

Subject:

FW: Newsletter

Welcome to a New Year for NTRWA! We're celebrating our 30th anniversary, talking about how it's never too late to do what you love and push past your fears. Make this your year!

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Founded March 1983

January 2013

Chapter 33, Region 5

Volume 32, Issue 1

Letter from the President

Ready for the New Year?

The New Year is here, a time to reflect on the past year and set goals for the next one. When I sat down to write this first message of my term as President, I couldn't help but remember my first meeting five years ago. I was nervous, not sure what to do or where to sit. Everybody seemed paired up and I was an outsider.

I got lucky.

Two members walked up and introduced themselves and insisted I sit between them. One of them gave me an extra ticket and I won a door prize. By the end of the meeting, I was

ready to fill out the membership form and pay my dues.

The welcoming attitude and feeling of family lured me in and kept me coming to NT for the next four years. When my other life got rough, NT was my respite. It was the one place I could go where I could talk to like-minded people and discuss a variety of subjects without thinking about my day job. Writing became a lifeline, a gateway to fun, and NT's members kept me sane while I started writing after a twenty year hiatus.

As 2013 begins, I'm hoping that family atmosphere continues to build. Come early and introduce yourself to someone new to the group. I know I tend to gravitate to the same friends every meeting, but I plan to find a new member, or potential new member, at each meeting in 2013.

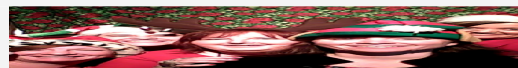
Volunteer some time. If you're too busy to commit to a Board or Chair position, consider offering a critique or beta read as a door prize. And don't be shy. (I know, there are very few shy people at our meetingsJ.) Think of a strength you can share with the group.

And don't forget to write every day. Tone those creative muscles until the words burst off the page and have a life of their own.

-Michelle Welsh



Jen and Angi, Photo Booth
Christmas Party 2012



Critique Partner Fun!
Christmas Party 2012

December 8, 2012

BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday, December 8, 2012 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The president was present. In the absence of the secretary, Marsha R. West recorded minutes. The meeting was called to order at 10:50 A.M. The October 20 minutes were not published in the newsletter and will need to be approved at the January meeting.

OFFICER REPORTS:

President: Jen FitzGerald:

- Welcomed everyone and asked that phones be placed on vibrate.

Treasurer: Angi Platt reported:

- Reported on finances. Treasurer's Report will be filed for audit.

President Elect: Michelle Welsh had nothing to report.

Membership Director: Jamie Webb reported:

- The chapter has 81 members with 5 visitors present.

Program Director: Nikki Duncan reported:

- Reviewed January and February programs.

Communications Director: Heather Long reported:

- The newsletter is being set up with MailChimp. Beginning in January, members will receive newsletters directly to their emails.

Website Director: Clover Autrey:

- Reminded members to give her their web site information.

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:

Hospitality Chair: In the absence of Marty Tidwell, Jen FitzGerald reported:

- Conducted the drawings and asked that members consider making donations for next year's baskets.

PRO Liaison: Carolyn Williamson reported:

- Encouraged members who haven't yet finished a book to do so and to submit to an agent or publisher so they can apply to be a PRO.
- As a PRO, members have priority reservations (after published authors) with agents and editors at RWA National Conference in Georgia. They also have access to several PRO loops via Yahoo and the RWA website.

Audio Librarian: D'Ann Burrow reported:

- CDs from RWA Nationals can be checked out.

Writing Incentives: Chrissy Szarek reported:

- Stephanie Morris won the quarterly drawing for most written pages. Sidney Bristol won the quarterly drawing for most edited pages.

PAN Liaison: Roni Loren:

- Handed out pencils for books sold.

30th Anniversary: Lara Lacombe reported:

- The anniversary anthology book will have twelve short stories and should be ready by March 20, 2013 meeting.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

Michelle Welsh announced the election results:

President-Elect — Clover Autrey

Secretary — Nancy Connally

Treasurer — Angi Platt

Membership — Jen FitzGerald

Web Director — D'Ann Burrow

Communications Director — Heather Long

Program Director — Lara Lacombe

- President Jen FitzGerald announced the winners of the yearly contests:
 - Pre-Published: Most written pages (Rising Star) Carolyn Williamson; Most edited pages (Silver Spur) Marsha R. West.
 - Published: Most written pages (Shining Star) and most edited pages (Golden Spur), Heather Long.
 - Yellow Rose Award to Nikki Duncan
-
- President Jen FitzGerald recognized the 2012 Board members with a charm symbolizing their job.

Next Business Meeting: 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, January 19, 2013 at La Hacienda. The meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

Submitted electronically by Marsha R. West for Nancy Connally

Date Approved: _____

Date Corrected: _____

It's Never Too Late

Heidy Markwell

The following article was used in the September 2012 of the Carolina Romance Writer's newsletter, The Final Draft. Permission granted to use with proper credit.

Epiphanies can strike anyone at any time. Young, old, middle-aged, any age.

When I graduated from high school (AHEM) xx years ago, I did what was expected of me. I went to college. But I went to college not having a clue what to major in. I liked history, I liked cultural/international studies and I liked literature. So the classes I chose centered around the topics I enjoyed learning about. Two four-year institutions, three declared majors at different times, a couple of lifelong friendships formed—one who is like a sister to me—and one community college later, I had an Associate Degree in Applied Science. Yep. I sort of got lost in the mix, never having found my niche. Don't get me wrong, I

wasn't a flunky. Granted, I was a little misguided, but I held a good average. And after my sophomore year, I decided to go home. That's when I earned my Associates.

My passion for writing and storytelling existed more or less like a shadow that moved when I moved. It's always been a part of me, always there when I needed to escape, and it's never let me down. My senior year English-Lit teacher gave me the choice between researching and writing a report about a past U.S. president or writing an autobiography. I chose the latter. And I'm glad I did. I had a helluva blast writing and reliving the first eighteen years of my life with my not so boring family, and our incredible experiences. Needless to say, I got an A+++.

So why didn't my destiny smack me in my face? Why didn't the obvious bounce around like a jester wearing bells? Who knows? I'll never know.

Maybe

I wasn't ready to "grow up" yet. Maybe life had different plans for me at the time. Lucky me, I met my husband. We dated. He read and complimented me on my work—short stories, poems, little things here and there. Suddenly other things became more important and I shuffled my hobby aside to exist as no more than a little shadow at my heels. Then my husband and I got married.

He went back to school for his Masters. I promised myself I would too ... one day. Then we moved. Bought a house. Had a baby. And then another. Many years past us by. I embraced my hobby once more shortly before we celebrated my daughter's first birthday over three years ago.

Here we are in 2012 and I finally know what I want to be when I grow up. A published author in fiction works with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing, and a Certificate in Publishing backing up my name. What a mouth-full! But I'm damn proud and relieved to know where I'm going with the full support of my family and friends.

So my friends, the moral of my tale is: Do what you love. Do it well. Take your hobby and turn it into a career. Embrace it. Nurture it. It's never too late. You're never too old or too young.

The secret of success is making your vocation your vacation ~ Mark Twain



NT Board at the Christmas Party 2012

Pro Motion - Fear of Writing

Julie Pitzel

This article appeared in the December 2012 issue of In Print!, the monthly newsletter of Houston Bay Area RWA. Permission granted to use with proper credit.

Late fall into winter is a good time to talk about fear.

Outside, away from the holiday parties and family feasts, it's dark and cold. Skeletons of bare trees spatter the barren landscape with grasping silhouettes. We hear whispers skittering behind us and find dry, dead leaves scuttling in the wind. Is the hiss and rattle in the shadows simply leaves or something more...substantial?

Fears come in many shapes and sizes. Some are practical reactions to our surroundings. Whether it's precarious heights, wild animals, or poisonous insects, a little fear is a good thing.

But some fears go beyond the rational: the woman so afraid of cats, she can't look at kitten pictures; the man who becomes ill watching a boat bob on the water; the writer who rolls into a fetal ball at the idea of submitting their work.

We all have reasons to avoid submitting: "I'm waiting on contest results."
"I've been caught up in a new story and haven't had a chance." "I'm stuck on the synopsis."

We have similar reasons to avoid writing: "I'm exhausted when I get home." "I'm researching llama farming in the Andes." "I'm learning my new writing software."

I am not saying the above and any number of other explanations aren't valid. Waiting for feedback and tweaking a manuscript before sending it out is a good idea. Synopses suck tar balls. Falling asleep at the keyboard isn't conducive to good writing. And sometimes we need to take time to learn a new software to improve our process.

But at what point does it become an excuse? When does it stop being practical and start being unreasonable?

When do we become ruled by our fear?

Because that's what happens. Yes, some of us would rather play computer games or watch mindless TV or amuse ourselves on Twitter and FB than write. But I know dread and panic play a large part.

And it's not just fear of rejection. That's part of it, but success is a lot scarier than getting rejected.

Wait! What? Yep. But that's another column. We have to remember that editors and agents aren't the mean girls on the playground. This is a business. They make decisions based on whether they think they can sell your story or your voice. Rejection is not about you. It's about the writing.

I could have called the article Fear of Failure. Because if we don't give ourselves the opportunity to succeed, we don't need to worry about failing.

I recently read a blog post by Chuck Wendig, "Failing Versus Quitting." Mr. Wendig gives us all a good dose of boot-to-rectum advice and I encourage all of my writer friends to read it and bookmark it for future reference. Warning: He is not politically correct and has never met an f-bomb he didn't like.

In a nutshell, Wendig calls quitting cowardice. Failure happens. It's like taking a wrong turn, we won't get to our destination that way but we'll have a better picture of the map. Quitting is sitting down at the first crossroad because we might go the wrong direction.

When we stop writing, when we put off submitting, we're sitting in the crossroad.

Writing is scary business. We put our souls in the words and we send them out and hope others are touched by them.

Sometimes we connect; sometimes trolls ignore everything but the error on page 220. We get advice to throw away our prettiest words, to tighten and increase tension and take the POV deeper. Some of the advice is conflicting and occasionally the praise is even more confusing.

Despite everything, we need to take charge, swallow our fears and write and submit. We need to accept that we might fail, but we may also succeed.

It's cold and dark out there. Bundle up, pack a flashlight, and remember there are scarier things than editors watching you from the dark corners.

Julie lives with her husband and three cats in a geodesic dome south of Houston. She writes paranormals and is still looking for an agent.



2013 Meeting Schedule

January 19 ~ Sara Reyes from **Fresh Fiction** will be joining us to discuss what readers want!

February 16 ~ Heather Long will teach a pre-writing workshop: **The Top 10 Questions To Answer Before You Write**. Designed based on Heather's method for writing and getting words on the page, come to the meeting prepared to work!

March 16 - Anniversary Party!

Email questions, comments, or articles to newsletter@ntrwa.org.

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