



# North Texas Romance Writers of America

## HEART TO HEART

FOUNDED MARCH 1983

CHAPTER 33, REGION 5

OCTOBER 2010

VOLUME 29, ISSUE 9

### WRITTEN WORDS

#### RISING STAR AWARDS MOST PAGES WRITTEN

- LEE SWIFT - 340 PAGES
- HEATHER LONG - 275 PAGES
- BETH SHRIVER - 200 PAGES
- RON CAMPBELL - 169 PAGES
- JEAN MARIE BROWN - 115 PAGES

#### STAR AWARDS MOST PAGES EDITED

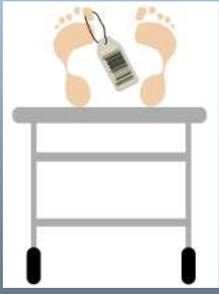
- CAROLYN WILLIAMSON - 428 PAGES
- RONI GRIFFIN - 310 PAGES
- LEE SWIFT - 280 PAGES
- JEAN MARIE BROWN - 273 PAGES
- RON CAMPBELL - 226 PAGES

### SPOTLIGHT ON

**MICHELLE  
WELSH**

**PAGE 6**

**JOIN US ON OCTOBER 16TH FOR  
DR. READE QUINTON  
*REALITY IS STRANGER  
THAN FICTION***



**MORE INFORMATION ON PAGE 4**

**MATERIAL IS GRAPHIC IN NATURE. DISCRETION IS ADVISED.**

**THE  
PRESIDENTS  
CORNER  
PAGE 2**

### INSIDE THIS EDITION

- MINUTES .....PAGE 3
- MEMBER NEWS.....PAGE 4
- GETTING INTO THE SWING .....PAGE 5
- ROMANTIC COUPLES .....PAGE 8

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

***THE STORY I AM WRITING EXISTS, WRITTEN IN ABSOLUTELY PERFECT FASHION, SOME PLACE, IN THE AIR. ALL I MUST DO IS FIND IT, AND COPY IT. ~JULES RENARD~***

Finally, the North Texas wind whispers that fall is near. And though I haven't seen any brightly-colored leaves, I know that soon I'll be able to drive home without the fear of frying to a crisp through my windshield. With the change of seasons, our nominating committee begins the search for next year's chapter officers.

Most of you don't know that back when I ran for President-Elect, I expected to get a full-time teaching position at any time. The idea was to ride out my first year in education while serving in the role of second banana so that I would already be a seasoned teacher when the mantle of chapter leadership fell on my shoulders.



Unfortunately, that job didn't arrive until three months before I became President of NTRWA. Suddenly I found myself in the incredible position of teaching full-time with very little previous experience, working simultaneously on my internship assignments and certification exams, driving a hundred miles a day to support my family, and oh, yes, serve as chapter President. Even though I'd hoped and prayed that this year I'd find a position closer to home, it didn't materialize. However, I did earn a promotion and a much needed raise. God's ways are strange, but in these challenging times I am so blessed to have my job, even if it is in Greenville, Texas (smile).

All of that to say, I'd like to thank our President-Elect, Marsha West, for the many ways in which she helps our chapter run smoothly when life has me strung up by the thumbs. Time and time again, she steps into the gap to encourage each of you on the loop, forward announcements from Chaplink, and preside over meetings in my absence. Marsha always finds time to encourage each of us even as she strives to do her very best in her writing and in aiding our chapter. In fact, all of the NTRWA Board and Committee Chairs have done their very best to make our programs a success. Marsha will be a truly dedicated and wonderful President next year. Please take a few moments to consider serving on the Board with this special lady. It's fun. It's challenging. And not only is it a great way to get to know the members of our chapter, but you'll meet other industry professionals as well.

Here's a thought for those of you, like me, slicing and dicing life into slivers of time too slender to savor: If you can't write long and hard, write short...at least you'll whet your appetite for more.

**Gina Nelson, President**

***HOW VAIN IT IS TO SIT DOWN TO WRITE WHEN YOU HAVE NOT STOOD UP TO LIVE. ~HENRY DAVID THOREAU~***

## OCTOBER MINUTES

**CALL TO ORDER:** A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on September 18, 2010 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The president and secretary were present. The meeting was called to order at 10:39 A.M. The minutes of the July meeting were approved as posted in the July newsletter, and the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as posted in the August newsletter.

### **OFFICER REPORTS:**

**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 Reade Quinton, a Dallas medical examiner who will speak on examining dead bodies. The deadline to register and pay for the November retreat is October 1. There is still room for two more people to attend.

**Membership Director Jeannie Guzman reported:** As of today, we have 84 members. In attendance we had 1 visitor, Catherine Hatten.

### **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 of workshops from the national conference for lending and will list them on an e-mail to members.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Nominations were opened for the 2011 Elections Committee. Candidates named were Roni Griffin, Nikki Duncan, and Tracy Ward. Marsha will chair the committee. Committee members may also be nominated for a board office. Marsha West moved to approve the committee members for the election committee. The motion passed.

The business meeting was adjourned at 11:05 A.M.

Submitted electronically by Carolyn Williamson

## REALITY IS STRANGER THAN FICTION

By Kym Roberts

Reade Quinton, M.D. is a board-certified forensic Pathologist employed by the office of the Dallas County Medical Examiner. Dr. Quinton graduated from LSU Medical Center in New Orleans in 1999 and completed a five year residency in Anatomic and Clinical Pathology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, Texas. Following residency, he completed a forensic pathology fellowship at the Southwestern Institute of Forensic Sciences (SWIFS) in Dallas, where he remained on as faculty. Aside from forensic pathology, his areas of interest also include infant death investigation, neuropathology and pathology informatics (the application of computers and technology in medicine). He is an active member of the National Association of Medical Examiners and the American Academy of Forensic Sciences.



**PLEASE BE WARNED. THE MATERIAL IS GRAPHIC IN NATURE.  
DISCRETION IS ADVISED.**

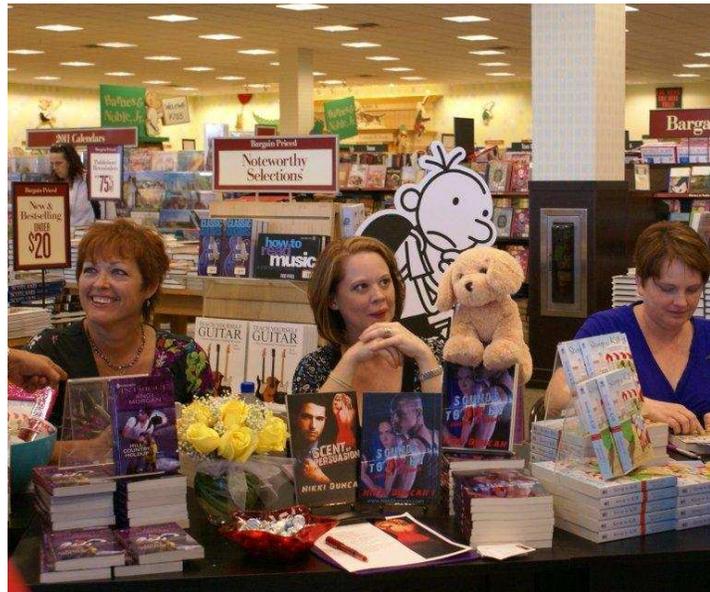
## MEMBER NEWS

**Beth Shriver** sold *Reclaiming Tess* (Dec. 2011) and *Love is a Rose* (June 2011) to Desert Breeze

**Heather Long** has been appointed to the faculty of Romance University. She also sold *Thirteenth Night* to Sapphire Blue Publisher

**Roni Griffin** is a finalist in the Heart to Heart Contest (San Francisco RWA)

**Lee Swift** is the top best seller on Amazon's Romance, Fantasy and Futuristic list. He also sold *Secret Cravings* to Siren Publishing.



NTRWA members Angi Platt, Wendy Watson, and Nikki Duncan signed books at the Hurst Barnes & Noble on September 18. (photo courtesy of Jeannie Guzman)

## THE AUTHENTIC SWING BY MARTY TIDWELL

The movie 'The Legend of Bagger Vance' was on my TV while I was getting ready for some appointments today, and it's a movie I've seen before and enjoyed. I'm a sucker for almost any sports movie, and the magical feel of this one speaks to me, so I had it on as background noise. But then the scene comes on when Bagger is telling Junah to forget everything but the ball and the flag -- to block out the crowd and the expectations and find his authentic swing. His authentic swing. I think that's what most of us are looking for as writers. That true note, that genuine emotion, that rare moment when the words hit the page at just the right angle and they resonate, and laugh and glow beneath your fingertips. That's what I write for--it doesn't happen every day or even every week, but boy howdy, it happens sometimes.



I felt the same way about the movie "Once"-- about a street musician and the woman he meets who collaborates with him in writing and recording songs. I cried through 3/4ths of the movie just because it portrayed the passion they had for the creative process. Making music moved them-- not all the illusive stuff that might result from that-- like fame and fortune. It knocked me down and left me skewered through and through.

I have plenty of days when I sit at the keyboard and feel as if I'm pushing a boulder uphill with my tongue. It's nice to remember that there are also days when the ground shifts and that after a nice little push from me, the boulder rolls downhill all by itself. I can't play golf and I'm a lousy musician, but every so often I can produce words that sing and swing inside my gut.

That's the reason I write. For that high. For those moments when the I don't have to look for the story. The story finds me and says, listen sister, once upon a time...

Marty Tidwell is an member of NTRWA.

<http://ceciliadanaher.brinkster.net/MartyWebsite/index.htm>

## **SPOTLIGHT ON MICHELLE WELSH**

**BY KIM QUINTON**

Michelle Welsh is a kindergarten teacher, mother and aspiring writer. In two short years with RWA and NTRWA, she has become involved with the board, regularly attends the meetings and can be seen supporting her fellow NT'rs at book signings and working on her craft by attending conferences. It's members like Michelle that make NTRWA such a wonderful group to be a part of.

### **Where were you born and raised? What brought you to North Texas?**

I was born in Galveston County and lived there until I married David. He joined the Navy and we moved to Jacksonville, FL. During his military career, we also lived in Corpus Christi, TX and San Diego, CA. We moved 'home' to Texas in 1998 via the USN for his last tour and retirement. Fort Worth is close enough to our families that we can visit often.

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

I wanted to be a writer when I was in middle school and high school, but thought it was an impossible dream. I began writing again two years ago.

### **What do you write?**

Contemporary romance.

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

Yes, I'm working on a steamy romance featuring an undercover cop and a law student.

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

I wrote some sci-fi in college and would like to try paranormal romance, but I can't do vampires. Maybe magic or ghosts?

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

(continued on page 7)

## **SPOTLIGHT ON MICHELLE WELSH**

After years of sci-fi only, the first romance I read featured a mostly naked man on the cover. Since then, I've read Rachel Gibson, Lora Leigh, Shayla Black, Lisa Kleypas, Julia Harper, Susan Donovan, Jill Shalvis—the list goes on and on. I'm a voracious reader.

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

I remember reading *Gone with the Wind* in Junior High, and I read Harlequin daily (back when they only had one line). As an adult, I read Julie Garwood and Anne McCaffery.

### **How was your first RWA national meeting? Any advice that you have put to use since returning home?**

My first national conference was wonderful! I loved the energy of the crowd. In fact, I sat in the rotunda daily and worked on my current piece as I fed off the creative vibrations of all the participants as they gathered and wandered through the throngs of people.

### **Are you working on a website?**

No, I don't have a website in the works yet --I'm trying to decide on a pen name.

### **What is your board position? Will it be the same next year?**

Right now, I'm website director, but I don't think I'll be in that position next year....

### **Any advice you would give to new people just joining?**

Jump in with both feet and get to know other members. There's lots of support for new writers and there's always something to learn.

## EVOLUTION OF THE ROMANTIC COUPLE

BY HEATHER LONG

As early as 1978, my grandmother was reading to me from romance novels. Through the years, she selected from Harlequin authors such as Penny Jordan, Carole Mortimer, Nora Roberts and many more. In each of these early romance novels, the love story was defined by the leading man and his leading lady. Many of the tales focused on the domineering male who turned the sweet virgin's life upside down with his demanding ways. Make no mistake, these men weren't necessarily alphas, but were produced in a time when the concept of men ruling the household and the world was still the accepted norm and the more independent woman was the anomaly.

Hard to believe that was just the 1970s.

However, a revolution was also coming, a revolution that dated back to the Suffragette movements of the 1920s and the Rosie Riveters of the 1940s and the flower children of the 1960s. A revolution that would give rise to woman power songs, television shows with powerful leading ladies who were beautiful, gorgeous and not only capable of taking on the guys, but beating them too. Among these television series were *Wonder Woman* (a female comic book Icon who personified the feminine mystique), *Charlie's Angels* (tough lady cops turned detective who could still be vulnerable and sexy) and *The Bionic Woman* (a teacher and tennis star who's bionics helped her survive, but who lived by her instincts and her guts).

These shows and the changing perspective paved a way for the new couples that would come into play in the romance genre.

### 1980s Super Couples

The 1980s was the era of the super couples on television and in romance novels. Luke and Laura created a sensation on *General Hospital* during the late 70s and early 80s. He was the roguish leading man and she was the kind-hearted woman who softened him. Luke and Laura shared many madcap adventures to save the world and this trend was reflected in much of the popular romances at the time.

For example, in Penny Jordan's *Escape from Desire* (1982) Tamara fell in love with Zach Fletcher when they were held captive together in the jungle. Their heat and passion burned up the pages, but it was Zach who rescued her, Zach who carried her from the jungle and Zach who eventually left her (with a bun in the oven) until they were reunited through an accident of circumstance.

"We have to escape or die," Zach told her.

Suddenly Tamara's holiday in the Caribbean had turned into a nightmare. On a guided tour of a rain forest she had been captured by guerrillas! Only through

the strength and comfort of fellow hostage Zach Fletcher did she survive the ordeal. Not so easy to overcome were the passions and emotions Zach had imprinted on her heart and memory.

Then Zach disappeared from her life - a ruthless departure that left Tamara despondent, wondering if she could survive alone...

Another example of these adventurous couplings can be found in Carole Mortimer's *Pagan Enchantment* from 1983:

Merry Charles was a promising young actress and Gideon Steele a very celebrated director-and when he came to see her play one night she couldn't help hoping it meant he was going to offer her a job in his next production. But that wasn't what Gideon wanted at all! In fact he had come on private business, with family news of a startling nature-and the next thing Merry knew, she was on a luxury yacht in the Mediterranean, posing as Gideon's girl-friend. And that was only the beginning of it.

These couples were charming, wild and living life beyond the sheltered shores of typical existence. They didn't worry about mortgages or paying the bills. The larger-than-life canvas against which they found love together was as important to the evolution of these romantic couples as the leading man and his lady.

It's also worth mentioning that the 1980s is when sexually explicit romance came to the fore and where consummation with the couple was no longer a fade to black or worded with carefully placed euphemisms. Romance readers responded to not only the super couples and their adventures, but also the level of steamier romance.

### **1990s The Competitive and Compelling Couples**

The adventurous couples of the 80s began to give away gradually to the empowered women and domineering men where competition with each other was as vital to the sexual chemistry as their working together. The stories did not always revolve around the man having to save her, control her, or tell her what she needed. Instead, they became stories about the push and pull of two strong-willed people with opposing goals who loved lustily.

Romance novelists also expanded beyond the category romance to the single title as historical, romantic suspense and even romantic comedy genres began to flourish both in and outside of the category romance. The 1990s introduced readers to adventures of Ayla in Jane Auel's prehistoric *Clan of the Cave Bear* series.

Another notable change to the couples of the 1990s is that they weren't fresh flowers, just in the early years of their lives. Heroines could be in their 30s and 40s. They could be self-employed or holding down jobs that were typically reserved for men. Their heroes were also changing. They were not always the domineering man, but the more sensitive, artistic and

gentle types.

One great example of the changing landscape can be found in Nora Roberts 1993 *Honest Illusions*:

The daughter of a world-renowned magician, Roxy Nouvelle has inherited her father's talents—and his penchant for jewel thievery. Into this colorful world comes Luke Callahan, an escape artist who captures Roxy's heart—and keeps secrets that could shatter all her illusions.

Again in Roberts' 1994 *Private Scandals*:

When her mentor leaves for the big time in New York, talk show host Deanna Reynolds risks everything for the chance to replace Angela on the air. But soon she and Finn Riley, the network's sexy journalist, are caught up in the bitter backlash of Angela's revenge.

In 1995, Nora Roberts offered up her J.D. Robb nom de plume with *Naked in Death* featuring the tough as nails New York cop Eve Dallas and drop dead swain Roarke. These two characters are incredibly powerful, igniting on the page in a tempestuous relationship that has lasted for over 30 novels.

Adventure and romance reappear in *My Guardian Angel* by Kay Hooper from 1995:

Hooper tells the disarming story of one very lucky — and very handsome — British agent. He's a man with a most desperate mission: to find the beautiful stranger who miraculously rescued him... then vanished as quickly as she appeared. What he remembered most clearly was that she possessed luminous eyes and the sweetest voice this side of heaven. Now he can only wonder whether he will look into those eyes or hear that voice again. If he does, this customarily attentive gentleman will not be so careless as to let his gorgeous rescuer out of his sight — that is, if he even lets her out of his arms.

## **2000s Paranormals and the Alpha Male**

While it can be argued that every trend has its roots somewhere, the growth of paranormals and urban fantasies definitely have roots in the 1980s and 1990s. Anne Rice's vampire books were wildly popular in the 1980s and filled with trembling morsels of gothic romance, flawed heroes and deadly leading ladies. In the 1990s, Joss Whedon added another twist to the paranormal world with a little girl named Buffy — the blonde in the back alley who could not only take out her attacker, but scared the bad guys to death.

In the continuing evolution of the romance couple, these two creators contributed heavily to the DNA makeup of the growing paranormal trend and the alpha male. Women were stronger, more central figures in their own stories and that meant they needed tougher, stronger men to romance them, protect them and fight alongside them.

The 1999 release of Christne Feehan's *Dark Prince* marked this change in the paranormal romance single titles that could and would generate their own worlds, series and followings:

He came to her in the night, a predator -- strength and power chiseled his features. The seduction was deep and elemental; he affected her soul. His need. His darkness. His terrible haunting loneliness. Her senses aroused, she craved the dangerous force of his body. Burned for him. And he had only touched her with his mind.

She came to him at dawn, his bleakest hour. As the beast raged inside him, threatening to consume him, he vented his centuries-old despair in an anguished cry that filled the waning night. And she answered, a ray of light, piercing his darkness. A beautiful angel. Her compassion, courage, and innocence awakened in him an exquisite longing and tenderness. He knew he must possess her, for only she could tame his savage side and lift the dark shadow from his soul. Apart they were desolate, bereft. Intertwined physically and spiritually, they could heal one another and experience an eternity of nights filled with love.

By 2006, numerous other authors were taking the market by storm with their tempestuous paranormal romances (and in some cases urban fantasy with strong romantic elements) including Kelley Armstrong (*Women of the Other World*), Patricia Briggs (*Mercedes Thompson*), Kresley Cole (*The Immortals After Dark*) and Gena Showalter (*Lords of the Underworld*), just to name a few.

### **Today's Heroes and Heroines**

As of September 2010, it is obvious that all of these previous power couplings will continue to inform tomorrow's heroines and heroes. The alpha male, his strength and his power, is here to stay and so is the alpha female, the woman with the strength, temperament and temerity to stand by and up to her man.

Tomorrow's heroes and heroines will be teachers, astronauts, magicians, werewolves, androids, explorers, preservers, creators and more.

The world changes, but romance lasts forever.

*Heather Long lives in North Texas with her husband, daughter and their menagerie of animals. As a child, Heather skipped picture books and enjoyed the Harlequin romance novels by Penny Jordan and Nora Roberts that her grandmother read to her. Heather believes that laughter is as important to life as breathing and that the Easter Bunny, the Tooth Fairy and Santa Claus are very real. In the meanwhile, she is hard at work on her next novel.*

**Website:** <http://heatherlong.net>

**Blog:** <http://dailydose-fantasyromance.blogspot.com>



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**

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

President, Gina Nelson  
[President@ntrwa.org](mailto:President@ntrwa.org)

President-Elect, Marsha R. West  
[PresidentElect@ntrwa.org](mailto:PresidentElect@ntrwa.org)

Program Director, Kym Roberts  
[Programs@ntrwa.org](mailto:Programs@ntrwa.org)

Secretary, Carolyn Williamson  
[Secretary@ntrwa.org](mailto:Secretary@ntrwa.org)

Treasurer, Ron Campbell  
[Treasurer@ntrwa.org](mailto:Treasurer@ntrwa.org)

Membership Director, Jeannie Guzman  
[Membership@ntrwa.org](mailto:Membership@ntrwa.org)

Communications Director, Jean Marie Brown

Web Site Director, Michelle Walsh  
[Website@ntrwa.org](mailto:Website@ntrwa.org)

#### **COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

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

Great Expectations 2010 & Bylaws, Angi Platt  
[GE\\_Coordinator@ntrwa.org](mailto:GE_Coordinator@ntrwa.org)

PAN Liaison, Shelley Bradley  
[PANLiaison@ntrwa.org](mailto:PANLiaison@ntrwa.org)

Spotlights, Kim Quinton

Audio Librarian & BABS, Nikki Duncan  
[Librarian@ntrwa.org](mailto:Librarian@ntrwa.org)

Texas Two Step, Marty Tidwell

Newsletter Editor, Jean Marie Brown  
[Newsletter@ntrwa.org](mailto:Newsletter@ntrwa.org)