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President's Corner

Hello NT

This month finds me behind and exhausted. I hope September and October were and will be quieter for you. I know I've mentioned Marching Band Boy and we're right in the thick of football/marching band season, with three marching contests looming as I write this. Bring on November and the retreat, as well as the end of HS football season, and the Thanksgiving break.

In September, we looked at our index cards with goals written on them. How'd you do? I missed taking a class in the third quarter, and thought I'd found one for the fourth only to have cancelled on me at the last minute for lack of participants. Probably just as well.

By the way, we still need some folks to volunteer to help run the chapter. Please contact president-elect Michelle Welsh to find out how/where we need you. (presidentelect@ntrwa.org) It's a great way to give back and to get to know your chapter mates better. A current board member decided to run as a way to make sure she attended meetings this year. It was so nice to see her smiling face more often than not. As for me, I'll still be around, trying my hand at a position I've never served in. Some positions we just aren't suited for, and I get that, but it's also a way to grow. My first term as president way back in 2007 really helped me get over my fear of speaking to a crowd. It's still not my favorite thing to do, but I can do it without full-body tremors.

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September 15, 2012
BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

Board of Directors:

Officers

Jen FitzGerald
President

Michelle Welsh
President-Elect

Nancy Connally
Secretary

Angi Platt
Treasurer

Nikki Duncan
Program Director

Jamie Webb
Membership Director

Heather Long
*Communications
Director*

Clover Autrey
Website Director

Committee Chairs

Roni Griffin
PAN Liaison

Carolyn Williamson
PRO Liaison

Heather Long
Kim Quinton
Great Expectations 2013

Marty Tidwell
Hospitality

Heather Long
Newsletter Editor

Dawn Clyburn
Spotlights

D'Ann Burrow
Audio Librarian

Chrissy Szarek
Writing Incentives

Nikki Duncan

Texas Two Step 2014

Angi Platt
Bylaws

Michelle Welsh
Angi Platt

30th Anniversary

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday, September 15, 2012 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The President was present. The secretary was absent. President-Elect Michelle Welsh took the minutes. The meeting was called to order at 10:38 a.m. The minutes for the August meeting were approved as read.

OFFICER REPORTS:

President: Jen FitzGerald reported:

- PPM review is on hold and will be done by Jen FitzGerald, Michelle Welsh, and Angi Platt. Proposed changes will be presented to the board and the board turnover meeting and subsequently presented to the membership in January 2013.

President-Elect: Michelle Welsh had nothing to report.

Secretary: Nancy Connally was absent.

Treasurer: Angi Platt reported:

- The Treasurer reported that a spot audit was completed and no problems were noted. The Treasurer's report will be filed for audit.

Program Director: Nikki Duncan reported:

- Upcoming programs:
October: Sherry Thomas
- Reminder about retreat (the first weekend of November) at Jefferson Inn in lieu of November meeting. Contact Nikki for details.
- December meeting will be held the second Saturday and will be a Holiday Party. Angi Platt moved that we have a *gently used book exchange with a publication date of 2012* and the motion was seconded by Michelle Welsh. The motion passed.

Membership Director: Jamie Webb reported:

- NTRWA has 76 members.
- There were two new members: Debra Owens and Christy Deporto
And six visitors: Laura Johnson, Angelyn Smith, Jan Brand, Gayla O'Neal, Monica Owens, and Dakota Byrd

Communications Director: Heather Long was absent.

- Jen FitzGerald reminded the membership to send articles for the

newsletter, as they are always needed.

Website Director: Clover Autrey reported:

She is updating the website and needs pictures and website links.

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:

PAN Liaison: Roni Loren reported:

Lori reminded members to let her know when they've sold a book so she can prepare the pencils before the meeting.

PRO Liaison: Carolyn Williamson reported:

- To become a PRO, a member must submit a manuscript to an agent or editor and have proof of submission. Application forms are available.
 - One of benefits of PRO is priority reservations [after published authors] with agents and editors at RWA National Conference.

Great Expectations: Kim Quinton reported:

- Final-round judges are being lined up. The contest blog is being updated.

Hospitality: Marty Tidwell had nothing to report.

Spotlights: Dawn Alexander reported:

- Lara Lacombe was the spotlighted member.

Audio Librarian: D'Ann Burrow reported:

- Discs are available for borrowing.

Writing Incentives: Chrissy Szarek had nothing to report.

Texas Two-Step: Nikki Duncan had nothing to report.

Bylaws: Angi Platt had nothing to report.

30th Anniversary: Lara Lacombe reported:

- Lara needs to know who is planning to submit a piece for the anthology. Send her an e-mail to let her know: lara.lacombe.writer@gmail.com
- She is seeking judges from Goodreads.

Book in a Year: Angi Platt had nothing to report.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

- President Jen FitzGerald read a thank you card from Delta Hearts of Gold, in regards to the donation we made after the Texas Two Step book signing.

Next Business Meeting: 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, October 20, 2012 at La Hacienda. The meeting adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

Submitted electronically by Michelle Welsh

Date Approved: ____, 2012

Date Corrected: _____

November Writer's Retreat!

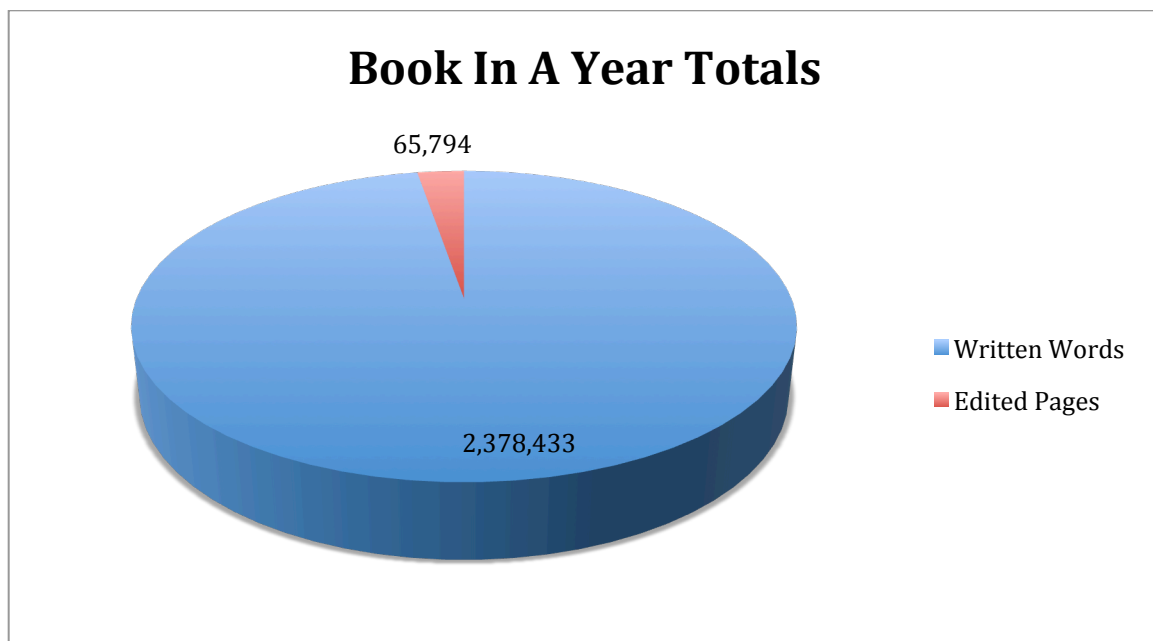
Here Ye Here Ye if you haven't already! This year's writer retreat will be the first weekend of November. By popular demand from those who attended last year, we're returning to the Jefferson Street Bed & Breakfast in Irving. There will not be a speaker this year, so this is purely a weekend for writing, plotting, etc.

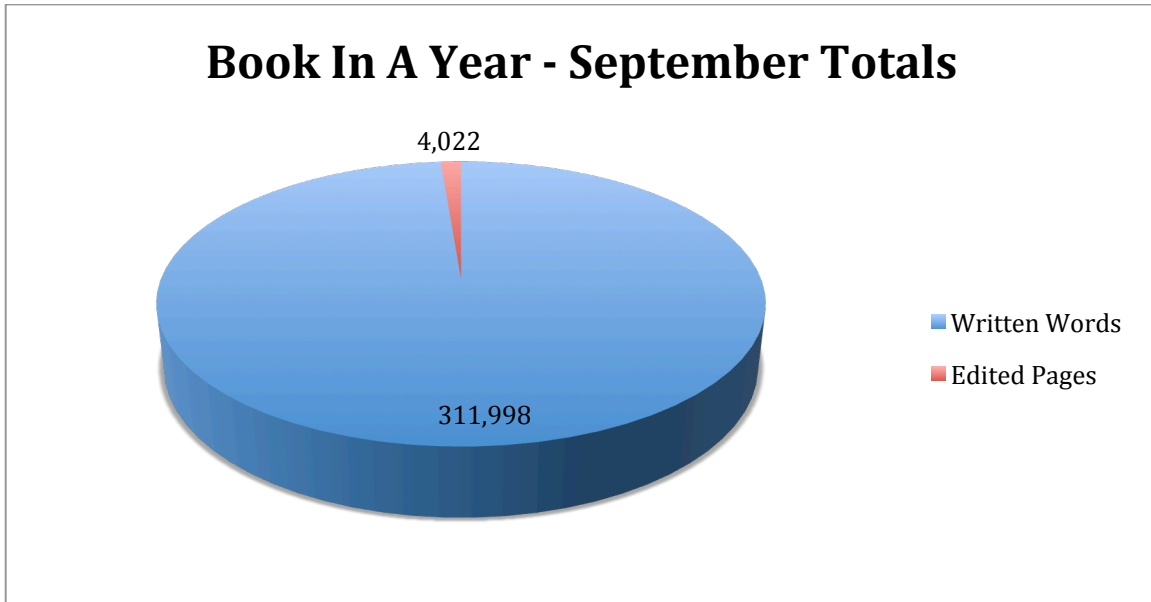
Here is the link for you to contact them to make your reservation. <http://www.jeffersonstreetbnb.com/> They also have a cottage across the street with 2 beds, 2 baths and a full kitchen. Rooms range from \$85 to \$140 a night.

There is no fee for the retreat other than the cost of your room and whatever food you take.

Charm Incentive

March 2013 will be the 30th anniversary of NTRWA. To help celebrate, the chapter is sponsoring a Book In A Year program for all members. For more information, visit the [Writing Incentives](#) page. (While you're there, you can see some of the other awesome ways we encourage our members to write.)





It's not too late to add your words to our pie! Join BIAY@ntrwa.org

October's BIAY Charm

LOVE

Just a four letter word. Easy to spell. Sounds pleasant enough. People desire it. Couples seek to keep it. Pets give it. And we write about it. And writing about love, having two characters obtain a satisfying 'happily ever after' is quite an achievement.



I believe the romance genre is not only some of the best fiction available, but also some of the hardest fiction to write. Of course, many disagree. But isn't it easier to write a straight murder mystery without having two people fall in love along the way? Romance guarantees a reader two things: a Happily Ever After and character growth.

My friend Tami Cowden first pointed out that *LETHAL WEAPON* is the perfect love story. It's "bro" love, but think about it. Two people can't stand each other and are forced to work together. Their tolerance grows when they respect the other for their skills. They protect each other and learn to work together. One rescues the other physically, while one rescues the other emotionally. At the end, they're family.

HAPPY OCTOBER WRITING !!

CONGRATULATIONS on your FINISHED BOOKS:

- D'Ann Burrow, *SECONDHAND SINNERS*
- Heather Long, *SOME LIKE IT REAL* (56K)
- Heather Long, *THE TWO AND THE PROUD* (11K)
- Heather Long, *A MARINE AND A GENLEMAN* (10K)
- Heather Long, *Waiting in the Wings* (35K)

In the Colorado Mountains with Margie Lawson and the Stellar Scribes

By Marsha West

Those of you who've been around a while know that I've been at this writing business for a little over five years. I've completed five books and begun a sixth one. Book three finaled in a contest and Book 4 finaled in a contest. Meager encouragement, considering the number of times I'd entered various contests with various manuscripts.

The year I was NT president was a tough year for me. Was I supposed to be doing this with my time? How could I justify the cost of continuing? There are other things I can do and perhaps be more successful. (Succeeding and being accomplished at a task are major for my self-esteem, which had been taking a beating from contest feedback.) So huge major self-doubts attacked. As I mentioned in a president's column, if I hadn't felt an obligation to NT, I'd have quit.

So how does any of this fit with the title of this article? Last March at our Texas Two-step conference one of the items up for bids was a Margie Lawson Immersion Class. (Thank you NT and probably Nikki Duncan for acquiring that.) Two years before we'd had Margie at our conference. The information overwhelmed me, and I put her handouts and my notes away. My brain couldn't wrap itself around all she told us that day. In retrospect, a bad decision.

Two years after that, and I'm thinking of quitting-again. On the conference table lay the half-price offer for Margie's class. I looked at it and walked away. How could I fly to spend four days with five people I didn't know from Adam? (Cliché alert!) Even at half-price, by the time I added airfare and lodging, I was gambling a lot of money she could help my writing. But that's what I did.

In the GE contest, the spring of this year, one of the judges said something like, "You're so close. Don't give in to the lure of self-publishing." Now, I may very well go the indie way, if after Margieizing # 4 & # 5 to the best of my ability, no one else wants them. But after they've gone through the cauldron of Margie's stew, that will be okay, because they'll be in good shape, something to be proud of.

You're asking—I can hear you—"What the heck did you learn?" Three things. First, I learned how to put emotion into my writing. I'm not about to tell you I know how to do it perfectly. I don't, but I now understand what my CPs kept saying to me after reading pages I thought were pretty darn good. They'd say, "But there's no emotion." A little like the story, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, I *thought* I had emotion. And that one word is the key—*thought*. You can't think emotion—you feel it. According to Margie, your POV character has to have a *visceral* experience.

Let me share an example of a visceral experience. In the car today, I was considering what I wanted to tell you about the trip. (Most of which I haven't gotten to yet. Surprise, surprise.) Two of the five women in our group had never, ever shared their work with anyone. Remember what that was like the first time you laid your baby out there for someone else's eyes to peruse? Scary down to your toes right? Heart pounding, gut twisting, God, what was I thinking, scared.

The third evening (we'd arrived Sunday afternoon, worked then and Monday and all day Tuesday—not to mention through meals), Margie asked someone to share an example from their work. For a moment, the room was filled with silence. Then one of the "new gals" thrust her hand in the air and said, "Pick me, pick me!" The chill bumps which ran down my arms then and in the car today and now again as I write these words—that's visceral. We were thrilled for her, for us, for the experience we were sharing.



Figure 1 Margie, Marsha, Kathy Paras, and Alice Burton in Russian Tea House, Dushambe in Boulder. Photo by Callenne Rapp

That's what I didn't put in my writing. That's what I now work hard to show. That's what Margie did for me.

The second thing I learned was that I never showed how anyone said anything. I never wrote, "He spoke loudly." I mean we don't use adverbs, right? Nor did I say, "His spoken words so soft, I almost didn't understand." I've got a theatre background, you'd think I'd just know to do that. My reasoning for why I didn't is because I have a theatre background. I hear how the words are supposed to sound. But you know I haven't developed the gift of telepathy, so my readers can't hear how the characters in my head sound if I don't show them.

The third thing I discovered was about Rhetorical Devices or RD for short. Oh, my gosh—those crazy words Margie shared with us at the NT conference. I couldn't pronounce them (and I can pronounce most words with little trouble), much less remember what they stood for. This time I learned that I use some of those quirky words, but didn't necessarily know their names.

Rhetorical questions—I did know what this was, and I love'em. Sometimes I over-do. A couple have made their way into this article.

The following examples are from my fourth book VERMONT ESCAPE. Several of you have read parts of it before, because I've entered it at least twice in GE, and then some of you are or have been my CPs, or you read parts during our Round Table Critique when we are fortunate to have our published authors look at our work. Now, I don't believe you would recognize much but the story. I worked all summer going through VE getting ready for the 4-day Margie's mountain marathon.

- Alliteration Anaphora—repeating a word or phrase at the beginning of three successive phrases or sentences. "Habit required she clean and moisturize her face. Habit provided comfort when life was chaotic. Habit could get her through the worst."
- Eponym—referring to a famous person who is recognized for an attribute and substituting their name for that attribute, not mentioning the attribute. "Gary's good ol' boy Texas speak misled many people into believing he didn't know what he was doing. From Jill's perspective, he was Warren Buffett." (Gary is heroine's CPA.)

- Anadiplosis—repeating the last word of one sentence at or very near the beginning of the next. “We really like you, Jill. But people are saying all sorts of things. Wild stories. Stories that you’re an heiress.”
- Combine Anadiplosis with Anaphora and you get—“The store is important to you, and you’d be upset if you sold it to the wrong person.”
“Wrong person. You think Jill is the wrong person?”

Margie has 22 Rhetorical Devices, but I won’t give examples of all the others. Did I just hear a gasp of relief? ☺ If you’re work isn’t getting the kind of response you’d like, I cannot recommend Margie Lawson and her packets and on-line classes and Immersion classes enough. (Polysyndeton—using many conjunctions.) Sorry, it just slipped out.

One last thing when you go to the mountain, you leave with five good writing friends. Our group named ourselves the Stellar Scribes. We have our own loop, share pages, ask questions, and generally cheer for each other. Only one is currently published. Rashda Khan as Mina Khan. She writes fantasy with jiins or genies. I’m positive the others will be published, and when they are, I’ll share.

Content-wise—there’s tons more. I’ve just touched on the first star in the solar system of Margie. (I first wrote the cliché, “I’ve just touched the tip of the iceberg.”) She doesn’t promise you’ll be published if you take her courses, but gosh I’m a better writer now than I was when I started the packets in May, or before I went to Colorado.

I’m sending VE out next week, and it’s so much stronger than it has been in any of its former manifestations. Maybe it won’t be picked, but now it’s a better-written book, and I think a good story. Maybe more important. I’m a better writer.

Just like I used to leave out the emotion in my books, I’ve left out the fun stuff for this article: cute water, walks on the mountain, the fog (we were the first class to experience being in the cloud.), the lodge, Margie’s house and super spouse Tom, and the pups, acting out scenes from our books. Maybe I’ll put all of that in another article. ☺ At least four NTers now have been to the mountain. Besides Nikki Duncan, Heather, Susan Butler, and me. If you’d like more info, you could ask any of us. While there would be similarities to our experience, I’m sure there’d be differences, too.

Great Expectations 2013

We have our judges for the 2013 Great Expectations, but we are still looking for a YA editor! So if you have a suggestion please send to heathervlong@gmail.com. Thanks!

- Sue Grimshaw - Single Title Random House
 - Inspirational Becky Monds, Thomas Nelson
 - Mainstream -Emilia Pisani- Simon and Schuster
 - Romantic Suspense - Libby Murphy, Entangled
 - Contemporary- Shana Smith
 - Historical – Mallory Braus, Carina Press
 - Specialized — Deborah Nemeth, Carina Press
 - Contemporary — Shana Smith, Harlequin
 - Erotic - Kelli Collins, Ellora's Cave
-



...continued from page 1

And the journey continues...remember last month I announced that I'd finally completed a manuscript? I also mentioned that I'd submitted it. The waiting period is almost over and I should hear something back soon.

Whether the publisher requests it or not, I'm ready. I've learned so much from my chapter mates that I'm ready, whatever happens.

Unfortunately, no meeting for me this month—the big marching contest UIL is the same day as our meeting and I haven't missed a contest yet. President-elect Michelle Welsh will be dipping her toes into the running-the-meeting pool, so please don't splash her too much. And I will see you all in December.

Have a great writing month!

Jen

Subtext! Not Just Another Buzzword

Be sure to join us Saturday, October 20th for special guest Sherry Thomas!

The word subtext is often heard nowadays. But what does it mean to a romance writer? How do you use it to create a layered narrative and nuanced interactions between your characters? The goal of this workshop is breakdown this mysterious catch-all word for subtle writing into concrete techniques you can apply to your own writing, from the dynamics of dialogue to the creation and expression of themes and motifs.

About Sherry Thomas

Sherry Thomas burst onto the scene with **PRIVATE ARRANGEMENTS**, a *Publisher Weekly* Best Book of 2008. Her sophomore book, **DELICIOUS**, is a *Library Journal* Best Romance of 2008. Her next two books, **NOT QUITE A HUSBAND** and **HIS AT NIGHT**, are back-to-back winners of Romance Writers of America's prestigious RITA® Award for Best Historical Romance in 2010 and 2011. Lisa Kleypas calls her "the most powerfully original historical romance author working today."

Her story is all the more interesting given that English is Sherry's second language—she has come a long way from the days when she made her laborious way through Rosemary Roger's **SWEET SAVAGE LOVE** with an English-Chinese dictionary. She enjoys digging down to the emotional core of stories. And when she is not writing, she thinks about the zen and zaniness of her profession, plays computer games with her sons, and reads as many fabulous books as she can find.



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NTRWA
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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