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President's Corner

Happy 2012 all!

I hope the New Year finds you all happy and well.

I'm not much one for resolutions, having found, probably like many of you, that I can never keep them or keep them for long. But since we're all writers here, I imagine the one resolution we'll share is that of getting, somehow, more words on the page. My biggest personal stumbling block is not lack of time, but lack of ability to plot. (I know what you're thinking.) When I get the occasional brilliant idea, I can bang out words like nobody's business. The problem is my brilliant ideas are few and far between. Not only that, but then I have to come up with GMC and turning points, both huge weaknesses for me. And conflict... to that I say:

Conflict—we don't need no stinking conflict!

Last January, Marsha handed out four index cards to those in attendance, and we were instructed to write quarterly goals. I wrote the same thing on all four cards and failed to meet that goal all four quarters. I have to admit that last January I was just coming out of a year-long depression and really didn't care all that much, nor can I actually remember what I'd written. This year I do care, and I already know what I'm planning to write on those index cards. My primary goal for 2012 is to learn how to plot. To help me accomplish this goal, I plan on taking online classes; at least one per quarter. If you have any recommendations, please send them along. If you're a great plotter, perhaps you have some words of wisdom/advice you'd care to throw my way.

Looking ahead through 2012 and beyond, we have a lot of exciting things happening

Continued on page....13



North Texas Romance Writers of America

December 9, 2011 BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday, December 9, 2011 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The President and Secretary were present. The meeting was called to order at 10:40 A.M. The minutes for the October meeting were approved as printed in the October / November newsletter. There were no October business meeting notes for November due to the chapter retreat.

OFFICER REPORTS:

President: Marsha West reported:

- Index cards with yearly goals were returned to writers who submitted goals earlier this year.

Treasurer: Ron Campbell reported:

- The October and November treasurer's reports will be filed for audit.

Program Director: Nikki Duncan reported:

- The schedule for NTRWA 2012 calendar was previewed as follows:
 - o January – Finding Fun and Unlocking Creative Block by Sally Felt
 - o February – Workshop of all the things you want to ask an editor by Louisa Edwards
 - o March – Pitch for RWA conference

Membership Director: Jamie Webb reported:

- Reminded members to renew their membership for the 2012 year.
- There are eighty-eight members (88).
- There was one visitor.

Communications Director: In the absence of Jean Marie Brown, Marsha West reported:

- Articles are due to Jean-Marie Brown by Sunday, December 25th.

Website Director: Marsha West reported:

- The position of website director is vacant. However, if there are any items that need to be posted on the chapter website please send them to Jen FitzGerald.

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:

PRO Liaison: Clover Autrey reported:

- Look for a PRO Workshop to be posted on the NTRWA website.
- Kim Miller is a new PRO member.

Great Expectations: In the absence of Wendy Watson, Angi Platt reported:

- The deadline for submissions is Friday, December 30, 2011.
- Judges are needed for the GE contest.

Board of Directors:

Officers

Marsha R. West
President

Jen Fitzgerald
President-Elect

Sheniqua Waters
Secretary

Ron Campbell
Treasurer

Nikki Duncan
Program Director

Jamie Webb
Membership Director

Jean Marie Brown
*Communications
Director*

Jen FitzGerald
Website Director

Committee Chairs

Karen Whiddon
PAN Liaison

Clover Autrey
PRO Liaison

**Angi Platt/Wendy Lyn
Watson**
Great Expectations

Barb Han
Hospitality

Jean Brown
Newsletter Editor

Carolyn Williamson
Spotlights

Michelle Welsh
Audio Librarian

Roni Griffin
Writing Incentives

**Nikki Duncan, Tracy
Ward**
Texas Two Step 2012

Angi Platt
Bylaws

Texas Two Step: Nikki Duncan reported:

- The Texas Two Step conference will be held Friday, March 30 thru Sunday, April 1, 2012.
- Authors with books in print who are registered for the Texas Two Step can participate in a book signing handled by Barnes and Noble.

Audio Librarian: Michelle Welsh reported:

- CDs from nationals are available to check out.

Award and Announcements:

- 2012 Election Results:
 - o Michelle Welsh – President Elect
 - o Nancy Connelly – Secretary
 - o Angi Platt – Treasurer
 - o Jamie Webb – Membership Director
 - o Clover Autrey – Website Director
 - o Heather Long – Communications Director
- Board Thank You and Service Awards were passed out to Board Members.
- Silver Spur Award for Most Edited Pages by an unpublished author was presented to Jerri Alexander.
- Golden Spur Award for Most Edited Pages by a published author was presented to Heather Long.
- Rising Star Award for Most Written Pages by and unpublished author was presented to Jean Marie Brown.
- Shining Star Award for Most Written Pages by a published author was presented to Heather Long.
- Yellow Rose Award presented to Clover Autrey.
- Paid GE Registration for 2012 awarded to Kim Miller.
- Paid Membership for NTRWA for 2012 awarded to Jerri Alexander.

New Business:

- Ron Campbell announced his resignation as of Saturday, December 9, 2011. J. Kathleen Cheney moved and it was seconded that Angi Platt be appointed as treasurer as of Sunday, December 10, 2011. The motion passed.

Next Business Meeting: 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, January 21, 2012 at La Hacienda. The business meeting was adjourned for the 2011 year at 11:30 a.m.

Submitted electronically by Sheniqua Waters

Date Approved: _____

Date Corrected: _____

Call for Newsletter Contributors

Share your knowledge with fellow NTRWA members by writing an article for the Newsletter. Articles may also reach a wider audience, as there's also the possibility of being featured in other Chapters' newsletters or on their loops.

Send your articles, news and more to the editor at newsletter@ntrwa.org.

Welcome to the North Texas Two Step Conference

We'd like to invite you to join us in Irving, Texas March 30 - April 1st for jam packed conference of craft and business workshops, panels, agent and editor pitches and much more...

The conference will kick off Friday evening with a book signing where we'll auction off Saturday lunches with our editors, agents and featured speakers. A percentage of book sale proceeds will go to benefit Children's Literacy.

NTRWA presents special guests:

Bestselling Author Mari Mancusi

Mari Mancusi used to wish she could become a vampire back in high school, but she ended up in another blood sucking profession; journalism instead. Today she works as a freelance TV producer and author of books for teens and adults. When not writing about creatures of the night, Mari enjoys traveling, cooking, goth clubbing, watching cheesy horror movies, and her favorite guilty pleasure; videogames. A graduate of Boston University and a two time Emmy Award winner, she lives in Austin, Texas with her husband Jacob and their dog Mesquite.



Social Media Pro Kristen Lamb



Kristen takes her years of experience in sales & promotion and merges it with almost a decade as a writer to create a program designed to help authors construct a platform in the new paradigm of publishing. Kristen has guided writers of all levels, from unpublished green peas to NY Times best-selling big fish, how to use social media to create a solid platform and brand. Most importantly, Kristen helps authors of all levels connect to their READERS and then maintain a relationship that grows into a long-term fan base.

Editors:

Lindsey Faber from Samhain Publishing

Agents:

Sara Megibow from Nelson Lit. Agency

Louise Fury from L. Perkins Agency

We are still accepting donations of raffle baskets and raffle basket items, so feel free to pass the word along!

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEES

(Early Bird Registration Ended December 31, 2011)

\$150 General Registration

\$200 Registration at the door if there is room.

Visit the North Texas Two Step conference page via the website for more information (<http://ntrwa.org/texastwostepconference.aspx>) or contact conference coordinator Nikki Duncan (programs@ntrwa.org). See Page 15 for registration form.

Three Quick and Easy Tips for Punching Up Your Fiction

By Cheryl Alldredge (aka Charlie Allden)

Remember that old saying; the devil is in the details? I like to twist it a bit and say, when it comes to writing, the strength is in the details. Here are three quick techniques that focus on the fine points of writing to give your work more impact.

Focus description on significant details!

Not all details are created equal and not everything in your story needs to be described. Focus your powers of description on things that are important to your story: the significant details. What makes a detail significant?



Any detail that is integral to the plot must be shared. If a letter opener on the hero's desk is going to be a weep-on later in the story, then you'd better show it to us in that earlier scene where he's sitting in his office. However, we probably don't need a detailed description of the bookcase, the chair, the...you get the point.

Another type of significant detail is one that shows the reader something about the character or his situation. If the suit Mr. Zucker wears to church has a discreet patch at one elbow, we know his family is probably struggling financially. Sometimes these types of details are more subtle or symbolic. If the scene that introduces Mary Jane shows her standing barefoot amidst the broken glass spread across the kitchen floor, it becomes significant that she is barefoot and subconsciously we will pick up on the fact that this character is vulnerable.

Eradicate filter words!

Filter words put distance between the reader and the character. Words like saw and felt remind the reader that they are reading a story rather than experiencing it. For example:

Basic: He felt the wind on his cheeks.

Stronger: The wind stung his cheeks.

The stronger sentence provides more sensual detail and lets the reader feel what the character is feeling. And that leads to my next tip...

Use stronger verbs!

There are hundreds of thousands of words in the English language but most of us use only in the low tens of thousands on a regular basis. Look at only verbs and the number we use regularly drops dramatically. Common verbs like look, walk, stand, sit are overused in our fiction. They also do little to illustrate or color the action. Does this mean you should pull up a thesaurus and replace them all with synonyms? No. Don't replace them with any synonym~replace them with a better verb.

Basic: He stood up.

Stronger: He jolted out of his seat.

The second version of the line above is stronger because it shows us that the "he" is either in a hurry, startled, or anxious. "Jolted" provides more information.

If there isn't a better choice, stick with the more common word. It's better for the verb to add nothing than to distract the reader or detract from the other strong writing around it. "He jolted out of his seat" would make little sense if he then limped to the fridge for another beer.

Putting these three quick techniques to work is sure to punch up your prose, because the strength of your writing is in the details!

Cheryl is a fan of love, adventure, and happily ever afters. Her short novel, Ladybugs and Fireflies is out now from Highland Press. She blogs about writing, Florida, and books at www.cherylalldredge.wordpress.com and about all things SciFi at www.smartgirlsscifi.wordpress.com.

Resolutions for Writers

By Charlotte Carter

Here we are looking 2012 right smack in the face. If you're like millions of other people, you're making resolutions about losing weight and exercising more. Chances are good that 90% of those resolutions will be broken or forgotten by the end of January.

If you are a writer, published or unpublished, you're hoping this New Year will bring Fame and Fortune. Or more realistically, you're hoping for a contract that will help to build your career.

I have some suggestions for your New Year's Resolutions:

1. Make writing a priority. It's way too easy to get off track if you don't stick to your guns. Family and friends make demands on you. A good movie opens at the local theater, you promise yourself that you'll get back to your writing schedule tomorrow. Don't count on it!

2. Spend time with other writers. No one understands a writer's fears, failures and successes like another writer. Not even your mother.

3. Don't let the business get you down. Nora Roberts says, and I believe her, that it was hard to get published when she started writing. Getting published in the traditional way is still hard. Get used to it.

4. Develop a presence on the Internet. Editors do check authors' blogs and websites. But remember Resolution #1 - don't spend all of your writing time fussing with your Internet exposure and forget about your goal of being published.

5. Improve your craft. Attend workshops and conferences, take classes online, find a critique group that will encourage you and help you to grow. This is part of making your writing a priority.

6. Keep yourself mentally and physically healthy. Yep, you do have to exercise, spend time with friends and family, and find ways to fill your creative well.

7. Read. A lot. Both in and out of the genre you're writing. I guarantee that won't be a burden.

So happy writing in 2012. Here's to making all your dreams come true.

Charlotte Carter is a multi-published author of more than fifty romance, cozy mystery and inspirational titles. Her most recent release, Montana Family will be followed by Montana Love Letter, an October 2012 release, both from Love Inspired.



Most Pages Written

Candy Havens - 735 pages
Heather Long - 450 pages
Nikki Duncan - 350 pages

Most Pages Edited

Shayla Black – 880 pages
Candy Havens - 735 pages
Jeanne Guzman - 628 pages

Sapphire Blue Publishing Closes

By Heather Long

On November 25, 2011, Sapphire Blue Publishing's owners sent out a notice to all of the authors that the publishing house would be shutting its doors at the end of the month. For three years, Sapphire Blue Publishing offered a unique opportunity to first time and established authors alike.

Founders Maria Clayton and Tina Gerow wanted to develop a publishing house that gave every author an opportunity to develop their tales in an atmosphere of immense creativity and support. They launched the publishing house with a competition in 2008, selecting the top six manuscripts entered for their first published novels. Many of those novels remained popular for the three years the publishing house listed them for sale.

Challenges in Publishing

The publishing house faced many challenges throughout its three years in operation, including a health crisis for founding member Tina Gerow. In November 2010, just after a book signing, Gerow was taken suddenly and seriously ill with an arteriovenous malformation in her brain. She underwent seven brain surgeries and an extended stay in ICU.

The authors, editors and artists of Sapphire Blue rallied around their ailing publisher. Gerow's recovery took many months, but she recovered. Unfortunately, despite her success in overcoming this personal challenge, more awaited the publishers and rather than let their authors dangle in uncertainty, they notified the authors expediently.

A Class Act

In an open communication from the publishers to the authors, all completed and published works were reverted immediately to the authors along with their covers. A loop was established with marketing support and the authors came together to help each other. The publishers answered every inquiry swiftly, offering every support imaginable.

Alas, Sapphire Blue Publishing closed her doors in 2011, but the company did not just disappear. This gem of a publishing house may have always been a diamond in the rough, but offered a class act that is hard to follow.

Author Heather Long published her first two novels and three novellas with Sapphire Blue Publishing.

Congratulations Barbara Han

“My big news of 2011 is: I signed with literary agent, Jill Marsal, of Marsal Lyon Literary Agency.”



How TV Taught Me To Write a Synopsis

By Carrie De Simas

Each year I help judge my chapter's contest entries. It's a great way to help my chapter raise money, but also a great way to learn a few things myself because it's often way harder to evaluate my own work, than to spot the errors in someone else's.

One of the hardest parts of contest entries, and submissions in general, seems to be the synopsis. There is the mistaken impression out there that the synopsis is a short story version of the full manuscript. Not true. It's also not a teaser or a back-of-the-book blurb.

Part of the problem writers have such a hard time with the synopsis is that it is counter-intuitive for us. We are taught to *show* and *not tell*. But the synopsis demands that we do just the opposite. Think of a kid recapping a movie. They don't build up to the suspenseful moments; they lay it all out upfront. They *tell* you what happened, holding nothing back. That is "in a nutshell" what a synopsis should do.



Since synopses tend to be most writers' Achilles' Heel, I have put together a how-to list based on Hollywood and TV:

1. CHARACTERS:

"Some people count, some people don't." (Robbie in *Dirty Dancing*) Only name the essential characters in your synopsis. Most publishers only want the details of the main characters (hero, heroine, villain) with maybe a line or two dedicated to any essential secondary characters.

2. PLOT:

"Just the facts Ma'am." (Sergeant Friday in *Dragnet*) Only give the essentials in the synopsis. Save the quirky scenes and interesting factoids for the actual manuscript. Just give the bare bones, including the hero's journey plot-points that apply, the main characters and their basic character arcs, any major twists or surprises, big black moment, and resolution.

3. CONFLICT:

"That's twelve levels of suck, that's what that is." (George in *Dead Like Me*) The key to the synopsis is to tell what the internal and external conflict is for each main character, and the rising stakes that lead them to the big black moment, and eventual resolution. Tell how you really make your character work for their growth, tell how you make them suffer, and tell how they eventually learn and evolve.

4. BACKSTORY:

"You got me monologuing!" (Syndrome in *The Incredibles*) If you have woven the backstory, conflict and character growth through the manuscript in a gradual and subtle way it will become apparent in the synopsis because you will be able to tell us the GMC (goal, motivation and conflict) of each scene/chapter in one or two quick sentences. This will mean that you won't have to have a lengthy explanation at the end of the synopsis (or a scene in your book) where the hero/heroine, or most commonly, the villain has to go on and on for paragraphs or pages to explain themselves. You see this a lot in mediocre television and film where the villain has the hero and could just kill him, but instead takes a few minutes to explain his brilliant treachery, thereby allowing the hero to come up with a new plan, break free of the bonds, attack and then defeat the villain.

5. DETAILS:

"Not the hair! Never the hair!" (Spike in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*) Keep the synopsis tight and simple by avoiding details and descriptions of characters, setting, etc. An easy trick is to search the synopsis for adjectives and adverbs. There shouldn't be many in the synopsis at all, except perhaps to highlight the main characters' key traits and emphasize key moments in the book. Even then though, try to keep it simple and

use strong nouns and verbs to convey your point.

Follow these basic tips and you will have a synopsis ready to sell your book, and an agent or editor who will thank you.

Carrie De Simas is a member of TRW and SCBWI (Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators), a freelance journalist and a children's lit and fantasy fiction writer.

How the eBook Pricing Probe Affects You

By Sunny Cole

In December, 2011, European regulators said they were investigating Apple Inc. and five of the largest international publishers: France's Hachette Livre, News Corp.-owned Harper Collins, CBS' Simon & Schuster, Britain-based Pearson Group's Penguin and the German-owned Macmillan. Investigators said they were trying to determine whether the companies had "engaged in illegal agreements or practices that would have the object or the effect of restricting competition."

One day later, a Justice Department spokeswoman confirmed that the U.S. Justice Department's antitrust arm was investigating the possibility of "anticompetitive practices involving e-book sales."

Unfair pricing practices affect authors all over the globe, not to mention consumers, so it's no surprise that when one company (Amazon, Apple, or whoever) seems to be profiting, others complain and call for investigations. David Sarno, Los Angeles Times ran a brief notice about this here:

<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/dec/08/business/la-fi-ebooks-20111208>

Attorneys general in various states have begun inquiries into ebook pricing practices that could potentially harm consumers.

As Sarno reports: *When Amazon.com and its Kindle were the sole major player in the electronic book market, the company set the price of e-books at \$9.99. But publishers found that the price was artificially low and sought a way to circumvent Amazon's pricing control.*

When Apple's iPad came out last year, the company had deals in place with five major publishers to use a new pricing model, in which the publishing companies were able to set the prices and the retailers (such as Amazon and Apple) took a fixed cut of the retail cost, about 30%.

Soon after, e-book prices on Amazon and elsewhere began to rise, and now many bestselling books retail for \$16 or more.

From an author's perspective, I can't help but think that this is a win-win for writers. I know that Amazon has eaten a lot of profits in the past from our work, but on the one hand, dealing with them puts us more in control of our books. On the other hand, government intervention via probes keeps Amazon (or whoever is under the cosmic microscope) honest.

Sure, there's a down side to everything, but I choose to look at the upside. Whenever we read about this big company or that one being audited or investigated, what we're really reading about is someone with whom we do business. It gets personal. We can choose to sit on the sidelines and make pithy comments or we can choose to get involved with our own affairs—and if it involves the pricing of our books, folks, it IS our business.



Gone are the days when a Max Perkins takes us by the hand and says “come here...let me handle this for you.” Nowadays, authors need to be informed, savvy, and pliable. Pliable, because things change and we must adapt with them.

Are Mainstream Publishers To Blame For Losing Out To Amazon?

According to writers at GigaOM, Amazon is disrupting the traditional book publishing business by #1 allowing authors to self-publish and #2 by signing writers to its own imprint. Author and blogger Charles Stross goes further to say that mainstream publishers are partly to blame for their own misfortune, since they handed Amazon one of the weapons it is using to attack them and steal their market share: the use of digital-rights management or DRM locks on their books.

Stross’s blog can be found here: <http://www.antipope.org/charlie/>

Wikipedia.com lists DRM as this: DRM is any technology that inhibits uses of digital content that are not desired or intended by the content provider. For a lengthy but detailed explanation of DRM and all it entails, see their website: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_rights_management

Is My Grammarian Slip Showing?

I know—I’m a horrible snob, and I make mistakes myself, but am I the only one who thinks this line in the Wall Street Journal is off?

At a congressional hearing, Sharis Pozen, the Justice Department's acting antitrust chief, said: "We are also investigating the electronic book industry, along with the European Commission and the states attorneys general."

This is why I have critique partners. At least two of them would’ve jumped on this and declared, nooooo...you were not investigating the European Commission and the states attorneys general.

Now try it this way: At a congressional hearing, Sharis Poze, the Justice Department’s acting antitrust chief said: “Along with the European Commission and the states attorneys general, we are also investigating the electronic book industry.”

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203501304577084331269336926.html>

Will Publishers Kill Amazon’s Golden Goose?

CBS writer Erik Sherman poses an interesting question. He asks: Will publishers kill Amazon's golden goose?

http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-505124_162-57343682/will-publishers-kill-amazons-golden-goose/

He makes a strong argument that with ebook prices reaching (and often exceeding) prices for paperback or hardback copies of books, *People may expect a digital file to cost less than a paper book, but they start to demand lower prices when they're potentially paying hundreds of dollars for a device. The higher the cost of the books, the less attractive the cost of the hardware seems.*

This translates to the ebook industry slowing down and most probably a few losses for Amazon, Kindle, Nook, et al.

Oddly enough, Sherman states that Apple won’t be affected that much because, in his words, *Apple's iPad wouldn't suffer, because consumers see it primarily as a tablet, not an e-reader.*

The man obviously hasn’t seen the number of books on my iPad.

For What It’s Worth

I was once one of those people who said they’d never use an electronic device for reading a book. (I also

once said I'd never go on a date with a certain geek, but I did. The iPad and I have lasted much longer than that date.)

I've also been one of those people who was dragged kicking and screaming into Twitter, Facebook, and even teaching my own computer to keep it clean and running smartly.

So all I know at this point is that I believe change is gonna happen no matter how I feel. And I believe that those of us who refuse to roll with it...well...we'll not fare as well as those who learn the survival skills necessary in this business.

As I used to ask my son back when he was young and would argue with me: Do you want to be right or get the job done?

~ Sunny

Sunny Cole is a multi-published author in both ebook and traditional publishing. She writes as Bobbie Cole, Sunny Cole, Lyn Cash, and Cash Cole.

Judi McCoy Remains Hospitalized



Long time NTRWA member Judi McCoy remains under care at a skilled care facility where she is undergoing occupational and physical therapy following her diabetic coma. According to posts on her Facebook page provided by Sherry Lawson, she is reading to Judi daily as well as providing her with stimulation in the form of conversation, brushing her hair and scents that she enjoys.

On December 22, 2011 Lawson posted "I brought some things for Judi to smell: her hand cream, her shower gel, her bottle of wild orange spray cologne, my body lotion, a caramel apple candle (she loves caramel), peppermint gum, cinnamon, and coffee beans. She seemed to like the candle the best."

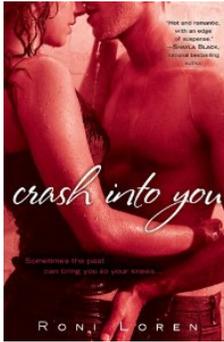
Penny Jordan Passes Away

New Year's eve was a bittersweet celebration for the romance community when news that longtime author Penny Jordan passed away at the age of 65. She had been very ill with cancer. Jordan published over 188 books beginning with her first one in 1981, discovered from the slush pile at Mills & Boon. Among her many titles includes one of her last novels: *Passion and the Prince* releasing from Harlequin Presents in January 2012.

According to the Harlequin Blog: In total, Penny wrote an astounding 200+ novels and has sold over 85 million books worldwide. In addition to her Harlequin Presents books, she also wrote historical romances under the pen names Caroline Courtney and Annie Groves.



NTRWA December/January Publications



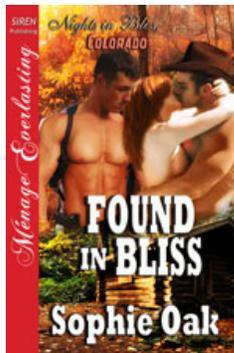
Brynn LeBreck has dedicated herself to helping women in crisis, but she never imagined how personal her work would get, or where it would take her. Her younger sister is missing, suspected to be hiding from cops and criminals alike at a highly secretive BDSM retreat—a place where the elite escape to play out their most extreme sexual fantasies. To find her Brynn must go undercover as a sexual submissive. Unfortunately, The Ranch is invitation only. And the one Master who can get her in is from the darkest corner of Brynn's past.

Brynn knows what attorney Reid Jamison is like once stripped of his conservative suit and tie. Years ago she left herself vulnerable only to have him crush her heart. Now she needs him again. Back on top. And he's all too willing to engage. But as their primal desires and old wounds are exposed, the sexual games escalate—and so does the danger. Their hearts aren't the only things at risk. Someone else is watching, playing by his own rules. And his game could be murder.

Lori Mullins yearns to shake off her past and live free of shadows and fear. Yet her only shot at obtaining the capital to launch her business rests in a man she met during a lie. A man whose voice alone turned her from jaded escort to giddy schoolgirl. A man who almost died because of her.

Trevor Masters can call off his search for the woman he loves. The woman he dreamt of while comatose. The quest for her heart, however, is only beginning. The trick will be convincing her he doesn't blame her—and that she deserves to accept herself as the woman who holds his heart.

Business negotiations land Lori in a heavenly hell. Heaven that Trevor is close enough to touch. Hell that she's planning her first designer wedding. His. And something's not quite right. The kind, compassionate man she fell for all those months ago, the man who's engaged to another, seems intent on wooing her...



Eight years after being tossed aside by the husband who took her son away, Holly Lang finds herself caught between two lovers—the exotic and dangerous Alexei Markov and the gentle but haunted Dr. Caleb Burke.

A former hit man for the Russian mafia, Alexei has been in witness protection while he testified against the mob. Now that he is done, he will do anything to earn Holly's love.

Dr. Caleb Burke is a walking contradiction. His love for Holly is obvious, but he keeps her at a distance. Underneath his gruff demeanor is a tortured soul that only Holly can heal.

As their passions burn out of control, Alexei and Caleb discover someone is trying to kill her. The only way to discover the identity of the killer is for all three to face up to the secrets of their past and work together to fight for everything they have found in Bliss.

Two Men on a Mission

Security Professionals Burke and Cole Lennox have shared women before but never meant to fall in love with one. Their lives are precarious, always on the edge of trouble. But Jessa Wade is too tempting, too perfect to let go. They're on a dangerous mission, but they can't help but get close to the beautiful, innocent artist. When their mission takes them to a foreign land, they reluctantly leave their love behind, promising to return for her one day.

A Woman with a Secret

After her lovers disappeared, Jessa Wade bravely moves on with her life, protecting her secret. But when she becomes the target of one of Burke and Cole's enemies, the men leap into action, vowing to save their woman and to never leave again. As danger stalks all three, they must come together and face the mistakes of their past. On the run and out of time, Burke and Cole will fight for their future with Jessa. But will Jessa's secret bring them together...or tear them apart?





...continued from page 1

At the end of March, we'll be hosting the North Texas Two Step - A Writers Conference. Nikki Duncan and Tracy Ward and their merry band of helpers have put together a fantastic weekend. I hope you'll come and be a part of it. For all the particulars, please visit our website, and don't

forget to spread the word.

As I write this, our esteemed writing contest, the *Great Expectations*, is just about to close to submissions and judging will get underway shortly. Wendy Watson and Angi Platt and all those who preceded them have put in countless hours to make the contest one of the best in RWA and our chapter's primary fundraiser.

Sue Grimshaw, formerly of Borders, will be here sometime in the fall.

The November retreat is a great time to get some writing done before the holiday hubbub begins. And in March of 2013, NT will celebrate its thirtieth anniversary. What a great milestone to commemorate.

Unfortunately, NT can't survive and thrive and offer all these awesome programs and events without its volunteers. Yes, I'm talking about you.

You've heard the saying, "it takes a village to raise a child"? Well, it also takes a village, if you will, to run a chapter. Some jobs certainly require more of a time commitment than others; some jobs require a passion for numbers, or at least a working knowledge of them; some jobs require those fearless or bold enough to cold contact people. When I agreed to run for president the first time, several years ago, I was petrified of speaking to large groups. I'm still not keen on it, but I learned how to do it and I'm the better for it. (That's not to say I'm necessarily better *at* it.)

We need *you*. Some needs are immediate and some are not. Immediate needs include:

- Audit Committee
- 2013 Anniversary Chair (& Committee)
- 2014 Conference Chair (& Committee)
- Contest Chair (by June 1)

If any of these things are of interest or you have any questions, please contact me as soon as possible. (president@ntrwa.org)

Otherwise, I may be contacting you.

In conclusion (finally, I know), there are a lot of new faces out there and I don't know all of your names, but I hope to—I mean to. Unless you know I know your name and can match it to your face, please come introduce yourself to me at the next meeting (and possibly the next). I'll be the one behind the podium.

As for those of you we didn't see very much of in 2011, I certainly hope we'll see more of you in 2012.

Sincerely,

Jen

Join Us January 21, 2012 for Sally Felt



Sally will present "Finding the Fun" - It's easy to get caught up in the work of writing to the point of losing the joy, so what better way to start off the new year than with fun?

All About Sally in Her Own Words:

I was just nine years old when the jolly old elf brought me a record player and the current #1 single, "Brand New Key." It wasn't long before I spent all my allowance on records and drafted my best friend to sing and dance along. We invented alter egos who toured the world. Hour after hour, we'd weave elaborate tales of music, travel and romance with our sister characters at the heart of every adventure.

Fast forward to life in a cubicle

I built a career as an advertising copywriter, creating brochures, web sites, ads and speeches for an international clientele. I was privileged to partner with some phenomenally creative people. Yet I secretly envied anyone living "on purpose." I was drifting. Drying up. Dying.

While vacationing in Peru, I had a moment of truth.

There I was in a small launch on an Amazon tributary with a handful of fellow travelers, dressed in a bathing suit and a life jacket. My heart hammered as I watched our guide repeatedly test the river for a spot where the brown water ran deep. Fear of the unknown gnawed at me. Only the day before, we'd fished piranha from nearby waters. Would I go for it? As soon as we dropped anchor, my friend followed, splashing into the river and declaring it wonderful. Someone spotted pink dolphins swimming close by. And before I could talk myself out of it, I leapt feet first into the experience of a lifetime.

This was what my spirit pined for. Screw the fear—find the fun.

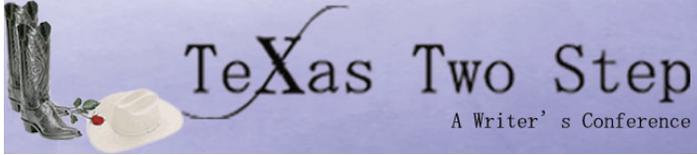
So I asked myself, where can I find fun every day? Fun is telling stories, and fun is indulging my inner ham. It seemed my inner rock star was calling. Rather than a call to fame, this one's a call to joy. So now I talk to people about all the crazy things that interest me. I do play shops to help others find their own map to fun. And I write books filled with characters learning to leap. - Keep up with Sally via her website: <http://sallyfelt.com/>

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Conference Registration Form

Please e-mail this completed form to Nikki Duncan, North Texas Two Step Conference Coordinator at

nikki@nikkiduncan.com.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone (home or cell): _____ E-Mail Address: _____

Are you published? Yes No Do you have a book(s) in print? Yes No

Do you plan to stay at the hotel? Yes No

Please mark your organization(s): NTRWA DARA Yellow Rose RWA Other _____

If you want an editor/agent appointment please circle your Editor/Agent of preference:

Sara Megibow Louise Fury NY Editor TBA Lindsey Faber, Samhain

Where did you hear about the North Texas Two Step Conference? _____

Payment Information:

If paying by check, please send checks to:
NTRWA
c/o Angi Morgan, NTRWA Treasurer
2100 W NW Hwy
Ste 114-1081
Grapevine, TX 76051-7808

If paying by Paypal, please send funds to treasurer@ntrwa.org.
Paypal Transaction ID: _____ E-Mail address used for transaction: _____

Registration is limited to 100 people. Costs are as follows:
NT, DARA & Yellow Rose Members: **\$105** until 12/31/11 and then **\$150**
General Registration: **\$130** until 12/31/11 and then **\$150**
Registration at the door if there's room: **\$200**

Payment Plans are available, but must be paid in full by February 28, 2012. Contact Angi at treasurer@ntrwa.org to make arrangements.

NTRWA is not responsible for making hotel registrations. Room rates are \$89 per night. Once your conference registration has been processed, Nikki will contact you with the hotel information to make sure you receive the discounted rate. If you do not hear from Nikki within a week of sending your registration, please follow up with her at nikki@nikkiduncan.com.

Thank you for registering, and we look forward to seeing you March 30 – April 1!



newsletter@ntrwa.org
NTRWA
2100 W. Northwest HWY
Suite 114-1081
Grapevine, TX 76051
NTRWA monthly meeting

NTRWA monthly meeting
Third Saturday of the month
Doors open @ 10 a.m.
La Hacienda Ranch
5250 Highway 121 South