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September 2016

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## Letter from the President

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### SEPTEMBER'S NT MEETING:

Scrivener is widely regarded as the best tool for writers of fiction and nonfiction prose. However, it is not intuitive for most people, and can be intimidating to the non-technical or novice. This session will help you get up and running, taking you from starting a new project to compiling it for e-book and manuscript copy.

Topics discussed include:

- Why Scrivener? How it can help you be more productive.
- The Binder - organizing your novel.
- Writing free of distractions and worry about format.
- Compiling to manuscript and e-book formats.

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- Front and Back Matter, research, and templates.
- Collections - Helping you distribute multiple versions of your work.

This is an interactive course. Although not required, you'll get the most value by bringing your own laptop to follow along with the provided materials.

\*\*\*If you don't own a copy of Scrivener, you can download the 30-day free trial beforehand from: <https://www.literatureandlatte.com/scrivener.php>

*Chris A Crawford is a certified computer nerd, having spent over 25 years in the software industry at companies like Tandy, Gateway Computers and Nike. He currently works for The Container Store.*

*Chris has been writing since 2012. His debut novel, *The Tuning Station*, was published in 2015 and his next, *Ro and Jules Across Heaven and Hell*, will be released in 2016. He is the current President of Greater Fort Worth Writers, has three grown sons, and resides with his wife and two cats in Keller, Texas.*

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COMING UP...

October:

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## **GOAL, MOTIVATION & CONFLICT**

The Building Blocks of Good Fiction

*by Debra Dixon*

*REVIEWED BY CHERYL BOLEN*

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To those of us who are long-time members of Romance Writers of America, GMC is old news, but it never hurts to take a quick refresher with Debra Dixon's easy-to-remember simplification of plotting.

The author/editor/motivational speaker freely admits she borrows from the late fiction writing instructor extraordinaire Dwight Swain. But Dixon's GMC simplifies his precepts.

In her quickly read book, she makes plotting even easier with her Who, What, Why and Why Not. The *who* is the character. The *what* is the character's **goal**. The *why* is why the character needs to achieve his or her goal (**motivation**), and the *why not* is why the character cannot achieve his or her goal (**conflict**). Put in all these things, and you've got a pretty good basis for a story.

As Dixon points out, there is no story if everything runs smoothly. She uses the movie *Wizard of Oz* to illustrate. Dorothy's goal? To get back to Kansas. Motivation? She believes her Auntie Em is dangerously sick, and she must apologize to her and tell her how much she loves her. Conflict? Dorothy must get the broomstick from the Wicked Witch so the Wizard will use his power to send Dorothy back to Kansas. Of course, many obstacles (more **conflicts**) come between her and getting that broomstick.

According to Dixon, each main character needs a GMC; hence, in *Wizard of Oz*, the Lion, Tin Man, and Scarecrow all have GMC, and all will have character growth over the course of the story.

Dixon also stresses the need for there to be both internal and external GMC for each main character.

What about the goal in our genre? "Excuse me while I climb on my soapbox," Dixon says. "The heroine's goal in a romance is **not** to fall in love and get married."

Another important thing she stresses about goal is to make it important and urgent. Reading those words was just what I needed while writing my current WIP. I had a pretty wimpy goal, but after rereading Dixon's handy-dandy little gem, I was able to bump up the importance and immediacy of the goal that propelled the first part of my book. (Yes, goals can change during the course of a book.)

She also says, "The large, central goal of the character is often accompanied by a series of smaller goals that drive the action of the book."

In a really good story the main characters' goals should come crashing into one another.

Moving to motivation, she says motivation is usually preceded by the word *because*.

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Dorothy wants to get home to Kansas *because*. . .

On conflict, she says story can be strengthened with several smaller conflicts, in addition to the central conflict.

"The outer conflict usually reveals or causes the big black moment, but it is the character's internal GMC which will resolve the big black moment," Dixon says.

Just as *because* precedes motivation, the word *but* precedes conflict. Therefore, Dorothy's goal is to get back to Kansas *because* Auntie Em is sick, *but* she must first get the broomstick from the Wicked Witch. Pretty simple stuff. Yet it can drive an entire book.

Dixon also brings home many other lessons we fiction writers know, but it's never a bad idea to refresh ourselves. Thus, she stresses that every scene should illustrate a character's progress toward the goal, or bring the character into conflict with opposing forces, or provide the character with an experience that strengthens or changes his motivation. Also, there should be three reasons for every scene. She provides a lengthy list which includes introduction of suspects, foreshadowing, discovering clues, and establishing trust between characters. But remember, there must be three reasons for each scene.

For more juicy tidbits, buy the book.

An appendix includes GMC charts for various characters in the movies *Wizard of Oz*, *Ladyhawke*, *Casablanca* and *The Client*.

*Cheryl Bolen is currently releasing three Pride & Prejudice novellas.*

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## Five Tips to Improve Your Amazon Author Central Page

by **Cat Rambo**

If you're selling books on Amazon, you'll want to set up your page in their Author Central program. Use your Author Central page to provide more information for your readers: upcoming events, a full listing of your books, pictures and videos, and even excerpts from your blog.

In order to set up your Author Central profile if you haven't, go to <https://authorcentral.amazon.com/> and click "Join Now." Once you've walked through the

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sign-up steps, you'll enter the name under which your book or books was published and select one of your books. You'll need to wait while Amazon verifies your identity, which may take a few days.

1) Make sure all your books are listed. Once you're logged into Amazon Central, click on "Books" on the blue bar across the top of the page. The page that appears shows the books connected to your author page. You can sort these by publication date, best-selling, and relevance. Relevance is a somewhat mysterious formula of which Amazon will only say, "the relevance ranking function uses many different elements to determine the best matches for customers' queries" and notes that search results may fluctuate.

2) Make sure your books have complete listings. To edit a book, click on its title. This will open its profile page.

You can add information here in three different categories:

- Editorial reviews: You can add a review from someone else, a product description, a "from the author" note, information from the inside flap and back cover, and an "about the author" section.
- Book details: These include publisher, publication date, language, print length, and file size if in electronic version.
- Book extras: These are actually pulled from Amazon's companion book review site, Shelfari. In order to fill this out you'll need to create a Shelfari account.

**To add books that aren't listed, click on "Add more books."**

3) Provide a bio. Click on "Profile" on the blue bar across the top of the page. The page that appears shows your author information. The most important part of this is your biography.

To edit your biography, click on edit biography, which should appear in the upper righthand area of the biography section. Your biography must be at least twenty characters long. Plain text only – you can't include fancy stuff like bold, italics, or links (those can go elsewhere though).

If you don't fill this out, be aware that what Amazon displays for you in its place is taken from your Wikipedia entry if one exists.

4) Include some visual interest. You can do this by adding photos and videos on your profile page. If you look at mine ([amazon.com/author/catrambo](http://amazon.com/author/catrambo)) you'll notice I've got a photo up there next to the bio. I added that and the other photo (you can have multiple ones) via the profile page.

You can add videos as well, which will appear on the righthand side of the page. Mine's a book trailer, but you could include all sorts of stuff there (make sure you have the rights to

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ty.

5) Hook up your blog and social media. The profile page lets you add your blog as well as your Twitter feed. Add your blog, and the latest few entries will appear on your profile page. Link in your Twitter account and your latest Tweet will appear on the page.

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*Cat Rambo's most recent short story collection, [Near + Far](#), appeared this fall from [Hydra House](#). Find links to her fiction as well as her upcoming online classes on her website, <http://www.kittywumpus.net>.*

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## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

The updated membership roster is available in the YahooGroups file section. Those who have notified us of their social media links...that information is included. We did not include phone numbers or addresses. If you'd like to contact a member, please use the provided email address.

If you'd like your information to be included, please use the Social Media update form in the members only section of our website. Please remember that information on our roster is for members only use and is a violation of chapter bylaws to be sold or used for profit.

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

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## **MINUTES from AUGUST**

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday, August 20, 2016 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 July 16, 2016 meeting were approved.

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## **OFFICER REPORTS:**

### **President: Suzan Butler reported:**

- On-line vote for by-laws passed. The three new board positions are: Communications Director, Contests Director, and Membership Director.
- If you are interested in a board position for next year, please see Kim Miller.

### **President-Elect: Kim Miller was not present:**

- No Report

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

- The June 28, 2016 meeting minutes were approved and filed for audit.

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

- The Treasurer's reports for July and August were presented and filed for audit.

### **Program Director: Amanda McMurrey reported:**

- Today's Meeting:
  - **Mary Theresa Hussey, What Editors Really Want**
- September 17, 2016:
  - **Chris Crawford on Scrivener**

### **Website Director:**

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- If you want to post information to the website, please contact Jen FitzGerald.

### **COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:**

#### **Membership Director: Angi Morgan reported.**

- 79 members to date.
- Von Jocks is our newest member.

#### **Communications Director: Audra Lewandowski reported:**

- Report submitted:
  - Send information / articles / photos for inclusion in the newsletter to [newsletter@NTRWA.org](mailto:newsletter@NTRWA.org) by August 28, 2016.
  - Social Media—please complete the profile information for your social media formats to share with the chapter.

#### **PAN Liaison: Chrissy Szarek reported:**

- Pencils to members present:
  - No pencils presented.
- RWA pins for milestones (starting at 5 books published.) Pins are \$10 apiece. Order through RWA. You must order your pins yourself.

#### **PRO Liaison: Clover Autrey reported:**

- If you are not a PRO member, please see Clover for application information. PRO pins must be purchased from RWA.
- PRO membership allows you on the NT PRO loop, where training and information are provided to our chapter PRO members.
- Last evening we held a PRO workshop with **Mary Theresa**

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**Hussey** to review member's first pages.

### **Two Step Conference: Amanda McMurrey reported.**

- No report.

### **Great Expectations: Lisa Fenley reported:**

- Report filed:
  - We need volunteers to help with the 2017 contest.

### **Carolyn Contest: Jen FitzGerald reported:**

- Report filed:
  - Contest Complete and winners announced
  - We need volunteers to help with the 2017 contest.

### **Hospitality: Faith Stencil was not present:**

- Faith Stencil will continue her tenure as hospitality chair for the next half of the year.

### **Writing Incentives: Chrissy Szarek reported:**

- Top 3 Edited Pages: Chrissy Szarek 514 pages, Krystal Shannon 372 pages, Kym Roberts 307 pages
- Top 3 Written Pages: Kym Roberts 240 pages, Cindy Dees 215 pages, Cathy MacRae 200 pages
- Two drawings for gift cards for top three over the last six months:
  - Edited Drawings: Cindy Dees and Tish Sanders

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○ Written Drawings: Lavender Daye and Lisa Fenley

### **Bylaws: Angi Morgan reported.**

- Changes to the Bylaws were sent out via the loop. The revised By-laws passed.

### **Spotlights: Open Position:**

- No Report.

### **Unfinished Business:**

- No unfinished business to report.

### **New Business:**

- No new business to report.

Next Business Meeting: 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, September 17, 2016  
at La Hacienda. The meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

Submitted electronically by [s] Lisa Fenley.

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#booties

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

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