

Jen FitzGerald

From: NTRWA Newsletter <newsletter=ntrwa.org@mail182.wdc02.mcdlv.net> on behalf of NTRWA Newsletter <newsletter@ntrwa.org>
Sent: Friday, October 17, 2014 8:57 PM
To: Jen FitzGerald
Subject: October 2014 Newsletter

Trick or Treat.

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Founded March 1983

October 2014

Chapter 33, Region 5

Volume 33, Issue 10

Letter from the President

It's Fall, the days of cooler weather, and well, for some, a lot of sneezing.

And best yet...Halloween.

I love Halloween. Best pagan celebration tipped on its head and gone commercialized ever. All that spooky goodness and candy galore and let's face it...plain old fun. It's when the monster B-movies get overplayed and scary and sometimes hilarious decorations go full-out.

For people like us writers who live in fantasy worlds all the time, Halloween allows the rest

of the world to come out and play with us.

So enjoy the month, soak your pumpkin in vinegar so it will last, and let the ghouls out to play!

HaPpY HaLLowEEEn!

Clover Autrey
NTRWA President

Upcoming October 17th Meeting:

Marla Regan - Time Habits

Time Habits is how we handle ourselves in both our personal and professional life. Marla Regan owner of Organized Time is a Speaker, Certified Family Manager® Coach and Professional Organizer. Her passion is helping clear clutter inside and out.

For more than 20 years, Marla Regan has been speaking to groups across the country, helping people find solutions for everyday situations through various topics related to Time Management and Organization. Marla specializes helping people bring order to chaos and as a result makes an immediate impact on the lives of the people in her audience! Her warm, approachable style, in combination with her expertise and passion will inspire your group to become more efficient and effective at work and home.

Participants will come away with

- Family Management Strategies
- Planning Tips
- Setting up Routines

Member News

Connie (C. Marie) Bowen - update: *Good news!! I have won the Paranormal Romance category for the Indiana Chapter of RWA's Indiana's Great Opportunity contest. (IGO). I advance to 'The Best of the Best' competition with final winner announced in November.

The MS is book one of a trilogy. The working title submitted was "Stranger". I have revised the name of the MS to "Passage".

November Retreat

As a reminder, we won't have a general meeting in November. Instead, we're going to try something a little different--a writing retreat, but with a twist!

The retreat weekend will take place Friday (starting at 5 pm) through Sunday (ending at 5 pm), November 7-9. Participants are encouraged to form groups of 4 on their own, and to decide when and where to meet. We have sodas, K-cups, juice pouches, and granola bars available for purchase (\$0.25/item --> all money goes back to the chapter).

The goal is to be as productive as possible during the retreat weekend. Prizes will be awarded for:

- 1) The group that writes the most words
- 2) The group that edits the most pages
- 3) The group that meets their goals (minimum of 2000 new words or 200 pages edited for each member)

It is important that the groups contain only 4 people, so we can keep things fair--we can't have a group of 20 competing against a group of 3, for example.

The food will be available at Saturday's meeting, and I encourage you all to form your groups and plan where you would like to meet at the meeting. Use this as an opportunity to hang out with new people--it should be a lot of fun, and it will be a great way to get to know your fellow members!

The prizes for our winning groups will be \$5 gift cards to Starbucks or Barnes & Noble for each member of the group.

I think this will be a fun activity, and I hope you all enjoy it as well! Let me know if you have any questions!

-Lara

Social Media Update

All NT'ers: In an effort to help promote one another, we are compiling a list of all our Facebook, Twitter and other social media account names. This data will be on a spreadsheet for us to share and like or follow. Some of you have already responded. Thank you. For those of you who have not, please go to the website now. I'd hate for you to miss out.

<http://ntrwagreatexpectations.blogspot.com/p/ntrwa-social-media-form.html>

The key to likes and follows comes down to exposure (a similar algorithm for The Zon). Increase your exposure—tell us your Facebook page so we can Like you (even more).

The following article appeared in the May 2014 issue of the Romance Writers of America, Greater Vancouver chapter newsletter. It may be reused by RWA chapters with appropriate credit to the author and chapter.

GESTURES AS COMMUNICATION

by Ariadne Bursewicz

Words have supreme importance for us as writers. Not only is language essential to human social communication, writers use words to express emotions, abstract meanings, settings, actions, complete imaginary worlds and beings, and persuasive arguments.

Communication consists of using behaviour to affect the behaviour of others, whether human, animal, or mystical beings. As humans, and therefore primates and mammals, we have many means of communication. All primates, including humans, communicate through touch, smell, taste, hearing, sight and movement. Humans add language to this list.

Body language alone is a huge subject. Posture, attitude, facial expression, movement and gesture are aspects of body language. All authors are aware of body language, and use it (in words) to add physical dimension to scenes, or to express emotion.

Gestures, as part of body language, can be particularly effective. Very briefly, a gesture is an expressive movement. In humans, gestures may be biological, used unconsciously to illustrate something. For example, in relating something that happened on her way to a meeting, a woman may make large movements with her arms. When asked later about her gestures, she remembers vaguely that she waved her hands around, but cannot repeat the precise movements.

Other gestures are shared culturally, may have names, and are coded with meaning. These are symbolic gestures. As we all know, a symbolic gesture may carry a clear, innocuous meaning in one culture, and be a deadly offense in another. For example, the thumb-up hitchhiking signal. In Sardinia, Macedonia, and parts of Greece and Sicily this is an obscene insult. In Ghana it is so insulting that vehicles stop just long enough for the occupants to beat the hitch-hiker severely. Each of these areas has other gestures which ask for transport.

In writing, symbolic gestures can convey many things as counterpoint to silence or dialogue. Insults to superiors can contrast with obsequious words. Or the gesture may give away the true emotion that is not expressed in words. Humour can be expressed

through disjunction of words, deeds and gesture. And conflict is often begun and strengthened through gesture.

Anthropological studies of gesture show that there are some ambiguities in using gesture. Besides being specific in meaning to a particular culture, gestures also depend on context for significance because many gestures can indicate more than one thing in the same culture. For example, tapping one's temple with the tip of one's forefinger may mean "crazy, insane" or conversely, "intelligent". Opposites are expressed by the same gesture, so context is necessary for clarification, not to throw the reader out of the story by unintended incongruity.

Localized gestures, retained only in one city or region, without clear context or explanation, also confuse the reader. Obviously, there's significance, but what? When the jolly elf St. Nicholas lays his finger alongside his nose, what does he mean? That gesture is no longer used in North America, although it still exists in Scotland. Without context, gestural meanings do not translate well.

Context is essential for understanding a symbolic gesture. Cultural knowledge is also essential for using and interpreting gestures successfully. Many cultural gestures are taught to children, who are then encouraged to use them appropriately. There are formal cultural gestures, and informal ones. Formal gestures include the bow, the curtsy, shaking hands, and clapping in applause. Clapping produces a sound which becomes rhythmic, and may be intended ironically. Formal religious gestures include bowing the head in prayer, and, for Roman Catholics, the genuflection and sign of the cross.

Through time gestures may gain added meaning or may lose or modify meaning. A common expression is, "I'll cross my fingers for you!". This is a type of luck bringer. The twisting of the middle finger over the forefinger started as a surreptitious sign of the cross. As a good luck symbol, it has lost the meanings of deity, trinity, sacrifice and redemption expressed in the full sign. In addition, a hidden finger cross can negate a promise. "Yes, I'll do it," says one thing, but fingers crossed and hidden behind the back mean "I don't have to do it, no matter what I said."

The use of gestures in fiction can add layers of meaning not expressed otherwise. Symbolic gestures can enrich expression as follows:

1. to reinforce what a character is saying

2. to contradict what a character is saying or add a note of irony
3. to express something not put in a character's words
4. to show true emotion, despite a character's actions or words
5. to show humour by disjunction of words, actions, setting, context and gesture
6. to establish a different time or place by using appropriate gestures, usually with some discreet explanation (e.g. in Ghana "He heard a truck grinding down the road. Just in time he remembered what he'd been told, so he held his arm out, hand flat, palm turned down, and began to raise and lower the arm gently from the shoulder. And it worked! Sure enough, the truck halted, and a beaming driver waved him into the cab." The entire interaction consists of gestures, the correct hitch-hiking signal for Ghana, and the welcoming wave.)

Because gestures fall out of use, and new ones are adopted or invented, each time and place has its own set. In Italy in the 19th century, a beckoning gesture was performed palm down, and a wave was done with the palm hidden from the person receiving it. Using accurate gestures for historical times adds another layer of grounding in the period for the reader.

7. A negative use of gesture is to give no context. The reader is yanked out of the story because he or she is puzzling over the implications of a gesture never heard of before, or wrong for that time and place, or one with double meaning but no clue as to which one is intended.

Choice of symbolic gesture enhances communication of our fictional worlds to the reader.

A member of RWA-GVC for six years, Ariadne Bursewicz enjoys combining her anthropological skills with storytelling. Life-long curiosity makes research fun, whether in the library or in the field.

The following article first appeared in the October 2014 issue of In Print!, the monthly newsletter of Houston Bay Area RWA. Permission granted to reprint or forward to sister RWA chapters with proper credit to author and chapter.

3 Marketing Habits to Adopt

By Joan Reeves

I've heard a lot of authors say, repeatedly: "I just want to write my books and publish them. I don't want to have to promote them."

I'll be honest. I've also made the same whine comment. I imagine we all cringe a bit when the words marketing and promotion are bandied about. The image of a used car salesman comes to mind, doesn't it?

Why can't we just write? Because no one will find our books. In today's world where there are hundreds of thousands of books available, how will anyone find your book if you don't do something?

Every author is trying to find the key to discoverability. What worked last month, may not work this month. Part of the problem is that we're all looking for the magic answer. An instant fix. Sadly, there is no magic solution that works immediately and works for everyone, all the time.

I don't have the answer, but I do have 3 habits to cultivate that will help.

3 Marketing Habits to Adopt

1. Think Long Term

Instead of trying to figure out how to sell Book A today, try to develop a marketing strategy that focuses on long term goals. So figure out some long term goals because becoming a

"name" or selling a 10K books this month isn't going to happen overnight. Be patient.

Write achievable goals designed to help you increase your name recognition and awareness of your brand. Start with one thing, i.e., blogging every day, and build your brand. Or decide Twitter will be your go-to network to build your brand. Learn all you can about your chosen vehicle. You can't possibly hit every social network and be effective. Decide what is doable for you. Then make a plan. That old axiom still applies: Plan your work; work your plan. Be consistent. Be patient. Be in it for the long haul.

2. Figure out your brand

Yeah, you there. What is your brand? What kind of writing are you known for or want to be known for? Do you know? What would your writing friends say if asked? You need to give a lot of thought to this because it's virtually impossible to market yourself and/or your work unless you know what your product is. If you honestly don't know how to market your work and yourself, then find an author who writes a similar book. See how they market themselves. Emulate. Don't copy. Don't try to be that author. The world doesn't need another Nora Roberts or Amanda Hocking or Joe Konrath. Besides, you'll never be anything but a pale imitation so it's always best to be you.

Be yourself, but learn how to present yourself and your work effectively in ways that don't make you feel smarmy. Once you've discovered or determined your identity as a writer, decide how you're going to get that point across. Then at every opportunity, display your brand online and in the real world.

3. Increase your visibility

You must be noticed. No one will want to find your books if you sit quietly in a corner, hiding behind a potted palm. Investigate low cost ways that make a big impact. Write articles, book reviews, blog, guest blog, comment, speak up, Tweet, Facebook, attend writers club meetings, network. There are thousands of ways to get noticed online and in the real world. Figure out what you can do that is maybe just a step out of your comfort

zone. You see, you have to step out of your comfort zone to grow.

The Cold, Hard Truth

If you're not satisfied with your sales numbers or your career growth, you must do something different because if you keep doing the same old thing, you'll keep getting the same old results.

Now is the time to do something different. Take action. Discover your writer identity. Draw up a plan. Get moving now.

Joan Reeves writes sassy Contemporary Romance and how-to nonfiction for writers. Her books are available where ebooks are sold and audio books are at Audible and iTunes. She's published SlingWords (<http://SlingWords.blogspot.com>) since 2005 and also publishes 2 free newsletters: Writing Hacks (for writers <http://eepurl.com/fX7JT>) (the original source of this article) and WordPlay (for readers <http://eepurl.com/Yk61n>).

A Note from the Newsletter Editor:

Please note photos included in the newsletter are provided by the members. Any photos you'd like to include can be sent to newsletter@ntrwa.org. It is at the discretion of the newsletter editor as to which photos will be included in the newsletter. Thank you.

September 2014 Meeting Minutes:

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday, September 19, 2014 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The President and President-Elect were present. The meeting was called to order at 10:45 a.m. The minutes for the August 15, 2014 meeting were approved.

OFFICER REPORTS:

President: Clover Autrey reported.

- The nomination committee for the 2015 Board consists of Angi Morgan, Nancy Connelly, Robin Nelson, and Lisa Fenley.

President-Elect: Angi Morgan reported:

- Audra Lewandowski is assisting the chapter with its social media opportunities. She asked members to send their Facebook information to Audra for a spreadsheet she created to enable members to "Like" each other's Facebook pages.

Secretary: Lisa Fenley was not present. Carolyn Williamson took minutes.

- No Report.

Treasurer: Jen FitzGerald was not present. Angi Morgan reported:

- The Treasurer's report was presented and filed for audit.

Program Director: Lara Lacombe reported:

- Today's program is Using Dialect, presented by Tex Thompson.
- October's meeting will feature Marla Reagan's program on Time Management Skills.

Membership Director: Gina Nelson reported.

- 72 Members to date.
- Guests at meeting: Connie Bowen.

Communications Director: Kim Miller reported:

- Send information / articles for inclusion in the newsletter to newsletter@NTRWA.org by September 28.

Website Director:

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:

PAN Liaison: Chrissy Szarek reported:

- Pencils presented to members present:
 - Three pencils to Sidney Bristol for her three book deal with Kensington
 - Two pencils to Lara Lacombe for her two book deal with Harlequin Romantic Suspense. Tentative titles are *Killer Explosion* and *A Convenient Attraction*.

PRO Liaison: Dakota Byrd reported.

- No report.

Great Expectations: Angi Morgan reported:

- Lisa Fenley will chair the Great Expectations Contest for 2015.
- Audra Lewandowski established an NTRWA CONTEST Facebook page and requested that members "Like" our page.
- Chris Keniston is arranging for final judges for the contest.

Carolyn Contest: Jen FitzGerald reported:

- Clover Autrey will chair the Carolyn Contest for 2015.

Hospitality: Michelle Welsh reported:

- No report.

Audio Librarian: Debra Owens was not present:

Writing Incentives: Christine Crocker reported:

- Distributed writing incentives.

Texas Two-Step: Lara Lacombe reported:

- No report.

Bylaws: Angi Morgan reported:

- No Report.

Spotlights: Regina Richards reported:

- Suzan Butler is our spotlight for September.

Unfinished Business:

- No unfinished business to report.

New Business:

- Carolyn Williamson's first book, *Romancing the Gold*, releases on September 26, 2014.
- Kim Roberts' *Dead Man's Games* releases on October 2, 2014.
- Sidney Bristol's first book with Kensington releases on October 27, 2014.
- Suzan Butler was recognized by NTRWA for making the NY Times Best Sellers List for her contribution to a Seals anthology entitled *Seals of Summer*.
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Email questions, comments, or articles to newsletter@ntrwa.org.

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