshops, seminars. Because I can always get better, up my game, improve.

I used to think the longer I worked at it, the easier it would become, but sometimes I suspect it's the opposite. The more you know, the more conscious you are of your mistakes and the more you are desperate to not make them.

Believe me, published authors are just as insecure as unpublished. Maybe even more so. The other day on Twitter, a NY Times bestselling author tweeted about how she was doing revisions and mentioned a phrase that she'd written, followed by a 'Did I really write that? I suck.'

My reaction was 'Wow. Even them. Even those who have hit what many consider the pinnacle of writing success are insecure. But then I realized, we're all writers. And in the end, we are human after all.

www.KarenWhiddon.com

Profile for Seduction - Silhouette Romantic Suspense - October 2010, Coltons Christmas Baby - Silhouette Romantic Suspense - Dec. 2010, Lone Wolf - Harlequin Nocturne - January 2011

The following article was featured in May 2010's edition of "The Final Draft"

TIGHTEN YOUR PROSE – SING ALONG

By Ashantay Peters

Singer-songwriters have an amazing talent. The good ones can hook you, introduce characters, relate a story and induce emotion – all in less than five minutes. So what does this have to do with writing novels?

Novelists can use songwriting tools to tighten their prose. All you have to do is listen.

First, the anatomy of a song's lyrics can be broken down into four areas that include the introduction, the stanza, chorus and bridge. A song can be and often is much more complex, but we'll stick to the basics.

A song's first line hooks the listener and sets context – sound familiar? For example, consider the lyrics to the Beatles' Eleanor Rigby. A woman named Eleanor Rigby is in a church picking up rice after a wedding. Context is set with two lines and the listener obtains an instant picture.

Stanzas relate the story, may present conflict and create emotion in the listener. For this example, think about Simon and Garfunkel's Bridge Over Troubled Water. The duo sings that when you're weary, feeling small and about to cry, that there is someone waiting at your side to help. Whew.

Meanwhile, the chorus takes a nugget of information presented in the stanza and repeats it, while a bridge rephrases and locks down the song's moral or restates the chorus from a different direction. Eleanor Rigby's chorus addresses all the lonely people – an idea present from the song's first two lines. In Bridge, the song's bridge tells the weary woman that her time has come to sail on; her dreams are on their way. These two tools could be compared to point of view. The writer tells one side then (sometimes) restates it for the reader from another character's point of view.

Songwriters routinely use super dense metaphors to make every word count. Hemingway did it. You can too. Delete lazy words!

When you find yourself stuck for ideas, you can use song lyrics to generate new stories. Simply write the first line or two from your favorite song. If you're unsure of a song's words, go to lyrics.com or one of the other browsable lyrics archives on line. Then write a new plot idea that includes goal, motivation and conflict. Remember, the lyrics are only a jumping off point for you. Each musical genre holds songs perfect for this exercise.



newsletter@ntrwa.org

NTRWA
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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PANLiaison@ntrwa.org

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Newsletter@ntrwa.org