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Every Word Counts

*Founded March 1983**Chapter 33, Region 5**November 2015**Volume 34, Issue 9*

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## Letter from the President

### The STRUGGLES with CHAPTER 6

Many years ago at one of the first regional conferences I attended, an editor stated: It's not the first or last chapter that sells a book, it's chapter 4. She (I wish I could remember who) went on to explain how many authors concentrated on rewriting chapter 1 so much that they forgot about the rest of the book. She had been disappointed with how contest finalists (including RWA® Golden Heart® finalists) rush to polish and revise the last two thirds of their book before submitting after a request.

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When I write, I do something unconsciously. I'm not a writer who spends a lot of time studying and in workshops. But I do spend a lot of time reading, critiquing, and practicing. In my first book, I gave each turning point a major adventure-high action scene, which made the critical chapters easier to write. "Easier" since high action doesn't require a lot of introspection. The emotion is still there, just not a lot of self-reflection by my characters.

My second book was different. Lots of action. But each turning point in the book seemed to turn on an emotional dime. And thus the reason for the title of my blog. I wondered what was wrong with chapter 6 for a couple of weeks, unable to pin-point whatever it was. I couldn't move forward. I remember how hard it was to come back to it day after day. I knew it wasn't completely right. I just couldn't determine what was wrong.

I had approached it from the heroine's frustration level. Amp it up. Tone it down. Change the wording. Change it back. Delete half the chapter. Start again. And finally...one critique partner looked at the hero. Whew...thank goodness. Done. It's done. I felt like the Munchkins in the Wizard of Oz singing DING DONG THE WITCH IS DEAD. It's such an awesome feeling to slay that Chapter 6 Witch!

My point? Do I have one? Awe, yes... It's not the first chapter, the fourth chapter, or the last that sells a book. It's every word. Yep. Choosing and critiquing and rewriting and revising and then doing it all over again. ALL of it sells the book. A great story, a great story-teller, and great writing...combine it with perfect timing, an editor who loves the story and you have a sale.

So all you contest junkies out there. Don't wait! Rework the entire book and don't wait on that request. BE READY FOR THE REQUEST. Get every word ready for the request. And the sale.

~~Angi

*Angi Morgan is the author of Intrigues where honor and danger collide with love. She*

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combines actual Texas settings with characters who are in realistic and dangerous situations. Her debut *Harlequin Intrigue*, *Hill Country Holdup*, is her Golden Heart winning manuscript and also an RT & Booksellers' Best Award nominee.

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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.

### **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

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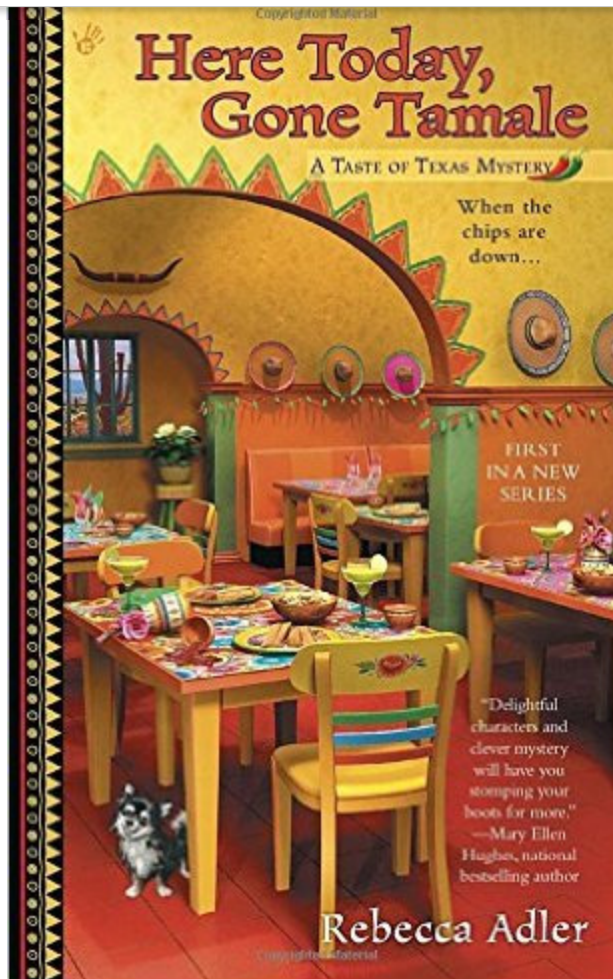
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## **MEMBER NEWS**

- Gina Lee Nelson's new book, writing as Rebecca Adler, *Here Today, Gone Tamale* releases Dec 1st.

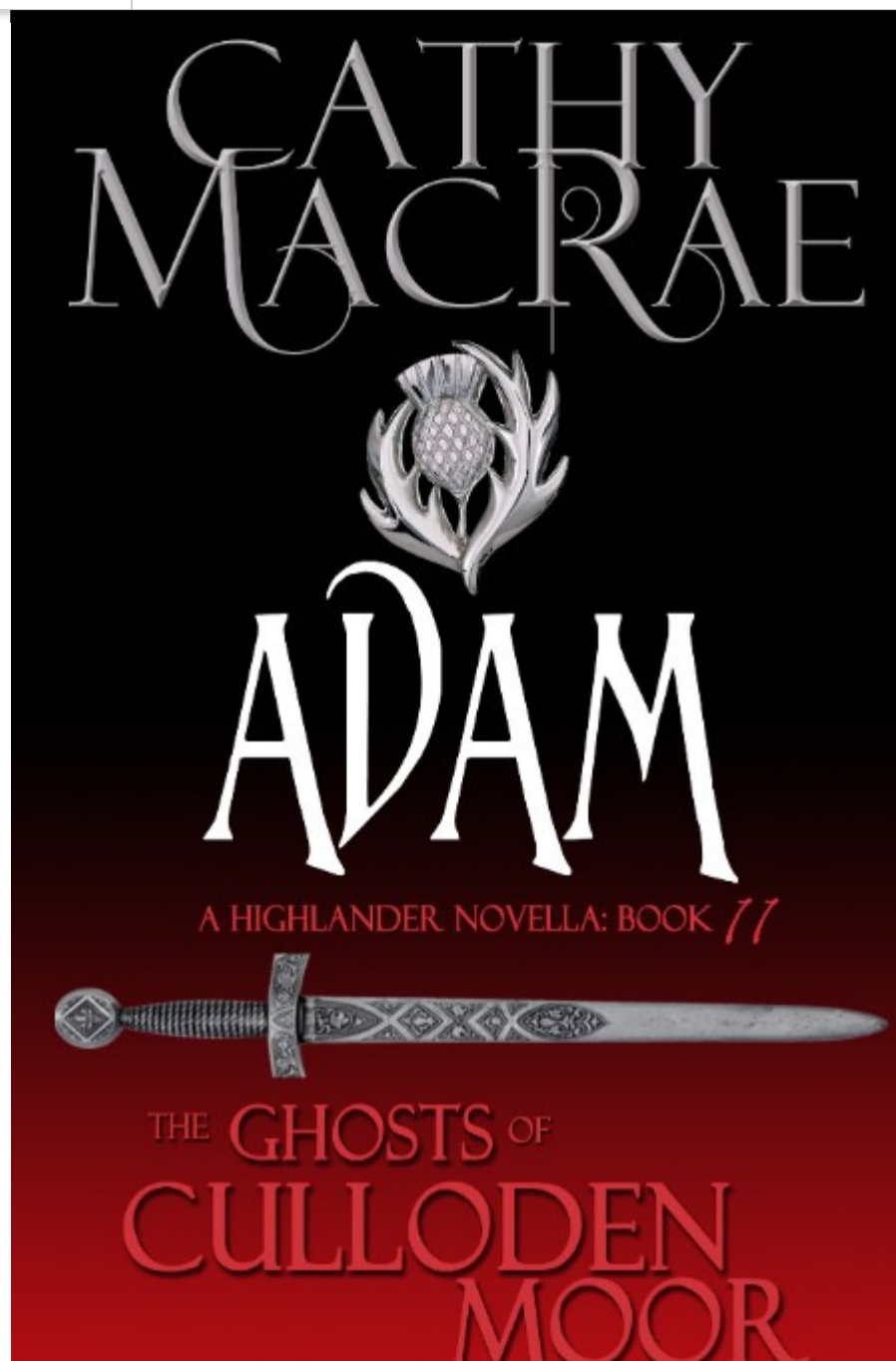
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- Cathy MacRae released a book Oct. 29: Adam: A Highlander Romance (The Ghosts of Culloden Moor series book 11)

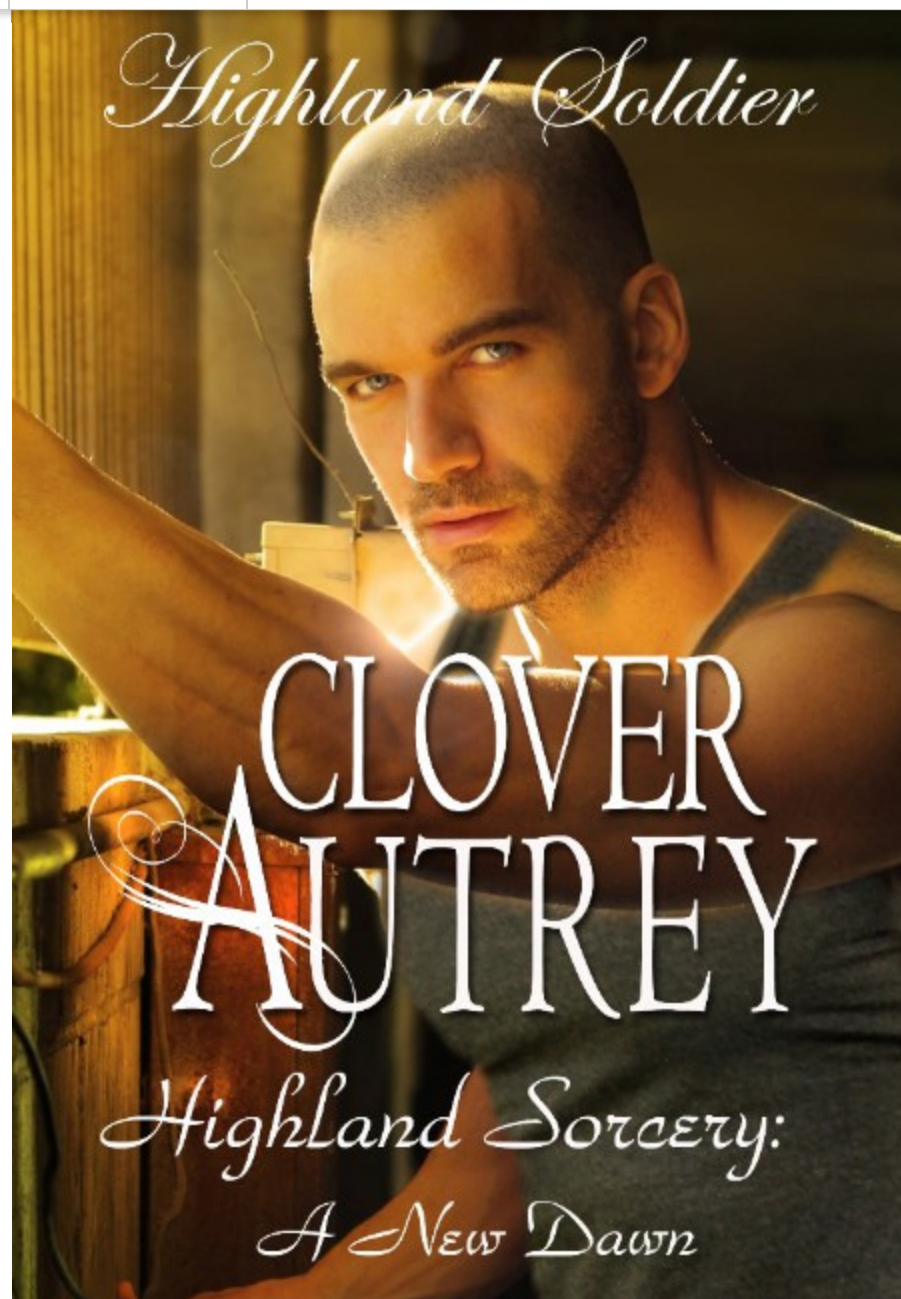
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Clover Autrey has a new release on Nov 16th. *Highland Soldier*.

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## **Fenley Grant won the Indiana Golden Opportunity Contest for *Daywalker* in the Paranormal Romance Category**

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## **Next Meeting: December 12th**

## **Annual Winter / Holiday Gathering**

Please wear your ugliest holiday/winter sweater, and bring a cracky/ugly/funky ornament for the White Elephant ornament exchange.

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## **Only for a Hero**

by Sarah Cannon

When authors get together for a writing retreat, you can usually expect four things to happen: lots of writing, some brilliant ideas passed around, catch up on the latest news and a trip to Wally World. Not particularly in that order.

I recently had the pleasure of hosting my first writing retreat. It was, without doubt, the craziest and best time I can remember. Some things, however, I never saw coming.



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The gifted author was desperately searching for inspiration for the hero in her current WIP. She said she could see his individual features in her mind but she couldn't bring it all together. And, of course, he had to have heroic values. He had to act in a heroic way regardless of what he might encounter. We tossed out a few names of famous people but none did the trick. "Maybe it will clear your mind if we do our Wally World run now?" All agreed. Off we went.

I needed Dr Peppers. Another sought bottled water and so on. We walked into the store and each of us went our separate ways. I grabbed a cart (yes, I'm lazy) and headed to the drinks isle. After parading up and down several times I found cases of Coke, Sprite, Pepsi, Mountain Dew – everything but Dr. Pepper. About then the others approached me and ask if I was finished shopping.

"I can't find the Dr. Peppers." We all looked and nope – none to be found anywhere. It was about then the trip to Wally took on a whole different meaning.

"Excuse me, Ma'am." I turned toward the deep, almost shy voice. "The Dr. Peppers are back there," he pointed, "on the very back wall. Had a hard time finding them myself."

This guy was about six foot four, clean-shaven, boots, worn jeans, plaid shirt and if I had my guess, his western hat was in his pick-up truck with or without his horse trailer attached. He was pushing a cart. In it was an adorable baby about six months old.

"If you'd like to come with me, I'll show you where they are." Where they...? Oh! The Dr. Peppers. Of course. I followed him to the isle. Down about half way he pointed at the cases. I thanked him profusely and he gave a nod. "Yes Ma'am. Glad I could help."

He went his way and, sadly, I went mine. I hadn't gone far when the other girls caught up with me. They had witnessed the whole thing and the one looking for her hero said, "That's HIM! That's my hero!! I've GOT to get a picture!" We tried to follow but with those long legs, he out maneuvered us. Finally, I told them to put their groceries in my basket. I

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would check out and they could do what authors do. Hunt the man down.

After checking out I waited at the front of the store. I saw the hero and his baby in line. The girls joined me. Sadness prevailed. They couldn't get a picture. He was too fast. Too many people; too many corners. One sighed and said she may have gotten a butt shot. I'm thinking... we have all gone a little crazy. We are, in essence, stalking this poor guy!

His wife joined him in the line and our shoulders dropped a bit further. Giving up on the picture, we all headed to the car. After unloading the basket we took off for the exit, a route that propelled us down the main aisle of the store... the one right in front of the doors; the one where you stop if pedestrians need to cross. We stopped, looked harder. It was *him*. How many chances are we given on something this important in a life time? This was destiny. This picture was meant to be!

"Girls! Grab your phones! Hurry!" was the unanimous cry. Again his long strides took him across the cross walk faster than we could dig the cell phones out of the bottom of our purses. A sad sigh and accompanying groan was made by every author in the car. I'm in the back seat thinking... this just isn't right. We worked for this picture. We earned this picture. We should not let fate or unpreparedness stop us from getting a picture of Every Girl's Hero! With no sane thought in my head, I bailed out of the car, my phone still in my hand.

My hubby can say what he wants but I'm not totally brain deficient. I went straight to his wife. I apologized for bothering and explained we were authors for Harlequin and we were in need of a picture of a true hero to serve as inspiration while we write the next story. I explained what her hero hubby had done for me and asked if we might take his picture.

She grinned and looked at him with a new appreciation in her eyes. "Sure. Absolutely." Bless his heart. It never occurred to anyone to ask if *he* minded. Like a true hero, he merely asked "Where do you want me?" The other girls bailed out of the vehicle and we proceeded to have a photo session right there in front of Wal-Mart. We had traffic backed

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up out of sight in three directions but who cares? We were getting pictures of a real life hero!

We presented our business cards as proof we honestly were authors and let the obvious impression we were all crazy as a bat slide to the background. Returning home, we all felt the excited peace of success. We came. We saw. We conquered!!

One last tidbit... The baby's name turned out to be the same as the heroine in the story. You can't make this stuff up and it just doesn't get any better!! Who's up for another retreat!!

*Sarah Cannon is an author for Harlequin Desire and a member of NTRWA. Her next book is the first in a 4-book series, [The Masters of Texas](#). She is a 2014 Golden Heart winner.*

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The following article appeared in the May 2015 issue of *Heart of the Bay*, the newsletter of the San Francisco Area chapter of RWA. Permission is granted to RWA chapters to reprint or forward this article with proper credit to the author and chapter.

## Marketing and Discoverability: How Do You Discover Books?

By Carolina Montague

In the online world of books, discoverability is a key marketing concept now, even though what it means is simply how readers will dis-cover your books. In the past hundred years, this mostly meant through brick-and-mortar book stores, and many authors say they will stay with their traditional publisher because these publishing houses have a lock on book distribution (Rusch 2014, Penn 2014, Whistler 2015).

However, this is changing. Now the landscape of distribution includes paper and electronic means of deliver-ing your books to readers, and authors have many more ways to find their audiences. Even traditionally published authors are finding what midlist and small press authors have known for a long time—unless an author is famous or has been a bestseller for a long time, the onus of marketing is on the author.

I am at an early stage of my career, where I fit the criteria of “wouldn’t I be better off writing” (Rusch 2014), than trying to market the few books of mine that are available. But I took a break recently to look at how readers who *might* like the books I write could find my books.

Since my nose is pretty much down to the writing grindstone right now, I discarded the idea of a poll. That would take way too much time. How to proceed? I figured that people who might like the books I write would probably be something like me, so I started with that. I idly flipped through my Kindle and was shocked to see that in the past two years, I had bought 319 books. This was not counting the hundred or so I’d bought in paper. Well, I am an avid reader—most writers are—but in doing this exercise, I got really curious.

I made a spreadsheet. Yes, I know—time suck! But it was just for the past two years and actually took less time than I thought it would. Each book in the sheet had the title and how I found it. Then I sorted on how I discovered the books—and was in for a surprise.

A third of the books I bought came from advertising, mostly ads on my basic Kindle device (not a Kindle Fire—I have the one that has Kindle advertise-ments show up as a screen saver). That floored me. Almost a third of the books I’d bought came from clicking “Buy” on that link! I thought I’d bought more from the really cool covers on Good-reads, but I only bought one that way. It was the paranormal *Out of Breath* by Blair Richmond

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[www.goodreads.com/book/show/1566666-out-of-breath](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1566666-out-of-breath),  
The cover of Blair's book just got to me, so I wanted it, and loved the book. I also bought *The Quaker Cafe* by Brenda Remmes from a Kindle screen-saver ad because it had an appealing cover ([www.brendaremmes.com](http://www.brendaremmes.com)). It was not really the type of book I would read, but the cover spoke to me. So covers matter, but not as much as I'd thought.

However, buying a direct ad from Amazon might not be a bad idea. I thought I was relatively immune to ads, but the numbers showed me I was not. And if I'm not, chances are my readers would be susceptible as well.

A quarter of the books I bought came from recommendations from a trusted source. These are more than word-of-mouth, and can include known experts in many fields (Das 2015). For fiction, the "known experts" can be book lists in blogs of your favorite authors.

The recommendations that influenced me the most included SFA-RWA authors, close friends, and a book that is called *Vampires Are Us: Understanding Our Love Affair with the Immortal Dark Side* by Margot Adler ([www.goodreads.com/book/show/18654415-vampires-are-us](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/18654415-vampires-are-us)). Margot's book traces her fascination with books on vampires in several genres, and includes her recommendations. Several of the books I bought are from her lists, including Faith Hunter's Jane Yellowrock series ([www.faithhunter.net/wp/books/jane-yellowrock-series](http://www.faithhunter.net/wp/books/jane-yellowrock-series)) and Nora Robert's Circle vampire trilogy ([www.goodreads.com/series/44593-circle-trilogy](http://www.goodreads.com/series/44593-circle-trilogy)). I got the digital box set for Nora's and I now pre-order all of the new books in the Jane Yellowrock series.

I'd have to agree with Das on the power of trusted sources in book marketing. I had never pre-ordered a book before!

Ten percent of the books I bought came from my prior experience with an author. I bought a number of books for my Kindle to complete series by authors when I had the first books of the series in paper. I got the entire In Death series by J.D. Robb ([www.jdrobb.com](http://www.jdrobb.com)) and Robyn Carr's Virgin River and Thunder Point series ([www.robyncarr.com](http://www.robyncarr.com)).

I also found books came from online searches for research books that I needed for my own books. I bought resource books on the areas where my characters travel and history books covering the background of my hero.

The final way I found books was from authors interviewed by Terry Gross on *Fresh Air* ([www.npr.org/programs/fresh-air/](http://www.npr.org/programs/fresh-air/)), by Justine Willis Thoms on *New Dimensions* ([www.newdimensions.org](http://www.newdimensions.org)), and from a podcast from Simon Whistler ([www.rockingselfpublishing.com](http://www.rockingselfpublishing.com)).

When I looked closer into the media sources, I found that, indirectly, I bought more books from the podcast by Simon Whistler than from both of Terri's and Justine's shows, because Simon introduced me to a subgenre that I'd never read before: Zombie Apocalypse books. In his podcast, Simon interviewed Shawn Chesser, an author who had self-published his books after he'd written his first zombie novel using Notepad on his iPhone ([www.shawnchesser.com](http://www.shawnchesser.com)). His first book was only ninety-nine cents, so I bought it to see what this genre was all about. I got hooked, and whenever I saw another author in the same genre from Kindle's "recommended for you" algorithm, and liked the cover, I bought

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I'd included only the eight books in Shawn's zombie series as being from "podcasts," but had put the rest of the many zombie series I'd bought in "advertising," because I was looking for broad categories. However, these really could fit under several categories—trusted sources, media, and advertising, because some of them came from direct *ads*, others from lists, and Simon's podcast.

To all these potential sources, I could add another category: articles in newsletters! I've included websites for the books I've named, so you can take a look.

I can see that a finer-grained analysis could lead me into methods of marketing that I might want to experiment with, once I have more books released. As Kristine Kathryn Rusch, in her 2014 book *Discoverability*, says, "None of the hype, none of the career stuff, none of the marketing works on just one book. Nor does it work well on only a few." She recommends that authors prioritize writing, first, last, and always.

Happy writing!

#### Resources Used for This Article

Das, Harshajyoti. *The Art of Book Marketing*. Book-Marketing.org, 2015.

Penn, Joanna. *How to Market a Book: Second Edition*. The Creative Penn, 2014.

Rusch, Kristine Kathryn. *Discoverability: Help Readers Find You in Today's World of Publishing*. WMG Publishing, 2014.

Whistler, Simon. *Bootstrapping for Indies*. Rockingselfpublishing.com, 2015.

*Carolina Montague is the author of several works of paranormal romance, including Forever Green, Sacred Guardian. Visit her at [www.carolinamontague.com](http://www.carolinamontague.com).*

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#### 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](mailto:newsletter@ntrwa.org). It is at the discretion of the newsletter editor as to which photos will be included in the newsletter. Thank you.

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## October 2015 Meeting Minutes

### CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday, October 17, 2015 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The President and the Secretary were present. The meeting was called to order at 10:42 a.m. The minutes for the August 15, 2015 meeting and the September 19, 2015 meeting were approved.

### OFFICER REPORTS:

#### **President: Angi Morgan reported:**

- Texas Two Step: One day conference for NT members only. Amanda McMurrey and Jan Schlieshman are Co-chairing. First Saturday in April is the preferred date.

#### **President-Elect: Suzan Butler reported:**

- Please notify Suzan if you're interested in serving on the 2016 NTRWA Board.

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

- The August 15, 2015 minutes and the September 19, 2015 minutes were approved.

#### **Treasurer: Jen FitzGerald reported:**

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

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

- Today's Meeting:
  - Elizabeth Essex-Character Themed Writing
- November: No Meeting
- December: Holiday Party – Bring in your white elephant / ugly ornament to exchange. Prize for wearing the ugliest holiday sweater.



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- No report.

**COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:****Membership Director: Gina Nelson was not present:**

- No report.

**Communications Director: Kim Miller reported:**

- Report submitted:
  - Send information / articles / photos for inclusion in the newsletter to [newsletter@NTRWA.org](mailto:newsletter@NTRWA.org) by October 28, 2015.

**PAN Liaison: Chrissy Szarek reported:**

- Pencils to authors present this month:
  - Connie Bowen: 2 pencils. *Prophecy* and *Hawthorne and Mistletoe*.
  - Carol Doss: 1 pencil. *Smooched*.
  - Chris Keniston: 2 pencils. *Perfect Match* and *Love by Design*. Love Walks In box
  - Christie Doport: 1 pencil. *A Different Side*
- Regina Richards made PAN.
- PAN pins are available- notify Chrissy if you would like one, she will place the order with RWA.

**PRO Liaison: Clover Autrey reported:**

- No report.

**Great Expectations: Lisa Fenley reported:**

- The 2016 Great Expectations Contest opened October 1, 2015 and runs until January 3, 2016. Four entries to date: 2 Inspirational, 1 Romantic Suspense, and 1 Historical.

[Subscribe](#)[Share ▼](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)[RSS](#)**Carolyn Contest: Jen FitzGerald reported:**

- The 2016 Carolyn Contest will run from November 14, 2015 to February 14, 2016.

**Hospitality: Michelle Welsh reported:**

- No report.

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

- No Report.

**Writing Incentives: Christine Crocker reported:**

- No Report.

**Bylaws: Angi Morgan reported:**

- No Report.

**Spotlights: Marty Tidwell was not present:**

- No Report.

**Unfinished Business:**

- No unfinished business to report.

**New Business:**

- No new business to report.

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