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Enjoy the process, the finished product, and the people who LOVE your writing!!



Founded March 1983

Chapter 33, Region 5

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Letter from the President

FAN RECOGNITION

As writers, we dream of the day we hear, "I loved reading your book!" We have book signings, parties, wine tastings. Online or face-to-face, hearing those words makes your day. And of course, the dreaded words or inconsiderate reviews destroy us just as easily.

I've only been published for five years. There's only eleven books out there with my name on them. But someone recognized my name at the Romantic Times Booklovers Convention this year. And something ecstatic happened... A total stranger (to me) brought two of my

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books into the signing for me to sign. Yes, already read copies from home traveled to Dallas to get my little ol' autograph. I was floored again when Rose Marie stopped by. I'd given her a book on Thursday. She read it and bought three more on Saturday. Fun. Super Fun. Terrific Fun.

Readers are the reason we write. What do they want? More good books. The fans I meet love my writing. It's the ones that don't that put a downer on my day. Yes, bad reviews. Seriously...why bother to put negativity in the world. But I have left a bad review myself (hotels & restaurants). But that's about service, not an interpretation of work. Oh wait...there have been one or two movies that I wouldn't recommend to friends. Everybody has an opinion.

I've often wondered if I write better or worse because of a review. Wait again...um...NO I HAVEN'T. Each book is written to the best of my ability. I hope each is getting better. Fans love 'em. Or they don't. I can only hope they give each book a read. Plain and simply put...they're entertainment that I hope leaves an emotional impression. A crowd of people isn't ever going to think the same about a subject. Period. As a writer we thrive on that principle when we create, but forget quickly when someone criticizes.

If you're stewing over a bad review... I hope you give yourself a couple of minutes and then move forward. If your elating over a great review... Use that as encouragement for the next chapter. If you're watching you daily sales... Well...guilty every once in a while. If you're still working on that first published work... Finish the damn book so you can angst like the rest of us.

Enjoy the process, the finished product, and the people who LOVE your writing!!

~Angi

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SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media is important to a writer's world. Complete the social media form <http://ntrwagreatexpectations.blogspot.com/p/ntrwa-social-media-form.html> and get connected with other NT members.

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FOLLOW ON TWITTER

Let us know if you have a # (hashtag) specific to promoting North Texas authors. Share other hashtags on our loop or with the hashtags below.

#TXauthors

#ntrwa-gecontest

#dara-ntrwa-pals



MEMBER NEWS

Clover Autrey presented Fenley Grant with her PRO pin at the May 2015 general meeting.

Want to know what PRO is? From the RWA website:

About the PRO Community

RWA welcomes writers at all stages of their careers from the unpublished, to the "almost" published, to the published and the multipublished. In an effort to meet the needs of all its members, RWA has several Communities of Practice (CoP) which are communities of

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people who come together with a common interest to share ideas, find solutions, and build innovations.

The purpose of the PRO Community of Practice is to establish within RWA a network of communication and support to effectively promote and protect the interests of romance writers in the areas between manuscript completion and PAN eligibility.

PRO focuses on the business side of writing rather than craft. To be eligible to join the PRO community, RWA members must submit an application and a digital copy of the qualifying work(s) to the RWA Office.

PRO Eligibility

This program is available to any active General or Honorary member who: (1) is not PAN-eligible and (2) has one complete original work of romance fiction of at least 20,000 words, or multiple complete original works of romance fiction which combine for a total of at least 20,000 words.

[Membership in the PRO Community of Practice](#) is available only for active RWA members.

DID YOU KNOW about these SECRET IDENTITIES?

Did you know that Audra Lewandowski formed [GREENFEST SOUTHLAKE](#). (She probably runs it single-handedly.) “Green Fest is Southlake’s point of connection to learn about the many ways to be better stewards of the earth’s resources. The event will feature various ways residents can invest in a sustainable future, improve daily living and save money by Going Green!” She’s also published under the name [Mia London](#). She also has volunteered

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to organize the social media lists for NTR.

Did you know Kim Miller has volunteered to put together the NTRWA Newsletter for...well, I don't want to remind her how long. Totally volunteer. No extra benefits. She's very very appreciated. Kim writes under the name of [Eve Cole](#).

Send a shout out to Audra or Kim for or someone else you admire who volunteers their time.

Audra: Audra_Lewandowski@verizon.net

Kim: Kimberly_Miller1012@yahoo.com



This article was first used in the Sacramento Valley Rose RWA May/June 2015 Newsletter. Rights are granted by the author for circulation to other RWA chapters.

The Writer's Box: Long Ago, in a Galaxy Far, Far Away...

by Anna J Stewart, Sacramento Valley RWA

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When I was seven years old, those words changed my life. Yeah, I know what you're thinking, how could a seven year old's life change thanks to yellow words on a starlit screen? Here's how: that was the day I fell in love with storytelling. Every one of us who writes has "that" movie, or "that" book... "that" TV show. For me, I have a few of each, but when I reflect on that one movie that to this day explodes in my mind (along with the theme music), it's STAR WARS (Episode IV, A NEW HOPE).

I'm writing this article a little over a week after the latest trailer for STAR WARS, Episode VII, THE FORCE AWAKENS hit cell phones and computer screens everywhere. It crashed the site. Millions watched (I watched it at least five times), most of us cried (did you see the Matthew McConaughey video? No? GOOGLE IT NOW!). Why the tears? Because it reawakened the force within all of us who had been mesmerized all those years ago. New stories, old characters, new characters, familiar settings and the image of that Star Destroyer lodged in the sand of a desolate planet...okay, I'm giving myself chills again. Needless to say, I've got a date in December circled in thick red marker. No one try to speak to me that day: I'll be at the theater.

STAR WARS is my generation's Greek mythology. For me, the question wasn't Burt or Ernie, it was Luke or Han. It was dressing up as Princess Leia with her cinnamon buns and white dress. It was imitating Chewbacca's roar or bleeping around the house like R2D2 and heading to the local toy store to buy the latest action figure (I still have them!). STAR WARS gave me the opportunity to escape into the adventure, wonder, and excitement of George Lucas' imagined world. I know, I know, this is supposed to be a column about writing and while I can wax poetic about all I love about STAR WARS (and all I loathe, ahem, eps, 1, 2, and 3--more on that later), these movies taught me some essential lessons when it comes to creating full, rich, and impactful stories.

1. Character matters. Oh, how this is true. I'll admit, Luke, Leia, and Han aren't exactly fleshed out in A NEW HOPE (see Ep V, THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK for far more depth), but their archetypes are dead on and they bring you along for the ride the instant they step

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onto the screen. For the minute 47 isn't what you're waiting for every time you watch it (for those non-fans, that's when we first see Han Solo at the Cantina in Mos Eisley). There's the good boy (Luke), the bad boy (Han), the spunky heroine (Leia), the trusty sidekicks (Chewie, R2D2, & C3PO), and the mentor (Obi Wan). There's also an uber-cool ship that every geek would give their right arm to fly: The Millennium Falcon. Throw in a pretty awesome villain in the form of Darth Vader and it's a can't miss combination.

2. GMC. It's all over the place. Every character has their own. They clash, they connect, they team up, they fight the Empire and each other. They achieve some goals, delay others, and develop relationships none of them anticipated or even want. Perfection? Perhaps not, but it's certainly enough to keep the creative juices flowing and the stories moving forward.

3. The Hero's Journey. There's a reason Luke Skywalker is one of the images on Joseph Campbell's stellar mythology book, HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES. He is the modern day hero the Greeks foretold. He follows through right to the end (and end we'll now get to see even more of as the new trilogy of movies unfold). Mysterious birth? Check. Orphaned/search for parents? Check. Death of mentor? Double check (kind of?). If you need a character with which to map out this informative journey, look no further than Luke. Personally, I also see one for Han, although not as traditionally tied to the text definition, but it's there. One might also make the case Leia has one as well, so...while Lucas might not have been the best screen writer on the planet (aak! The dialogue issues...), for the most part, he gets character (Jar Jar Binks non-withstanding).

4. Romance. BING! Hey, we're romance writers, of course we want a love story. Setting aside the mildly disturbing kiss between Luke & Leia in THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, was there a person watching NOT cheering for Han and Leia to finally connect? The princess and the bad boy. The rebellion leader and the smuggler. Conflict galore, chemistry out the wazoo and a payoff at the end with Han's simple "I know" that to this day makes me sigh. Never have two words said so much (cue Carbonite blast). They're together...even when they're not. They're still together (we assume) as we move into THE FORCE AWAKENS,

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20 years later. They're home...and soon, we will be too. Maybe this time around Luke will get a love interest. One can hope.

5. Prequels! I had another epiphany in recent weeks, thanks to my resurged interest in the movies. I now understand completely why episodes 1, 2, and 3 did not work for me (and many others). Because...drum roll...those three movies are ALL BACKSTORY!! I couldn't have cared less about how Anakin became Darth Vader. I didn't care how he and Padme got together...because I already knew the end result: Luke and Leia and three really good movies (quiet! RETURN OF THE JEDI wasn't ALL bad!) There was no mystery in the prequels; there weren't any surprises aside from the fact that George Lucas should not be allowed to design costumes. All three of those stories (that included huge inconsistencies when it came to the original 3) were pure, boring, back story. I'm beginning to jump on the "no prologue" bandwagon thanks to this realization...because in most cases, that's what prologues are as well: back story that could and should be woven into the work itself.

I could write an entire book on my love of these movies and this universe, but alas, I'm confined to a word count (which I think I've now surpassed). To those of you who don't "get" STAR WARS, it's okay. I live with someone who doesn't--and it's painful, especially when I want to watch them again. Ask any die-hard fan and they'll tell you, STAR WARS is a religion. There are heroes to believe in, villains to rail against and causes to fight for. These stories touch a basic need in all of us--not only geeks and fans, but humans. That good will always defeat evil and that we long to be part of something larger than our selves--call it the FORCE if you like (I do). So when December rolls around and the frenzy hits manic status (and probably the nightly news), stop and think about the power one movie from 1977 had...to turn some of us into believers, dreamers, and storytellers.

Happy writing!

Anna J

A self-admitted TV and movie addict, national bestselling author Anna J Stewart writes sweet romance for Harlequin Heartwarming and steamier contemporary family centric

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romances for Derrley InterMix. Visit her online at www.authortamastewart.com for more information on her books, workshops, and mailing list.

The following article appeared in the May 2015 issue of romANTICS, the newsletter of the Toronto Romance Writers, Susan Haire, editor. It may be reused by RWA chapters with appropriate credit to the author and chapter. Permission form is on file with the editor.

To Pen(name) or Not to Pen(name)?

By Louisa Lo

As I enter into the world of self-publishing, one of the most important questions is: What author name should I present to the world? Is using my real name a good idea? For that purpose I posted on the Toronto Romance Writers loop and the responses have been truly amazing.

Before I go into that discussion, here's a brief description about who I am, since the choice of an author name has a lot to do with each individual author's genre and personal experience.

I love my real name. I never quite found an author name that speaks to me as much as my own name. I don't write erotic content, just mainly YA/NA fantasy and science fiction with romantic elements. Nothing I'd be too embarrassed to have my great-niece reading one day. In my day job, I am an entertainment/media accountant, handling production budgets and film royalties. My writer identity has always been an icebreaker at work rather than a point of shame. The sentiment "hey the bean counter doesn't just count beans, she's one of us" has won me many hearts among the production crew.

I've been thinking a lot about personal safety and whether it makes sense to use my real name as my author name. I have a few crazy exes out there, and I stood up to a few bullies in my past, so there are some real concerns there. The responses I got from the TRW loop ranged from people who never had a problem using their real name, to people who believe that a pen name is a must. It sure is a polarizing topic!

So here are some things to consider when you decide what name to use – I've created a compilation of all the wonderful emails the TRW members have so generously supplied.

Your Genre

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- The LW, not my mom factor.

What is the heat level of your writing? Are you comfortable with your friends and family finding out what you write? How old-fashioned are they?

- The “day job” factor:

What kind of industry are you in for your day job? Are they strait-laced or artsy? Are you comfortable having potential employers find out about your books online?

- The cross-genre factor:

Do you write in multiple genres? Are the readers mutually exclusive? Will they be disappointed and then give you bad reviews because your author name led them to purchase what they expected to be steampunk and ended up being a Harlequin Presents?

- The gender-hiding factor:

Are you courting fans who are more open to books with a non-gender specific name?

Your Real Name

Is it difficult to spell or pronounce? Are there alternative spellings? Is it easy to remember? Is it at the end of the alphabet and tough to find on a bookshelf? Is it next to the authors you want to be next to? Did you Google your name and type it on Amazon? Is it unique? Does some popular cheesecake-baking grandma with the same name already dominate the top thirty Google searches? You want to make it as easy as possible for readers to find you AND remember you. How often do you think about a book you read two months ago and wonder if the next book is out, but you can't recall who the heck the author is?

“What’s-her-name” couldn’t sell books because you can’t look her up on your Kindle.

And that brings me to the toughest pro-real-name argument for me: my real name has alliteration in sound and sight, it’s easy to spell, memorable, short so a reader doesn’t have to squint to read it off the cover on a Kindle, and I have lower risk of having wrist cramp after a signing. And it just feels so damn right. I tried forcing myself to use Luisa Lo, but it

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just felt so weird. I tried using my husband's last name, but an Asian girl with a Spanish first name and a Scottish last name just felt like a bit of a false advertisement.

Ease Of Discoverability

Sorry, not the discoverability of your work by readers, which is a marketing wonder, but the discoverability of your real name by the wrong people. Here are a few way that can happen:

- People outing themselves, or being outted, accidentally on social media. All it takes is one mention or tag by someone (like an overly proud sibling or someone in your local chapter) who knows both your real name and your pen name and posts them together, and suddenly it's out there.
- Many of us use the same Amazon account for both online ordering and our self-pub business. That means somewhere out there, there's a database connecting Jenny A. the erotic writer to Jenny B. the cat water fountain buyer, with the same home address attached. Granted these facts are supposed to be confidential, but all organizations get hacked eventually, no matter how big or small.
- You still have to find a way to cash that royalty check, pay your editor's PayPal bill, interact with various organizations, and be in public databases, such as domain registration and copyright. How many times have you hired a service provider, only to be confused by a totally different name showing up on the PayPal invoice? There are ways to use pen names/company names to deal with some and possibly all of the above issues, but there's a lot of work involved in keeping those names attached to you and yet keeping your real name private, never mind the number of business associates you'd have to count on to keep your secret. Which leads us to...

Costs Vs. Benefits

How much time are you willing to devote to protecting a not-so-secret identity? How much time can you devote to maintaining multiple social media presences?

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How much benefits are you sacrificing in not capitalizing on your built-in fan base (friends, family, neighbors) if you use a pen name? If you're writing erotica it might not matter anyway – do you really want to make a sale off Uncle Wilbert?

More On The Benefit Of Anonymity

A lot of this also has to do with how much you have to lose. Do you have a tendency to attract stalkers? Do you have an understanding boss? Do you have young children? Are you on the run from a crazy, Sleeping With The Enemy ex?

On The Flip Side...

I spoke to a friend who's an IT specialist, and he told me that having a pen name would weed out the casual crazies, those who would not want to put much effort into finding you. But if someone has the will to find you, they will anyway.

Really all the safeguards are like locks. They keep out the honest people, but the pros always find a way.

It makes sense to make it harder for them, but you don't want to stop living your life either. There's a site called TinEye (www.tineye.com), where you can submit a photo and search for the first time and place that an image originated on the Internet. So Annie A. the erotic writer could post a picture of just herself at a barbeque, and TinEye could tell that Annie B. the soccer mom first posted that same picture on her personal Facebook page. And oh look, here's another pic with her husband and kids for the same event. The cat is again out of the bag.

There are also book signings, Skype interviews, and various personal appearances where anyone could snap a picture of you during these events. I watched a documentary on facial recognition, and what was once science fiction is now a doable reality. One can only assume it gets more advanced as time goes by. The technology is not perfect at this point in time, but soon finding out an author's identity by a non-casual crazy might be as simple as taking a picture of the author at a workshop, hacking into the

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driver's license database, and matching it with a face there. Their name, home address. Unless you plan on never making personal appearances, all that protection might just be in vain.

If there is no true anonymity anyway, having a false sense of security could be even more dangerous. If you blog like nobody knows where you work, you might just slip and say a few things you would never say about your co-workers otherwise. If you think you are among friends, you might be giving your opinion about politics and religion on your personal social media site that could get back to your readers and offend them. Or like Annie B. the soccer mom, you assume you're safe and gush about your kid's spelling bee results and practice schedule so they know where to find you at the same time next week in City XYZ, Soccer Field #3.

If you assume from the get-go that people are watching, there's an inverted protection there.

The Decision

I eventually decided to go with my real name. I just love it too much.

Yes, there might be people out there who would have given my books more of a chance if my name sounded masculine. But my writing voice is entirely quirky female. Love it or hate it, I am proudly feminine.

Yes, I have some enemies out there, and they have the potential to become nasty online. But I have no idea if I'll be successful enough to be on their radar, or if they would bother to do anything. I can't hide under a rock because of something someone may or may not do. Plus, I could barely find time to do the basic social media stuff, let alone covering up the tracks for my real name.

I think the pen name decision ultimately comes down to our personal comfort level, genre, past experiences, and professional needs. And these things are different for everyone. Maybe it's just like publishing: there's no one-size-fits-all. Don't you just hate/love it when life's like that?

Louisa Lo

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(unintentionally mentioning that my debut novel, VENGEANCE DE MINE, IS COMING OUT April 30, 2015 under my REAL name). ©

Louisa Lo is a proud TRW member and an entertainment/media accountant by day. By night she writes about vigilantes, because it seems like a better life choice than trying to become one and landing herself in jail. She just has that kind of luck. ©

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.

April 2015 Meeting Minutes:

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday, April 18, 2015 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The President and the Secretary were present. The meeting was called to order at 10:47 a.m. The minutes for the March 21, 2015 meeting minutes were tabled until May for approval as the newsletter for April did not go out.

OFFICER REPORTS:

President: Angi Morgan reported:

- Texas Two Step will be a one day conference with a minimal fee for members (cost of lunch). Planned date is April 2, 2016. We need a coordinator for the event. Discussed possible speaker(s).
- Renewal packet was submitted on time. In March, new by-laws requirements from RWA came forth and we need to incorporate them and vote on approval for them at year end.

President-Elect: Suzan Butler reported:

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- Minutes tabled for approval in May.

Treasurer: Jen FitzGerald reported:

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

Program Director: Lara Lacombe reported:

- Today's Program ~ Melissa Cutler ~ Dr. Strangelove: or, How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love Writing Synopses.
- May 9, 2015 ~ Renee Groskreutz ~ Blogging.

Membership Director: Gina Nelson was not present.

- Please renew your membership for 2015. Renewal was due at the end of February.
- New Members: RexAnn Meredith and Addison Fox

Communications Director: Kim Miller was not present. Angi Morgan reported:

- Send information / articles / photos for inclusion in the newsletter to newsletter@NTRWA.org by April 28, 2015.

Website Director:**COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:****PAN Liaison: Chrissy Szarek presented pencils to members present:**

- Suzan Butler – *Scoring His Heart*
- Chrissy Szarek – *Rogue's Call*

PRO Liaison: Dakota Byrd was not present.

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- No report.

Great Expectations: Lisa Fenley reported:

- 130 entries (one entry went under contract and the author decided to pull both of her entries. She donated her entry fees to our chapter fund, however.)
- \$3255 in gross proceeds. Net proceeds TBD--will be less PayPal fees and \$450 in first place prize monies.
- Congratulations to our finalists, especially our own Sidney Bristol.
- Certificates and prize monies mailed.
- Final standings announced on March 16, 2015.

Carolyn Contest: Jen FitzGerald reported:

- We are in the final round of judging and everything is on track.

Hospitality: Michelle Welsh reported:

- Need donations of writer's critiques to use as raffle items.

Audio Librarian: Debra Owens was not present:

- No Report

Writing Incentives: Christine Crocker reported:

- Presented the report.
 - Pages written / edited:
 - Top 5 Most written:
 - Suzan Butler – Most written for the Quarter
 - This Month:
 - 300 Angi Morgan
 - 280 Cindy Dees
 - 235 Chris Doporto
 - 175 Kym Roberts
 - 131 Suzan Butler

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- 1725 Gina Nelson – Most edited for the quarter

- This Month:

- 1130 Chrissy Szarek
- 695 Cindy Dees
- 522 Suzan Butler
- 340 Tammara Webber
- 330 Kym Roberts

- Completed: Austin Texas Rangers Book One – Angi Morgan; Highland Illusion – Clover Autrey; Rogue's Call – Chrissy Szarek, Sweet – Tammara Webber; Killer Season – Lara Lacombe
- Submitted: Carolyn Rae Williamson-*Searching for Love* to Harlequin
- Sold / Published: *Rogue's Call*-Chrissy Szarek, *Scoring His Heart* – Suzan Butler
- First Sale: Jan Schliesman was presented with her first book cover block. *Protecting His Brother's Bride* goes on sale on May 5, 2015.

Bylaws: Angi Morgan reported:

- No Report.

Spotlights: Marty Tidwell reported:

- Vicki Green is our spotlight for April.

Unfinished Business:

- No unfinished business to report.

New Business:

- No new business to report.

May 2015 Meeting Minutes:**CALL TO ORDER:**

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday, May 9, 2015 at the La

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10:56 a.m. The minutes for the March 21, 2015 meeting were approved. Minutes for the April 18, 2015 minutes will be approved at the June 2015.

OFFICER REPORTS:

President: Angi Morgan reported:

- Addendum to chapter renewal has been filed.
- Suzan Butler was added to the bank account as an official signator. The new by-laws state that only two signators may be on the account and the treasurer may not be on the account. The President and President-Elect are on the NTRWA account.
- Audra Lewandowski reminded members to list their social media contacts on our sites.

President-Elect: Suzan Butler was not present:

- No report.

Secretary: Lisa Fenley reported:

- March minutes approved and filed for audit.

Treasurer: Jen FitzGerald reported:

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

Program Director: Lara Lacombe reported:

- Today's Program ~ Renee Groskreutz ~ Blogging.

Membership Director: Gina Nelson reported:

- Please renew your membership for 2015. Renewal was due at the end of February.
- 58 Members to date.
- Our guests are Chris Weiler-Allen and Renee Groskreutz.

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- Send information / articles / photos for inclusion in the newsletter to newsletter@NTRWA.org by May 28, 2015.

Website Director:

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:

PAN Liaison: Chrissy Szarek was not present.

- No report

PRO Liaison: Dakota Byrd was not present. Clover Autrey presented:

- PRO requirements reviewed and non-PAN, non-PRO membership encouraged to apply.
- The PRO loop for NTRWA is being revamped.
- Fenley Grant (Lisa Fenley) was presented with her PRO pin.

Great Expectations: Lisa Fenley reported:

- No report.

Carolyn Contest: Jen FitzGerald reported:

- All the scores are in and winners will receive notification by May 10, 2015.

Hospitality: Michelle Welsh reported:

- No report.

Audio Librarian: Debra Owens was not present:

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- Presented the report.
 - Pages written / edited:
 - Top 5 Most written:
 - This Month:
 - 145 pages Cindy Dees
 - 110 pages Krystal Shannon
 - 77 pages Lavender Daye
 - 72 pages Jen FitzGerald
 - 65 pages Angi Morgan
 - Top 5 Most edited:
 - This Month:
 - 530 pages Tish Sanders
 - 234 pages Audra Lewandowski
 - 165 pages Lavender Daye
 - 156 pages Krystal Shannon
 - 130 pages Angi Morgan
 - Completed: *Forever Dom* and *Undercover Heat* by Lavender Daye

Bylaws: Angi Morgan reported:

- No Report.

Spotlights: Marty Tidwell was not present.

- Amanda McMurrey is our spotlight for May.

Unfinished Business:

- No unfinished business to report.

New Business:

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