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President's Corner

Are you kidding me??

As you know, I've been revising and revising and revising one particular manuscript for months. I've given myself three subsequent deadlines for this thing, and, with the last one, I thought I had it. But there's been a certain aspect of this story that I've been struggling with. I sort of knew what it was, but couldn't pin point exactly why the plot wouldn't gel, why I couldn't get the heroine's emotional journey arc to play out properly.

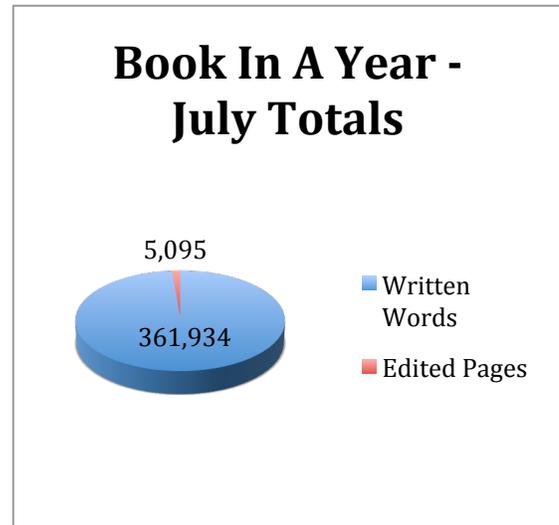
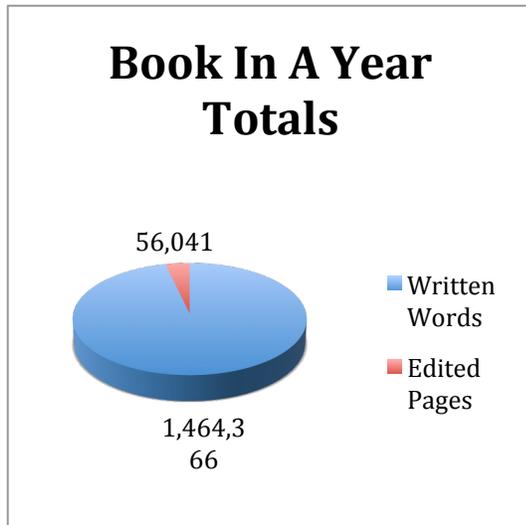
So I decided to go back to the basics: GMC. Again.

For those not familiar with the acronym, that's goal, motivation, and conflict, from the book of the same name by Debra Dixon.

Had I done this before for this story? Yes, I had, but the story has had a lot of its guts slashed in the last couple of months so perhaps it was time to revisit.

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Book In A Year Totals



August's BIAA Charm

THE HORSESHOE

A symbol of good luck, turn it open end down and all the luck spills out. But some believe it should be hung to where the luck will spill on those around it. Hmm...but what about writing? Do we make our own luck by practicing, talking to other writers, honing our craft to get better? "Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity." ~ Roman philosopher And there you have it. The horseshoe represents our writing this month because after we've prepared ourselves, we still need our wonderful words to hit an editor's desk on the right day. Then we cross our fingers that marketing can sell it. Even if we're not waiting on a traditional editor to say yes, we cross those fingers again that the reader will connect with our words and we'll find a fan.

Congrats on lots of finished books this month:

- Protecting Their Child by Angi Morgan
- Here They Lie by D'Ann Burrow
- Judas Contract by Heather Long
- Soulgirls by Heather Long
- No Regrets, No Surrender by Heather Long
- The Cowboy Marine by Heather Long
- Blueprint for Love by Gina Nelson
- Collision Force by Chrissy Szarek
- Kidnapped at the Gun Show by Michelle Welsh

Spotlight on Lara Kingeter

By Dawn Alexander

First, tell us about yourself. You keep saying you aren't interesting, but I hear you have a Ph.D. and lived in London?

Well, I grew up in the DFW area and left to attend graduate school in Maryland (hence the Ph.D., which is in Microbiology and Immunology, if anyone is interested. That's partly why I write under a pen name--if you Google my real name, you'll get all sorts of boring science papers). I moved to Houston in 2009, and moved again last year to be closer to my mom after my dad died. Needless to say, I'm tired of moving! :)



I have two orange and white cats (the color is important, because anyone who has cats knows that orange ones tend to be pesky), and when I'm not at work or writing, I'm probably asleep.

As for the London thing, my college had a JanTerm program (where you just took one class for the month) and I spent the January of my junior year in London going to see plays every night for college credit. I would have loved to have stayed longer, but being the nerd that I am, I had to get back to my science classes in the spring semester. It was a fabulous trip, and to this day, London is one of my very favorite places--I'm always looking for an excuse to go back!

Tell us about what you write and your current WIP

I write category romantic suspense. My current WIP is about a woman named Claire Fleming, who works for a nuclear watchdog organization in Washington, D.C. After an attempt is made on her life, FBI agent Thomas Kincannon is assigned to the case in the hopes of keeping her safe while they figure out why she's a target and who killed her Russian counterpart. They fall in love (of course), and while they're fighting their attraction, they have to deal with coded documents, kidnappings, and a dangerous assassin (oh my!).

How was your experience at RWA Nationals? Do you have some good news to share?

It was my first Nationals conference, and I had a great time! It was so much fun to see all my favorite authors and to hear them talk about craft, technique, and tips. I also really enjoyed meeting some friends from my online writing group. I do have some good news--I pitched to an editor at Harlequin, and she said she wanted to see the full manuscript. I said something along the lines of "You do?", but she didn't seem to hold it against me :)

What made you join NTRWA? What do you remember most about your first meeting?

I joined NTRWA because I wanted to have a 'real-life' writing group--online groups are great, but it's also very nice to talk to people face to face. I had heard so many good things about local RWA chapters, and when I realized this group meets so close to where I live, I knew I had to join. As for my first meeting, I remember everyone being very friendly and welcoming. I remember Angi telling me that the group really pushes its members to turn PRO as soon as possible, and since that was on my 'to do' list, I knew I had found the right place :)

You also review books on your Science of Romance blog. What has that experience been like?

It's been a blast! I've made a lot of great contacts, both authors and other readers, and I've really enjoyed discussing books with them. At the same time, it's a little stressful. I'm always on the lookout for new content, and writing the reviews does take up time, since I try very hard to give substantive reasons as to why I did or did not enjoy a book. Writing has cut into my reading time so I don't post reviews as often as I

used to, but I still enjoy it very much. I've had readers tell me they've decided to buy a book because of one of my reviews, and it always makes me feel good to know that I'm helping in some small way to promote romance.

What is your writing process like?

Well, I usually write in the evenings and on weekends. I am the complete opposite of a morning person, so there is no way I'm getting up even earlier to write!

I generally start out by playing a game of Bejeweled, which is a super-addictive game (and if you haven't played it, don't start!). I tell myself I will only play one game, but that usually turns into three or four or... At some point I will look at the clock, say a bad word because I've wasted so much time, and then open my manuscript. I daydream a lot about the story while I'm at work, so if I'm lucky, I'll know where to start writing.

I'm much more of a pantster than a plotter, but I do have some sense of where the story is going and what the high points are going to be. I can't skip around--if a scene comes to me and I'm not there in the story yet, I tuck it away to pull out when the time is right. I know some people can write in chunks and those people fascinate me--I'm a linear writer.

What is something your chapter mates would be surprised to find out about you?

I have a deep and abiding love for superhero movies.

Great Expectations

By Heather Long

Yes, it is almost that time again! Great Expectations 2013! Your co-captains Kim Quinton and Heather Long have been working on lining up final round judges, setting dates, posting ads and getting the site ready for submissions. To keep up with Great Expectations news, guidelines and more visit: <http://ntrwagreatexpectations.blogspot.com/>.

Deadlines:

- To receive the "early bird discount," you must submit payment (via Paypal) by noon CST on Saturday, December 8, 2012.
- All entries and payments must be submitted electronically by midnight CST on Friday, December 28, 2012.

Entry Fee:

- All payments must be submitted via Paypal.
- A separate entry fee should be submitted for each contest entry.
- Entry fees are non-refundable EXCEPT in the event that a category is cancelled due to low numbers of entries.

Early bird discounted rate (for payments received before noon CST on Saturday, December 8:

- \$20 for members of NTRWA, DARA, and Yellow Rose chapters of RWA
- \$25 for all other RWA members
- \$30 for non-RWA members

Regular rates (for all other entry fees):

- \$25 for members of NTRWA, DARA, and Yellow Rose chapters of RWA
- \$30 for all other RWA members
- \$35 for non-RWA members

Eligibility:

- All work must be the author's original work that has not been contracted for publication prior to the entry deadline.
- This contest is open to all authors who have never been published in book-length romantic fiction as well as authors who have not been contracted or published in the entered category during the last three years (during 2010, 2011, or 2012).
- Previous first place winners may not re-enter the winning entry, even in edited format. They may, however, enter another work.
- Authors may enter as many times as they wish (in one or multiple categories)
- Failure to comply with any of the rules may disqualify the entry resulting in a forfeit of the entry fee.

Most Pages Written

Heather Long - 1285 pages
D'Ann Burrow - 215 pages
Barb Han - 150 pages
Sidney Bristol - 139 pages
Angi Morgan - 110 pages

Most Pages Edited

Heather Long - 2640 pages
Chrissy Szarek - 1026 pages
Angi Morgan - 630 pages
Sidney Bristol - 527 pages
Dawn Alexander - 483 pages

Seen at RWA 2012

Jamie Wesley looks stunning as she prepares for the Golden Heart awards. A finalist in the Contemporary Series Romance with *Tell Me Something Good!*

Thanks to Dawn Alexander for the great photo op!





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I jotted down what I thought were the big black moments (BBMs) and what the changes in the heroine's thought process needed to be over the course of this very short story (currently 13K). I then mapped out GMC for both the hero and the heroine. I didn't do external vs. internal

though. (I'm not explaining that, read the book. ☺)

As I was working through these things, some flaws in my story came to light. I could see what I needed to change and I also knew where those changes could be made.

It was all a bit disheartening, to say the least. I'd just blown off the second deadline and chosen the third, a mere two weeks later, but I really don't see that happening either. The changes, while known and doable, will take more time, I think, than just another two weeks. And as I mentioned last month, I'm heartily sick of working on this story.

What to do, what to do?

Nothing to do but set it aside again. I have plenty of other manuscripts needing revisions, not to mention the dangerous shiny that is a new story line for those much-needed new words for my next BIAY charm.

I did sit down and chart GMC for all my other current manuscripts as well, hoping to avoid any of them taking quite as long to call complete.

Please don't feel discouraged by my tale. This particular manuscript started off as something else, something longer before I finally found a publisher and a line to target. Of course there were going to be growing pains as I learned to navigate the shorter, more concise format. And as I start each new story, I've lessons learned and more experience under my belt to make them easier and hopefully faster writing.

No, I didn't get to announce, "I completed a manuscript." at the July meeting, as I'd hoped, but perhaps at the August meeting. (though maybe not the one I've been talking about) *fingers crossed*

Have a great writing month!

Jen

Big Characters with Rita Winner Cindy Dees!

Big Books, Big Stories, and Big Boobs...okay, make that Big Characters. (Big Boobs just sounded more fun.) Have you ever wanted to pull your hair out when an editor told you she's looking for big, commercial stories, and you have no idea what, exactly, she meant? Join Cindy Dees in August to find out the results of her survey of more than forty New York editors to answer that very question. We'll explore what makes for big characters, big relationships, big scenes, and big stories in this workshop appropriate for beginning writers to multi-published authors.



Congratulations to our 2012 Rita Award Winner Cindy Dees

Cindy Dees started flying airplanes while sitting in her dad's lap at the age of three and got a pilot's license before she got a driver's license. At age fifteen, she dropped out of high school and left the horse farm in Michigan where she grew up to attend the University of Michigan.

After earning a degree in Russian and East European Studies, she joined the U.S. Air Force and became the youngest female pilot in its history. She flew supersonic jets, VIP airlift, and the C-5 Galaxy, one of the world's largest cargo airplanes. She also worked part-time gathering intelligence. During her military career, she traveled to forty-two countries on five continents, was detained by the KGB and East German secret police, got shot at, flew in the first Gulf War, met her husband, and amassed a lifetime's worth of war stories.

Cindy teaches advanced Novel Writing courses at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Her hobbies include professional Middle Eastern dancing, Japanese gardening, and medieval reenacting. She started writing on a one dollar bet with her mother and was delighted to win that bet with the publication of her first book in 2001.

Cindy has won a Golden Heart and Holt Medallion for writing, is a five-time finalist and winner of the prestigious RITA Award for Women's Fiction, two-time winner of RT Book Review's Best Harlequin Romantic Suspense Novel of the Year, is a Romantic Times Lifetime Career Achievement nominee, and a Waldenbooks best selling author.

She writes for the Silhouette Romantic Suspense line, and her thirty-sixth novel was released in August 2012. Additionally, she has books coming out in October, 2012, and January, March, and April of 2013. She loves to hear from fans and can be contacted at her website: www.cindydees.com

August 2012



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