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March 2017 Heart to Heart Newsletter

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 Chapter 33, Region 5
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MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday, May 17, 2017 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The President and the Program Director were present. The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m. The minutes for the April 15, 2017 meeting were approved.

OFFICER REPORTS:

President: Kim Miller reported:

- No report.

President-Elect: Audra Lewandowski was not present:

2017 BOARD

President

Kim Miller

President Elect

Audra Lewandowski

Secretary

Robin Nelson

Treasurer

Cindy Dees

Program Director

Amanda McMurrey

Membership

Director

Angi Morgan

Contest**Coordinator**

Lisa Fenley

- No report

Secretary: Robin Nelson was not present. Lisa Fenley reported:

Communications**Director**

Jen FitzGerald

- The April 15, 2017 meeting minutes were approved and filed for audit.

Treasurer: Cindy Dees was not present:

**2017
Committee
Chairs**

- The Treasurer's report will be presented at next month's meeting.

PAN Liaison

Chrissy Szarek

Program Director: Amanda McMurrey reported:

Writing Incentives

Chrissy Szarek

- Open to suggestions for program ideas.

- Today's Meeting:

- o Conflict Resolution in Fictional Relationships—Carol Doss

- June 17, 2017 meeting:

- o Mia London: Marketing for Authors—Yes, Facebook is Your Friend

PRO Liaison

TBD

Bylaws

Angi Morgan

Membership Director: Angi Morgan was not present:

- No report.

Two Step**Conference**

Angi Morgan

Great Expectations

Lisa Fenley

Communications Director: Jen FitzGerald reported:

The Carolyn

Jen FitzGerald

- Send information / articles / photos for inclusion in the newsletter to newsletter@NTRWA.org by June 1, 2017.

Spotlight

Jen FitzGerald

- Social Media—please complete the profile information for your social media formats to share with the chapter. If there are changes there is a form online.

Hospitality

Jen FitzGerald

- Please send in an office selfie.
- If you need information added to the website, send to website@ntrwa.org

continued below...

Continued from above...

Contests Director: Lisa Fenley reported:

- Need volunteers for both contests.

Great Expectations Contest: Lisa Fenley reported:

- Contest date extended as two editors need more time.
- Looking for four volunteers to help with the contest reorganization. Need technical expertise. Angi Morgan and Audra Lewandowski volunteered, so we need two more volunteers for the committee.

Carolyn Contest: Jen FitzGerald reported:

- Contest complete and winners announced.
- Tammy Jo Burns, member, won the historical category.

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:

PAN Liaison: Chrissy Szarek reported:

- Pencils for book releases / sales to members present
 - o Chrissy Szarek-The Princess and the Laird
- RWA pins for milestones (starting at 5 books published.) Pins are \$10 apiece. Order through RWA. You must order your pins yourself.

PRO Liaison: OPEN POSITION:

- Need someone to take position
- If you are not a PRO member, please see Clover Autrey 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.

Two Step Conference: Angi Morgan was not present:

- No report.

Hospitality: Jen FitzGerald reported:

- If you have ideas for gifts, please notify Jen FitzGerald.

Writing Incentives: Chrissy Szarek reported:

- Written:
 - o 70-Jen FitzGerald
 - o 45-Lisa Fenley
 - o 37-Christine Crocker
- Edited:
 - o 283-Chrissy Szarek
 - o 250-Kaye Smith
 - o 151-Lisa Fenley

Bylaws: Angi Morgan reported:

- No Report.

Spotlights: Jen FitzGerald reported:

- The spotlight is postponed until next month.

35th Anniversary Committee:

- Charm Program: Chrissy Szarek reported:
 - o If you haven't submitted your totals for May, the window is closed. Please send totals the Friday before the meeting.
 - o Charm bracelets / charms earned distributed.
- Anthology / Continuity: Jen FitzGerald reported:
 - o Must take place in Dew Drop, Texas
 - o Due January 27, 2018
 - o Must be romance, but no Erotic. Must be PG13
 - o Words 3000 to 3500
 - o E-book only
 - o The NTRWA website has a link to find more information and the town 'bible'
 - o Sign up for your space in the anthology

Unfinished Business:

- No unfinished business to report.

New Business:

- No new business to report

Next Business Meeting: 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, June 17, 2017 at La Hacienda.
The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Submitted electronically by [s] Lisa Fenley for Robin Nelson.

Date Approved: _____

Date Corrected: _____

Ten Tips for Finding Time to Write by Carolyn Rae

1. Pick your favorite TV shows and watch only them.
2. Delegate some chores to family members.
3. Say no to requests to chair a project. Offer to do one simple task instead.
4. Don't clean as often.
5. Bunch errands to save gas and time.
6. Dovetail – do two things at once. One task should not require much thinking.
7. Write when your mind feels more creative.
8. Write when you're less likely to be interrupted.
9. Do important things, like writing, first. Set a regular time each day and write.
10. Don't do things that won't matter if they're not done, like rearranging closets, etc.

A final tip - either write or revise. Don't do both at the same time. If you do, the critical editor on your shoulder will keep finding mistakes, and soon you'll think this is the worst thing you've ever written. Keep on writing while your creative brain is sparking. You can polish it later and find the jewels you've created.

Carolyn Rae is the author of eight romantic suspense novels and a cookbook. Her latest novel is Pretend Princess.

Dew Drop Continuity

We have nineteen members signed up--
Are you one of them?

If not and you're interested, then [sign up here](#).

For the details and other links, [visit the website](#).

Any questions that aren't answered,

shoot an email to Jen: jen . fitzgerald . writer @ gmail . com
(and, you know, remove all the spaces)

The following article first appeared in the April 2017 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.

Thanks,

Leslie Marshman
Editor, In Print!

~*~*~

From The President: Change
by Ann Peake

Recently, our chapter moved the venue for our monthly meetings. The new place is larger to help accommodate our growing membership, and it's free. Did the move go off without a hitch? That would be a big "nope," but I still have confidence that the issues can be addressed. The move and the resulting issues did bring to mind the difficulty of change – for all of us, in a variety of different areas of our lives.

Marriage, a new baby, a change of jobs, purchasing a home – some big examples of major changes in our lives. But change comes along in smaller packages, too. A new meeting place, road construction causing a detours, daylight savings.

Change can also happen to our writing process. We may move more from pantsing to plotting. Perhaps we change genres, try first person narrative rather than third person. For me, change is still in flux. Before I explain that, let me offer up a bit of background.

My critique group has taken a small hiatus from our weekly meetings – reasons not important, only that we took off three weeks. Ostensibly, I was to use the time to incorporate weeks' worth of comments from my crit partners into my manuscript. I was a wee bit behind on that, and was beginning to feel discombobulated.

So, yeah. I did that. I went through my marked up pages and made the small changes (typos, missed commas, etc.). Anything that would require more thought and more work to correct, I simply added a note to my MS with the intention of fixing it later.

So, that should have been the end to it. Once that was completed, I should have begun tip-tapping away on my next new chapter. But change lured me like a siren. I started

convincing myself that I really needed to nail the first third of my story, especially the plot. I mean, how could I be expected to forge ahead if I was on shaky foundational ground? Is not the first third of any story the foundation of the story? Or, in my case, of the series.

So, here's where I address the flux. George R. R. Martin summed up very succinctly my view on writing: "Some writers enjoy writing, I am told. Not me. I enjoy having written."

More precisely, the "having written" part for me is editing, where my true writing enjoyment lies. During the crit group break and after incorporating crit partner changes in my MS, the editor in me was anxious to get into the real meat of the story. This was a pitfall I was anticipating.

No, no, no, I told myself. I would NOT fall into this trap. I would NOT get bogged down in useless editing. Why? Because it is my contention that this endless editing of mine is the PRIMARY reason why I remain in the ranks of the unpublished.

Again, I turn to George R. R. Martin, who said: "One of the big breakthroughs, I think for me, was reading Robert A. Heinlein's four rules of writing, one of which was, 'You must finish what you write.' I never had any problem with the first one, 'You must write' – I was writing since I was a kid. But I never finished what I was writing."

Yeah – I NEVER finish what I'm writing, either. I feel his pain. I had determined that my writing process had to CHANGE.

Here's what else you need to know about me. I'm a plotter needtobe. Because of that, when I reach a point in my novel where I'm not sure what happens next – I stop writing. Another super excellent way to finish a story. Yeah, right.

Let's return to that editing siren's song. After making the changes to my MS, I was (quite predictably) burning with the desire to do some hard core editing. Damn the forward progress. I NEEDED to make sure the first third of my story was rock solid. I told myself, "To thine own self be true."

Screw the advocates of forward progression. I should recognize and appreciate that I'm a different kind of writer. I shouldn't try to buck my natural inclinations, but go with them. Let the writing flow naturally. Seemed a solid rationalization, in my mind.

I went so far as to begin deep editing on my current WIP. Then, in the car, my son was chatting about . . . you guessed it, George R. R. Martin. He told me (and I'm paraphrasing them both here) that Martin believed it didn't matter how badly your story was initially written. It mattered more that you finished it. You could always go back and tighten prose, correct grammar, and deepen POV.

And that's when it hit me. The change I was trying to incorporate into my writing process was not born of my organic storytelling process, but rather it was hatched because of fear.

Anne Lamott said: "Perfectionism is the voice of the oppressor, the enemy of the people. It

will keep you cramped and insane your whole life, and it is the main obstacle between you and a shitty first draft.”

On face value, change can be positive influence when that change has come about from honest reflection. When the change is a reaction to fear (fear of a shitty first draft; fear of failure; fear, fear, fear) then it is an avoidance mechanism or perhaps delusion.

Change is hard. Not changing can be hard as well.

So, I'm casting aside my fears and I have decided to keep on with my forward progress. The change I made was not to change.

Ann Peake wrote her first ditty when she was ten on an English seashore while visiting her British grandmother. From then on, her family members either acted in, or were treated to, plays, skits or commercial spoofs. In school, she wrote poetry, fables and short stories. Years later, she tossed down a particularly bad novel and thought, "I could do at least that well." She's been pursuing the elusive published novel ever since. Ann loves a good romance – all the more if it is wrapped in a great fantasy setting.

THE EDITOR'S CORNER - Procrastination (or why I don't have time to write)
by Leslie Marshman, In Print! Editor

I wrote this poem several years ago, and updated it a bit to use this month because I didn't have time to write an Editor's Corner column. Procrastination at its finest.

Procrastination
(or why I don't have time to write)

I really have a story
It's living in my head
But getting it to paper
Is harder done than said

There's the necessary day job
That, frankly, is a pain
And chapter volunteering
Sucks ideas from my brain

And then there are the errands
And the other household chores
Like shopping, cooking, dusting,
Doing laundry and the floors

By then, a little R & R
Is what I really need
Computer time, some e-mail,
Time to watch TV and read

And then, of course, the "health" thing
Working out and eating right
And on top of this I'm s'posed to
Get eight hours of sleep a night

I go to chapter meetings,
Join the chats and read the loops
Take lots of online classes
And hang out with writing groups

I glom on to great ideas
Other writers recommend
But the time I spend researching
Isn't time I have to spend

With Prime, in just two days
Stacks of craft books are all mine
But now I need to read them
And I just can't find the time

Suggested writing software
To help prioritize
But first I have to load it,
Find my notes and organize

I've got some great excuses
Why I don't have time to write
The reasons vast and many
Some are wrong and some are right

I really have a story
And it's one I want to write
Perhaps I'll start tomorrow
'Cause I'm writing this tonight

Leslie Marshman writes contemporary romance and suspense, and her publishing credits include short stories. Leslie called Denver home until she married a Texan without reading the fine print. She now resides halfway between Houston and Galveston. She's the editor of HBA's In Print! newsletter and contest coordinator for HBA's Judge A Book By Its Cover contest.

OUR MARCH PROGRAM--June 17, 2017

MARKETING FOR AUTHORS

Yes, Facebook is your friend.

There are several key things every author needs to be successful. This month we will learn what they are.

Our own Mia London (we can call her Audra) has 5 books indie published in romance. However, her background is business. Her degree is in Business Administration, she runs a design firm (going on 14 years), and she started a non-profit in 2008. Marketing is second nature to her.

Did you know Facebook has 1.89 Billion visitors a month worldwide? This is a number that cannot be denied. If you have only one presence on social media, pick Facebook.

Don't worry that the information will be over your head (or under). There will be something for everyone. Also, she will give us other tips (secrets) on Marketing our businesses to ultimately sell more books!

So load up your laptops and notepads, and get ready to learn all the insight she can give us in an hour. As you know, Audra is high-energy; she wants this talk to be interactive. Bring your Facebook questions.

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