

**Subject:**

February 2014 Newsletter

The holidays are almost here and that means writing, contests, and parties.  
Don't miss what's coming up next...

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## Letter from the President

Okay, I admit it. I'm a The Bachelor addict. Yes, I watched Trista and Ryan repeat their vows. I sat through Catherine and Sean's "Grown Sexy" ceremony. Where my grandparents enjoyed the Lawrence Welk show together, The Bachelorette is Pat and my's Lawrence Welk. We don't miss it or watch it separately. Yes, that's television at work, keeping families together.

Let's face it, it's a romance novel come to reality TV. It provides a hero and heroine hoping for that happily ever after that we all root for. Well, except for Ben Flajnik. Had to stop rooting for him because he was too easily manipulated to the point of annoying. (Note to self: don't write annoying heroes.)

But it also has a fairy godmother type matchmaker (Chris Harrison thank you), and that one evil antagonist we all want to hate, as well as several hilarious secondary characters that steal every scene they step in to. And those secondary characters usually end up in the book's sequel, er, I mean as the next bachelor or bachelorette.

So my point?

Uh, no point really. Except the strong inciting evidence that the general masses are still looking for romances and happily ever afters as the top sources of entertainment, be it television or in books.

So happy watching, happy writing and reading. And happy Valentine's day.

With loads of heart-shaped chocolate. Yes, lots of chocolate.



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## ***Upcoming February Meeting Speaker:***

*Frontloading in Genre Fiction with Pat Hauldren*

Pat will be discussing putting genre tropes and triggers in the front of your manuscripts where they belong and then on every page. She'll discuss what frontloading is, what genre tropes are, what triggers are, and where they go and why. She'll list popular authors' works and discuss how they frontload to best effect. If there is time, she'll discuss audience members' works and then take Q&A.

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## The Carolyn Readers Choice Award 2014

**Deadline: Friday, February 14, 2014, midnight CST**

Cost: \$25

What: books published in 2013, any length

Grand prize: Winners of each category get their cover advertized in a shared ad on the All Romance Ebooks website.

Details: [ntrwa.org](http://www.ntrwa.org) (<http://www.ntrwa.org/thecarolyn/the.carolyn.info.htm>)

For more information visit the NT website or contact [carolyn.award@ntrwa.org](mailto:carolyn.award@ntrwa.org)



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## Don't Forget to Tip Your Wait Staff

Just a reminder for those who attend the meetings...

Due to changes in tax laws, restaurants are no longer allowed to add gratuity to the meal tickets.

Servers get paid a base wage of \$2.13 and then rely on tips for the rest of their income. In addition, servers must pay the food runners out of their tips based on the amount of the ticket and not the amount of the tip.

Please please please remember to tip no matter when and where you eat out, but especially remember Javier each month at the meeting. He's faithfully taken care of us for the last couple of years and even remembers many people's drink orders. He's married and has two young children.

Thanks,

The 2014 Board

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## The Need for Speed

By Jodie Esch

*This article first appeared in the February 2014 issue of Tide Lines, newsletter of the Vancouver Island Chapter of RWA. Permission granted to sister RWA chapters to reprint or forward with credit given to author and chapter.*

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Lately, I feel as if I'm drowning under a tsunami of pressure and expectations. Everywhere I turn, authors are attempting to:

- Write More
- Read More
- Blog More
- Be on Facebook More

The list goes on. There was a time, and not too long ago, when authors simply wrote. When the time was right they submitted. Then they waited and waited for the often non-existent response. Or they received a nebulous response, or a hard-to-decipher response, or a response that left them breathless with hope, or

a response from a publishing house about to close their doors.

With the e-publishing world, the waiting time for submissions is eliminated. A different kind of time-line morphs into existence. Authors wait for editing, or get in line for the cover artist or search for the right marketing opportunity. But the gate is open to proceed. No need to depend on outside validation.

And with that change comes tremendous responsibility. The author is the CEO of all aspects of their writing journey. It's a monumental learning curve.

Traditionally published authors have their demands as well. Deadlines can be unrealistic. Editors change and lines fold. Months can stretch between an offer of acceptance and publication. Authors are abandoned after producing a number of books. No one knows what genre will surge to the top. Promotion is often a missing part of the equation.

I recently purchased a new computer complete with Windows 8.0. Before I had the laptop turned on, I received advice to upgrade to 8.1. Whew! I'm resisting and holding off—no matter what the gurus say. I need to learn what's in front of me first.

What can one do to survive the avalanche of new technology, new social media, and the new landscape of publishing?

Embrace what you can on your writing expedition. Write what makes your heart sing. Write what makes you smile. Write what makes you cry. Write what makes you remember why you started to write.

The pressure to learn more and produce more will always be with us. But I'm finding in order to remain emotionally and physically healthy, I must construct my own writing path. And have the courage to stick to it. I'm unique and so is everyone else who decides to wrestle with words.

Discover what works for you. You may be the tortoise, not the hare. And that's just fine.

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*Jodie Esch is the author of the YA series, *The Girlfriend Series*. *Little White Castles*, a novella, will be published in March, 2014. Her high-school characters are heading to college so they will transform into *New Adults* in the future. Oh my! You can find Jodie at <http://www.jodieesch.com/>*

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## What to Expect at RWA 2014

### Part 1

# Conquering Your Fear of National

*by Jeannie Moon*

*The following article appeared in the Jan/Feb 2014 issue of ShoreLines, the newsletter of the Long Island Romance Writers, Debora Dale, Editor. Permission is granted to sister chapters to reprint or forward articles with proper credit to authors, newsletter and chapter.*

The RWA Annual Conference is something I've come to look forward to every year. I plan around it. I budget for it, and the reason I do so is this: it's made a difference in my writing career. Since registration for the 2014 conference just opened, it seemed like a good time to let those who are hesitant about registering for the first time (or going back) know there's nothing to be scared of.

I've spoken with people who are totally overwhelmed by the thought of going to such a large event. They feel they can't get anything out of a conference with so many offerings and so many people. But, National is about the people, it's about making connections, about learning from the pros and about immersing your-self in a community of writers. So, what are some things you can do to make the conference work (better) for you?

Here's my list:

**Plan ahead.** Do a little research about the city you're visiting. Find out some places of interest, and some restaurants. Nothing helps beat conference fatigue more than a trip out of the hotel, even if it's to get a cup of coffee and read. If possible, plan a meal out of the hotel with some

friends. It's well worth it.

**Don't be shy.** Ha! Easier said than done, right? You don't have to be the life of the party, but don't be afraid to introduce yourself to new people. The easiest way to do this is to sit with people you don't know at the lunches. It's often hard to find your friends in a packed ballroom, so rather than make yourself crazy, find a table with a seat, and say hi. People are extremely nice and eager to make new friends.

**It's not school.** Don't schedule yourself from morning to night. No one is taking attendance and there are no tests. Should you look at the schedule of workshops and find the ones that can benefit your industry knowledge or help you hone your craft? Yes. There are hundreds, so plan ahead. But should you pack your day with no room to take a break, talk to friends or see the sights? NO! Keep your pace moderate. Leave time to socialize and relax.

**Be professional.** Dress should be business casual, and comfortable. Keep a supply of business cards, pens and mints on hand. Practice your elevator pitch *just in case*. Be polite and use common sense if you have an opportunity to talk with an agent or editor. It all sounds pretty simple, right? That's because it is.

Going to a large conference shouldn't be traumatic. With a little forethought, National is a manageable conference, even with its size and scope. Just like a good story, it's all about the pacing.

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**Jeannie Moon** has always been a romantic. When she's not spinning tales of her own, Jeannie works as a school librarian, thankful she has a job that allows her to immerse herself in books. The first two books in her Forever Love series, **The Temporary Wife** and **Unexpectedly Yours**, are available from NAL/InterMix. Visit Jeannie's website at [www.jeanniemoon.com](http://www.jeanniemoon.com)



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# January 2014 Meeting Minutes:

## CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday, January 18, 2014 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The President and Secretary were present. The meeting was called to order at 10:37 a. m. The minutes for the December meeting were approved as read with corrections.

## OFFICER REPORTS:

### **President: Clover Autrey reported:**

- Reminder of board meeting next Saturday at Lara Lacombe's home – open to all membership as well.
- Reminder about Texas Two Step Conference.
- Reminder about Carolyn Contest – closes 2-14-14.

### **President-Elect: Angi Morgan reported:**

- No business to report.

### **Secretary: Lisa Fenley reported:**

- Minutes for December read.
- Minutes for December stand approved with corrections.

### **Treasurer: Angi Morgan reported year-end results for Jen FitzGerald:**

- Presented Treasurer's Report. Closed the year with almost \$11,000.
- GE: \$3725

### **Program Director: Lara Lacombe was not present:**

### **Membership Director: Gina Nelson reported:**

- 84 members. 5 guests. Donna and Richard Stockton (she writes as Lexi Blake), Rebecca Atman, Helen Kalmamans, Rachel Simeone (speaker)

**Communications Director: Kim Miller reported:**

- Stated that articles for inclusion in the newsletter may be submitted to [newsletter@NTRWA.org](mailto:newsletter@NTRWA.org).

**Website Director:**

**COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:**

**PAN Liaison: Chrissy Szarek reported:**

- Explained PAN requirements
- Chapter pencil requirements: sell a book or self-publish a novel.
- Presented pencils to: Shayla Black – *Forever Wicked* (novella); Suzan Butler – *Heart and Snow*; Jen FitzGerald – *Romance Writer's Guide to Punctuation*.

**PRO Liaison: Jeanne Guzman reported:**

- PRO retreat on hold until next week's board meeting feedback.
- PRO applications available through her.
- Explained PRO status requirements.
- Presented member Dakota Byrd with his PRO pin.

**Great Expectations: Angi Morgan reported:**

- Specialized and New Adult categories need additional judges.
- Proceeds are \$3,725.

**Carolyn Contest: Jen FitzGerald reported:**

- Need additional reader judges.
- Deadline for entry is 2/14/14.
- Several categories have not yet received minimum entries required.

**Hospitality: Michelle Welsh reported:**

- She needs the big box of t-shirts so that we may sell them at upcoming meetings.

**Audio Librarian: Debra Owens was not present:**

- No business to report.

**Writing Incentives: Christine Crocker reported:**

- Presented awards earned and reviewed clipboard statistics.

**Texas Two-Step: Lara Lacombe and Suzan Butler. Clover Autrey reported in Lara Lacombe's absence:**

- Conference Blog has all the updated information. [NTRWAtwostep.blogspot.com](http://NTRWAtwostep.blogspot.com)
- Hotel block is reserved at the Sheraton.

**Bylaws: Angi Morgan reported:**

- No business to report.

**Spotlights:**

- Regina Richards accepted Spotlight chair position.

**Unfinished Business:**

- Angi Morgan was presented with her Yellow Rose Award pin from December

**New Business:**

- No new business to report.

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Email questions, comments, or articles to [newsletter@ntrwa.org](mailto:newsletter@ntrwa.org).

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