

Jen FitzGerald

From: NTRWA Newsletter <newsletter=ntrwa.org@mail74.atl11.rsgsv.net> on behalf of NTRWA Newsletter <newsletter@ntrwa.org>
Sent: Sunday, November 30, 2014 9:11 PM
To: Jen FitzGerald
Subject: November 2014 Newsletter

Gobble Gobble.

[View this email in your browser](#)



Founded March 1983

November 2014

Chapter 33, Region 5

Volume 33, Issue 11

Letter from the President

George Washington didn't feel he would make a good president. He'd already been a great general, was a favorable figurehead for the infant country, but he personally didn't feel like he had the qualities for leadership in a political sense. So he made a wise move and surrounded himself with the brilliant men of the time, filling his cabinet with advisors the likes of Alexander Hamilton, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson.

When I was approached to be the president of our group, I didn't really feel like I had the qualities for leadership either. I said no at least five times, to little avail. I'm such a pushover, which, hello, isn't that enough of a clue that I'm no leader?

Since I couldn't get out of it, I borrowed Washington's philosophy and made sure our board was made up of people who were not only extremely reliable but knew what they were doing.

And I have never been disappointed.

There hasn't been one time that I've had to nudge or remind people to do their job. Seriously. They just did it. To be honest, being president this year turned out to be fairly easy. The board and chairs did all the heavy lifting for the conference and contests and our wonderful programs and newsletters.

But the best part I learned about these people, besides their work ethic, is the genuine concern they have for our members. Countless times during our board meetings, one of the board would ask, "Is this the best thing for our members?"

And each time I'd get a little squeeze in my heart at the genuineness of that question.

These women volunteered their time, their skills, their creativity and their knowledge, sometimes their sanity, and huge chunks of their hearts in the hope that all of us at NT have a great experience and get out of our membership something worthwhile as writers who support each other.

This Thanksgiving, I want the board and all of our volunteers to know how thankful I am for each of you.

The board has done a helluva job and I, for one, am extremely grateful and proud to be in their company. This is me standing up and applauding.

I will miss you all this month. I hope you gathered long and prospered at all your various mini retreats. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving and can't wait to see you all at our Holiday Party!!!

Clover Autrey
NTRWA President



Upcoming December 15th Meeting:

Annual Holiday Get Together

We will be celebrating with an ornament exchange. If you wish to participate, please bring a wrapped ornament.

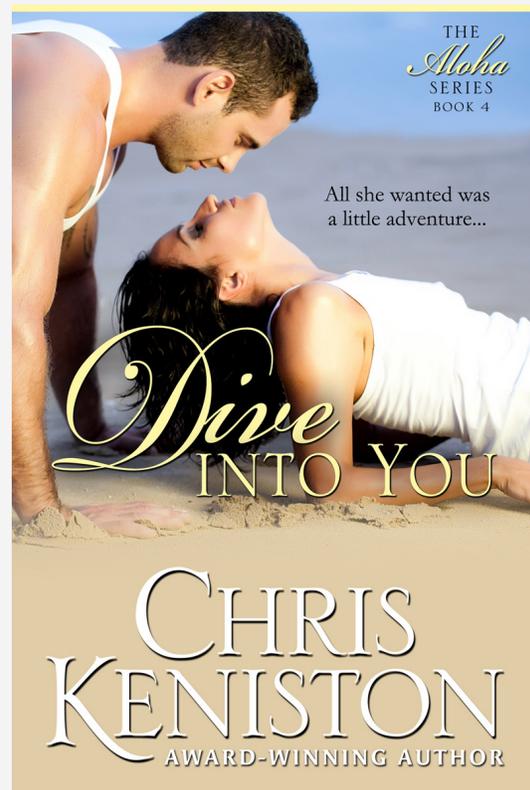
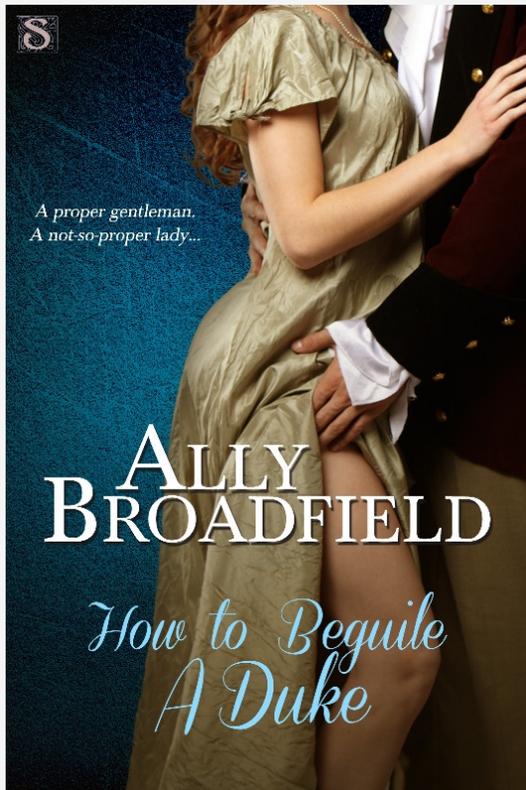
Member News

Ally Broadfield - New December release *How to Beguile a Duke*

Ally Broadfield - Earned PAN status with her novella, *Just a Kiss*, release in April 2014 by Entangled Edge

Tammara Webber - Earned PAN status, and Honor Roll with RWA

Chris Keniston - New November Release *Dive Into You*



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).

“Social media is changing the way we communicate and the way we are

perceived, both positively and negatively. Every time you post a photo, or update your status, you are contributing to your own digital footprint and personal brand.”

[Amy Jo Martin](#)

What is your brand messaging?

Last note: Follow the 80/20 rule- 80% of your posts should be about something (hopefully positive) other than your books. 20% can be about your books.



The following article first appeared in the October 2014 issue of Magic Moments, the monthly newsletter of Southern Magic (Birmingham, AL USA). Permission granted to reprint or forward to other RWA chapters with proper credit to author and chapter.

SEEK AND DESTROY SELF-EDITING - PART II

by Callie James

Searching for specific words/phrases is a massive time sucker and often takes me weeks to complete. Oh, how I hate it. But I've found it's a process worth finishing. I usually cut my use of the words listed below by half and reduce my manuscript by 3,000-5,000 words. Talk about tightening up those sentences. Woot!

Interestingly, I discovered something about my writing while editing my last manuscript. I'm not a

consistent abuser of words and phrases. I'll spot two or three paragraphs loaded with overused words, then nothing else for several pages. It took a while for me to realize it was lazy writing. I was writing tired by tacking too many writing hours onto my regular work days. I also hadn't been taking enough breaks during weekend writing.

It was this pattern that led me to consider self-publishing. I was pushing myself too hard to meet my own deadlines and my writing suffered, making editing a nightmare later. I still have personal deadlines, but I have that flexibility to alter those deadlines now, if needed. I no longer push myself to the point of dropping.

Since I have so many lists to share (and these are "short" lists), I'll keep my comments to a minimum. I've listed these in the following order:

1. Do you need all of those prepositions?
2. Change "to be" verbs (stop passive writing).
3. Delete unnecessary words/phrases.
4. Find deep point of view opportunities.
5. Don't start sentences with these words.
6. Define indefinite words.
7. Check capitalization and specificity.
8. Remove or replace repetitive words/phrases.

DO YOU NEED ALL OF THOSE PREPOSITIONS? I have serious issues with prepositions because I tend to block like a mad fool (blocking is a theater term for *where*, *when* and *how* actors will move about the stage). Try to eliminate the preposition and make two sentences. The preposition or prepositional phrase is often not needed.

CHANGE "TO BE" VERBS (STOP PASSIVE WRITING). Try to make the doer the subject of your sentence.

DELETE UNNECESSARY WORDS/PHRASES. You'll use these words to make fiction sound like reality (I do), but often these words will clutter your writing.

FIND DEEP POINT OF VIEW OPPORTUNITIES. No doubt, you've heard to show and not tell. When you find these words below, see if you can reword from a deep point of view perspective. For example, substitute "I felt sick" with "my stomach churned" or "I tasted bile." You get the idea.

DON'T START SENTENCES WITH THESE WORDS. I admit I still use some of these "ly" adverbs when

I'm in a character's head.

- Hopefully
- Fortunately
- It is
- There is
- There are

DEFINE INDEFINITE WORDS. This helps to avoid confusing the reader.

- Few
- Many
- Some
- Pronouns

CHECK CAPITALIZATION AND SPECIFICITY. Search names and pronouns. I find after so many passes, I'll often miss mistakes like "my Mom" should be "my mom." No capitalization needed in this case.

REMOVE OR REPLACE REPETITIVE WORDS AND PHRASES. This list will be your own personal list of words/phrases you use too often. I'm sharing words/phrases below that I overuse.

This is a constantly changing list for me, and each time I go through the process, I get a little better at not making these mistakes in the first manuscript draft. Sometimes I pick up new problems while trying to avoid old ones, but I'll leave that subject for another post. What are some of the words and phrases you abuse?

If you can stand more editing and want to join me for Part III of my Seek and Destroy Editing Process, please visit my website blog at <http://calliejamesbooks.com/musings.html>.

Callie James

This article was first printed in the Sacramento Valley Rose RWA November/December 2014 Newsletter. Rights are granted by the author for circulation to other RWA chapters.

The Writer's Box: Is it Just Me? The Perils of TV Watching When You're a Writer

By Anna J Stewart, SVR Chapter Member

Ahhh, fall. The leaves are turning, the temperatures are cooling (if not plummeting), and the promise of the holiday season looms. Yeah, all that's great but this is also my favorite time of year because...it's the start of the FALL TV SEASON!! Yay! Last year brought us THE BLACKLIST (all hail, James Spader), SLEEPY HOLLOW (with the drool worthy & ever sarcastic Tom Mison) and my favorite new comedy (I don't watch a lot of them), MOM (is there anything Allison Janney can't do?). I admit it, I watch far too much TV. It's my vice and I've turned it to my advantage by utilizing the hours I spend when it comes to my writing. Needless to say, it doesn't take much to get me to try a new show.

It does, however, take a lot to keep me watching.

As I write this article, we just started week 2 of the new season. That's right, it's a Tuesday morning (September 30, actually) and only two episodes have aired of various shows that only premiered last week. But something happened last night during the 8 p.m. hour that triggered this article (hopefully not too much of a rant, because OMG, I SO want to rant!). I'm now taking a deep breath...

For frequent readers of my articles (I've been writing them for about two years now), you know I'm a geek. Hardcore, CON attending, bordering on Big Bang Theory kinda geek (I'd so fit into their world sans the physics, which I failed in college). I love my superheroes and my science and tech stories. And I love anything that's different or tries to put a new spin on things (Supernatural, LOST, 24, Arrow). Shows that go above and beyond the norm and expected.

Needless to say, I was anxiously awaiting the start of GOTHAM. As a huge fan of the Christopher Nolan *Batman* movies (although NOT so much anything Superman--sorry, he'll always be Christopher Reeve to me), I was looking forward to seeing what new take they had for this setting centric show. Gotham City is, after all, its own character when it comes to the Dark Knight's mythology and the idea of viewing this world through Detective Gordon was intriguing. Jada Pinkett Smith as one of the villains seemed inspired and the inclusion of one of my favorite underrated actors who just can't seem to "hit," Donal Logue, along with a myriad of up and coming of age villains, how could it possibly miss?

For me, it not only missed, it barely fired.

It's taken me a little while to dissect what didn't work for me and to approach it from a more logical angle (other than "how could this show be this bad?" opinion). Last night, about five minutes into episode two (I try to give new shows at least four eps before deleting from my DVR), I was done.

Why? Because they broke the first rule of grabbing the reader.

No one, and I mean no one, was likable. I was honestly hoping a bomb would go off in the city, wipe everyone, including a pre-pubescent Batman out and reset the entire story. It was painful. The fighting, the hostility, the gloomy and depressing (okay, I get it--Gotham isn't supposed to be Utopia), but still. I didn't care about anyone who walked onto the screen. And if I don't care, I can't invest my time, which is becoming more and more limited.

Maybe it's the writer in me, because as I was skimming through the Tweets of people viewing the exact same show at the exact same time, most of them were loving it...and if not loving, at least liking it and willing to give it another shot or two. Me? I could not switch off fast enough and felt as if I needed a shower. Ugh. So disappointed.

And I know you know what I mean. It happens in books, too, right? You're waiting so long for a new or next release, you know it's going to be fabulous, except it isn't and you aren't sure why, except that maybe they didn't do things the way you would have. And I wondered if that was my problem with *Gotham*. So much potential, so many things I would have done with that script to make at least one of the characters mildly sympathetic so I could cheer for them and see what comes next. But nope. Click. Moving on.

Want a show with a relatively unsympathetic character that *is* worth watching? After one episode of *How to Get Away With Murder*, I'm in. Maybe not for the long haul, but certainly long enough to see what magic Viola Davis is going to bring to the screen. Her character, not particularly nice or likable and yet...there's something appealing that kept me glued to the screen. It's what I call train-wreck TV. I can't look away because I *have* to find out what happens next.

My surprise of the season so far? *Forever*. Sure, it's a procedural, but it's kind of like Quincy meets Sherlock with a bit of Highlander thrown in. An immortal forensic examiner who keeps dying and coming back as he searches for the

answers to the mysteries of his odd condition? Enough to get me to tune in...and keep watching. I'm hoping the ratings hold, because this one has already gotten very interesting very fast. Is it award-worthy? Probably not, but it's something new and different and in this day and age of same old, same old or "how depressing can we make this show," I'm enjoying it.

In case you're wondering other shows that have caught me so far, *Madam Secretary* and *Scorpion*, the former because of Robert Patrick, but the rest of the cast is a bit blah. We'll see how long that lasts. At least *Gotham* had me for an entire episode plus a few minutes. *The Mysteries of Laura* with Debra Messing broke my tolerance for stupidity at a measly four minutes into episode one. Seriously? Maybe Hollywood needs to start looking to RWA writers for their scripts because we know how to tell stories! We know how to nail conflict and develop characters and keep people turning the page? Right? And if you don't yet, you will, because we romance writers keep at it until we get it right.

Happy writing.

*A self-admitted TV and movie addict, former Golden Heart finalist **Anna J Stewart** writes sweet to steamy contemporary romances for Harlequin Heartwarming and Berkley. Visit her online at www.authorannastewart for more information and to join her mailing list.*

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.

October 2014 Meeting Minutes:

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday, October 18, 2014 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The President and the secretary were present. The meeting was called to order

at 10:38 a.m. The minutes for the September 19, 2014 meeting were approved.

OFFICER REPORTS:

President: Clover Autrey reported:

- Kim Roberts and Carolyn Williamson received their first book awards.

President-Elect: Angi Morgan reported:

- Consider running for the 2015 Board.

Secretary: Lisa Fenley reported:

- Lisa Fenley thanked Carolyn Williamson for completing the September minutes in her absence.

Treasurer: Jen FitzGerald reported:

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

Program Director: Lara Lacombe was not present. Angi Morgan reported:

- Marla Regan presented a program on Time Management Skills.
- November retreat: In honor of NaNoWriMo, we are writing for November. Groups of four. Choose to meet at a location or online. Set minimum goals as a group for writing / editing. Prizes for groups achieving writing and editing goals.
- December meeting will be the second Saturday, December 13, 2014 at La Hacienda. Bring an ornament (wrapped) if you wish to participate in the gift exchange.

Membership Director: Gina Nelson reported.

- 73 Members to date.
- Guests at meeting: Erika Thomas.

Communications Director: Kim Miller reported:

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

Website Director:

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:

PAN Liaison: Chrissy Szarek was not present. Clover Autrey reported:

- Pencils presented to members present:
 - Mary Beth Lee (under pen name Liz Lee): To Risk a Heart and The Real Deal
 - Angi Morgan: Hit and Run Hallie and One Riot, One Ranger series of four books for Intrigue (Intrigue's first Texas Rangers series.)
 - Connie Bowen: Hunter and Lily Graham and The Kid in Black
 - Kym Roberts: Dead Man's Carve
 - Chris Keniston: Dive Into You

PRO Liaison: Dakota Byrd was not present.

- No report.

Great Expectations: Lisa Fenley reported:

- Please go on the NT website and sign up to judge.

Carolyn Contest: Clover Autrey reported:

- Clover Autrey will chair the Carolyn Contest for 2015.
- Gail Barret sent us a thank you note for The Carolyn 2014. She won in her category.

Hospitality: Michelle Welsh was not present:

- 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:

- Lisa Fenley is our spotlight for October.
- Regina asked members to consider accepting the Spotlight Chair position for next year.

Unfinished Business:

- No unfinished business to report.

New Business:

-

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

Our mailing address is:

NTRWA
2100 W. Northwest HWY
Suite 114-1081
Grapevine, TX 76051

*[unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

This email was sent to jen@stormsedge.com

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

North Texas Romance Writers of America · 2100 W. Northwest Hwy · Suite 114-1081 · Grapevine, TX 76051 · USA

The MailChimp logo is displayed in a white, cursive font within a dark gray rounded rectangular box.