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July 2017 Heart to Heart Newsletter

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Founded March 1983  
 Chapter 33, Region 5  
 July 2017  
 Volume 35, Issue 7

Our deepest sympathies to Jerrie Alexander  
 on the loss of her husband.

## 2017 BOARD

### President

Kim Miller

### President Elect

Audra Lewandowski

### Secretary

Robin Nelson

### Treasurer

Cindy Dees

### Program Director

Amanda McMurrey

### Membership

#### Director

Angi Morgan

## JUNE 2017 MEETING MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER:

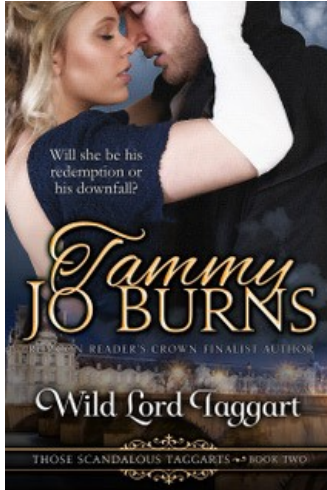
A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday, June 17, 2017 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The President and the President-Elect were present. The meeting was called to order at 10:43 a.m. The minutes for the May 20, 2017 meeting were approved.

### OFFICER REPORTS:

President: Kim Miller reported:

- No Report.

<p><b>Contest Coordinator</b> Lisa Fenley</p>	<p>President-Elect: Audra Lewandowski reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No report.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communications Director</b> Jen FitzGerald</p>	<p>Secretary: Robin Nelson reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The May 20, 2017 meeting minutes were approved and filed for audit.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2017 Committee Chairs</b></p>	<p>Treasurer: Cindy Dees reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Treasurer's report was presented and filed for audit.</li> </ul>
<p><b>PAN Liaison</b> Chrissy Szarek</p>	<p>Program Director: Amanda McMurrey reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open to suggestions for program ideas.</li> <li>• July's Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Inka Nisinbaum – Speaking on Motivation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Writing Incentives</b> Chrissy Szarek</p>	<p>Membership Director: Angi Morgan reported: Not Present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Report</li> </ul>
<p><b>PRO Liaison</b> TBD</p>	<p>Communications Director: Jen FitzGerald reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send information / articles / photos for inclusion in the newsletter to <a href="mailto:newsletter@NTRWA.org">newsletter@NTRWA.org</a> by June 28, 2017.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Please send in an office selfie.</li> <li>• If you need information added to the website, send to <a href="mailto:website@ntrwa.org">website@ntrwa.org</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Bylaws</b> Angi Morgan</p>	
<p><b>Two Step Conference</b> Angi Morgan</p>	
<p><b>Great Expectations</b> Lisa Fenley</p>	
<p><b>The Carolyn</b> Jen FitzGerald</p>	
<p><b>Spotlight</b> Jen FitzGerald</p>	
<p><b>Hospitality</b> Jen FitzGerald</p>	



Wild Lord Taggart  
Available 07.01.17

Contests Director: Lisa Fenley reported:

- Need volunteers for both contests.

Great Expectations Contest: Lisa Fenley reported:

- Contest date extended as editors need more time.
- Looking for two more to help with the contest reorganization. Need technical expertise.

Carolyn Contest: Jen FitzGerald reported:

- Contest is complete.
- Will turn in covers for ad.

CONTINUED BELOW...

Meeting Minutes continued from above...

#### COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:

PAN Liaison: Chrissy Szarek reported:

- Pencils for book releases / sales to members present
  - o Cindy Dees--four books—Runaway Ranch; Chris Keniston--seventh book in the series
- 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:

- o Need someone to take position
  - o If you are not a PRO member, please see Clover Autrey for application information.
- PRO pins must be purchased from RWA.
- o PRO membership allows you on the NT PRO loop, where training and information are provided to our chapter PRO members.

Hospitality: Jen FitzGerald reported:

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

Writing Incentives: Chrissy Szarek reported:

- Written:
- Edited:

Bylaws: Angi Morgan reported:

- No Report.

Spotlights: Jen FitzGerald reported:

- Risa Brown

35th Anniversary Committee:

- Charm Program: Chrissy Szarek reported:
  - o If you haven't submitted your totals for June, the window is closed. Please send totals the Friday before the next meeting.
  - o June 17 is the last day to sign up to participate.
- Anthology / Continuity: Jen FitzGerald reported:
  - o Two stories written already so far
  - o Must take place in Dew Drop, Texas
  - o Due January 27, 2018
  - o Must be romance, but no erotic. Must be PG-13.
  - 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, July 15, 2017 at La Hacienda.

The meeting adjourned at 10:56 a.m.

Submitted electronically by Robin Nelson.

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Corrected: \_\_\_\_\_

## **MARKETING FOR AUTHORS**

And yes, Facebook is your friend.

*"Writing a book and not marketing it, is like winking at a guy in the dark. No one knows what you're doing except you." – Mia London*

Before you roll your eyes, hang in there. I'm confident there are at least one or two tips in this article that will make your read-time worthwhile. So let's get right to it.

There are several things all authors need to start on the road to success. Here are the Top 3:

- 1) An email (newsletter) list
- 2) A landing page (i.e. your webpage)
- 3) A social media presence

For your email list, begin adding names into a free program like MailChimp. After 2,000 names, start a second list to get around their 24-hour rule and still maintain a free account.

How do I grow my list?

- 1) The blue button on your Facebook business/author page (under your banner photo) should direct people to your website to sign up for your newsletter.
- 2) Any time you do a book signing, give something away that requires capturing the entrant's name and email address.
- 3) Use a website, like Fresh Fiction, that will give you the list of entrants whenever you do a giveaway.

Regarding a newsletter, you do not need to break your back. In fact, too much and people tend to ignore it. I personally send out a newsletter about once a month. I want to save the audience's attention for the important stuff like new releases, sales, and contests.

Initially, your website doesn't need to look like you're a Fortune 100 company. I promise. It needs to be pleasing to the eye, professional-looking, not too cluttered, a good mix of pictures and text, and easy to navigate. (These same rules apply to your newsletter.) Your webpage represents you. The basics should include a little about you as an author, your books with covers and buy links, a place for people to sign up for your newsletter, and links to your social media. For your domain name, I highly recommend your author name, i.e. MiaLondon.com. Simple enough for people to find you. Lastly, if you are a do-it-yourselfer, try Website Builder for building and hosting your website. There are several hundred templates to choose from and you can update your page whenever you want.

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.

I know some authors use their personal page exclusively on Facebook, in the hopes of having their posts show more easily. However, there are several benefits to having a business page.

- 1) You are limited to 5,000 friends on your personal page. A business page allows endless followers.
- 2) You can schedule posts. Too much to do every day? Set aside some time on a given day, say Sunday, and schedule your posts for the upcoming week. Additionally, there are tools, like HootSuite, that allow you to schedule on Twitter, etc. as well. Remember, do not post the same thing on all sites on the same day. For example, you have a great quote from Princess Di. Post it Monday on FB, Tuesday on Twitter, Wednesday on Instagram, etc. Some people do not go on social media every day. This gives them an opportunity to see something different from you on each platform. Make sense? And the magic number is 3—post 3 times a day to increase exposure and reach.
- 3) You can see how many people view your posts. This is useful if you'd like to reuse a successful post again in the future.
- 4) Last but not least, you can advertise via your author page. For little money, you can vastly increase exposure of a new release (for example) to a specific target market. How incredible is that?

And don't forget—you can invite a friend to Like to business page just once.

This is just a little snapshot, but I hope enough to get you on the right track.

Hey! Did you just wink?

~\*~\*~

*Mia London is an indie author of erotic romance and absolutely loves it. You can find her on Facebook and Twitter, and her website is [www.MiaLondon.com](http://www.MiaLondon.com). Drop by and say hi. If you have any questions, drop her a line.*

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The following article first appeared in the May 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!

~\*~\*~

**EVEN WHEN THEY ARE WRONG, THEY ARE RIGHT: THE ART OF RECEIVING  
CRITIQUE**

by Terri Richison

All written words receive critique in one form or another. Critiques come from mass-market readers – even if they don't leave a review for your story. When they buy your next book, they have given you a favorable critique.

If you have an agent, you are receiving a critique from the agent's point of view. An editor will critique from an editor's point of view. Your mother's critique brings a totally different tone to the 'criticism' that is critique.

There are self-published authors who write totally alone, so that the first person who shares their words is a reader. Readers might pre-order your next book and leave a 5 star review – positive critiques that let the world know they enjoyed your book. Or you might never hear from them and they never buy another of your titles – a bad critique. Critiques at this level are pretty much out of a writer's control.

Some of us choose to work with a critique partner or critique group – these critiques are often presented in weekly sessions as you are writing the story. Critique groups can also act as brainstorming sessions when you hit that block and can't figure out what happens next. The most important thing to consider when forming a critique group is trust and respect. If you don't trust your partners to always tell you the truth, your arrangement is doomed before it starts. Sometimes the truth hurts – it is still their job to tell you the truth. It is your job to receive that truth with an open mind and you must never take it personally! You must respect them as individuals and as writers. Working with someone you don't respect as a writer is a waste of time for both of you.

I currently critique in a group of four. Each of my critique partners bring her own strength to the art of critique. I'm really good at catching timeline and continuity issues. But I suck at grammar and commas.

I've also critiqued with just one other person – both arrangements bring value to the table, but have extremely different time commitments. The size of the group and the number of pages you agree to critique will greatly impact the amount of time required to be a good partner.

In our group, the person receiving the critique isn't allowed to speak (and trust me, I suck at this, but I do try my best.) Receiving a critique is as much an art as giving a critique. First, remember that you are not there to defend what you wrote, the way you wrote it, etc. You are there to receive input from others, and to do that you must listen with an open mind and closed mouth.

They have read your words and are providing fair and honest comments based on what they read. If what they read is not what you intended, that's on you. However, always, always, always remember this is YOUR story. First, foremost and always, be true to your story!

As a good critique partner, you have an obligation to evaluate every comment made – but you do not have an obligation to agree! Although, assuming you are working with

individuals you respect as writers and as readers, then your job is to evaluate why they made the comment. What part of what they read (not what you wrote – what they read – a very important distinction when receiving critique) caused them to pause in the reading and make a comment.

Perhaps the phrase or sentence where they made the comment isn't the problem at all. Perhaps you have altered the pacing, or maybe you've thrown a very formal phrase into a casual story. Maybe you have created an expectation for something that is completely different from what actually made it to the page.

Being a good critique partner does not mean you make every change suggested. It does not mean you agree with every comment. Just because they said it doesn't make it right – it also doesn't make it wrong. Examine what they said, and then dig deeper to find the reason behind the comment. Why did they make this comment at this particular place? What was it that stopped them while reading this sentence or paragraph?

A good critique partner evaluates every comment. Sometimes, suggestions are spot on and that is great! Sometimes, suggestions help you realize that you missed an opportunity to delve deeper into character or plot development. Or maybe what is missing is a deep point of view that you innately have because you know these characters inside and out -- but perhaps the words you put on the page did not make it into deep point of view and move the story forward in the direction you want it to go.

Even if what they say is wrong, they are always right to say it! It is now your job to discover the underlying issue that caused your readers to pause and make a comment.

Have you written today?

~\*~\*~

*Terri Richison lives in Clear Lake City with the prototype of all her heroes, her high school sweetheart and husband of forty plus years. She is working toward a goal of self-publishing women's fiction. When she isn't writing or spoiling her grandsons, she is trying to keep up with her giant Great Dane, Thor (giant, even by Dane standards.)*

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Thanks,

Leslie Marshman  
Editor, In Print!

~\*~\*~



From The President - Try Listening  
by Ann Peake

Technology Has Brought Change - Technology has changed the way we read books. Oh sure, there will always be those Old Schoolers (me included) who love a hard copy book in their hands. The feel, the smell, the weight of a bound book – there ain't nothing like it. For most folks, though, reading has moved firmly into the electronic era. And that's okay. Change is inevitable, and I won't lie and say there aren't advantages to e-readers. But there is another way to enjoy your favorite authors that is less talked about – Audio Books.

For Readers - From a reader's perspective – at least in my case – it affords the opportunity to multi-task. I blaze through stories during my morning and afternoon commutes. However, I'm also on a budget, so I shop for my audio books at Half Price Books. Why do I mention this? Because I am limited in my selection. This has led to me purchase stories that fall far outside my preferred genre. I've listened to Women's Fiction, Westerns, Spy Thrillers, Cozy Romance, and Suspense, and not a single one of these stories I would have ever known if I had been reading rather than listening. So, cool. As a reader, I've broadened my scope.

For Writers – It may, however, surprise you to learn that the greatest value I've gleaned from audio books has not been as a reader but as a writer. To make my point, let me tell you a story.

A Story - So one day, I purchased an audio book by a very well-known author. To be fair, it was an early work, and although I have not read (or listened to) anything additional by this author, since he has gone on to publish many NYT bestselling works, I must assume that his writing improved. Improved? Oh yes. That's exactly the word I meant to use.

Before I explain that, let me first admit to having a love affair with adverbs. I used to wrinkle my nose with distaste whenever I heard someone disparage the use of all those lovely little adverbs, UNTIL . . . the story I was listening to was liberally peppered with them.

Perhaps liberally is too mild an adverb – even for me. The damn things were EVERYWHERE. Hundreds of adverbs. So many, in fact, that I became completely distracted from the story itself, which even now I cannot remember. Once I got over my frustration, it became a game for me – listening for all the adverbs.

The Moral – Though it pains me to admit, even to this day, what I learned from this experience was that all those warnings about adverbs were correct. Like the use of any grammatical tool, adverbs have their place. Their overuse, however, can become frustrating and a distraction. For me, a lover of adverbs, this message did not truly resonate until I heard the result. Would I have had the same reaction if I had read the book rather than listening to it? Who can say? But to be sure the lesson was pounded home as I listened to that story.

More Schooling - Since that day, I've learned even more from my audio book experiences.

For example, I've heard the differences between female and male authors. Case in point: Generally speaking, when a female author is inside a character's head, it's about revealing emotions and feelings. Male authors reveal inside reactions to outside stimuli. I've also noticed there are notable differences in specific genres. Case in point: A story about espionage will go into considerable detail about tactical weapons, whereas westerns tend to spend that page time on details about the land and sky.

The Overall Point – I don't think there is a one of us who hasn't heard the advice about the value reading your own work aloud. What I'd like to suggest is that you take that most excellent advice and expand upon it to include hearing other authors' stories read aloud as well. I promise that not only will you add another story under your belt, but you might just learn something along the way.

~\*~\*~

*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.*

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### Dew Drop Continuity

We have twenty 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](mailto:jen.fitzgerald.writer@gmail.com)  
(and, you know, remove all the spaces)

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OUR JULY PROGRAM--July 15, 2017

Inka Nisinbaum  
Motivational Speaker

Do you know this feeling when you sit down, start typing and every cell of your body just knows: This is going to be a bestseller! And then, the next day, you sit in front of the same PC, the same story and you think “I should never write anything other than a grocery list ever again.”

Doubt is part of writing. Everybody doubts him- or herself, famous authors, and not yet famous authors. Everybody. And once you overcome your doubt, your book is done, the rejection letters will start flying in.

Writing is hard. It's a tough business, but there are ways to overcome doubt and the feeling of defeat. Based on experience and a Master in Psychology Inka can teach you how to get where you want to be: Writing your second published book.

Everything is possible! You just have to be brave enough to make it happen.

~\*~\*~

*Inka Nisinbaum is originally from Germany. She has a Master in Psychology, worked in a juvenile prison, with schizophrenic patients in Vienna/Austria up until 2009 when she and her husband moved to the United States.*

*Arriving in the states, not being able to work right away as a psychologist, Inka fulfilled a long-lived dream of hers - becoming a published author in Germany by writing her memoir. When Inka was born she was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis and a life expectancy of four years. When she turned 23 she had a double lung and liver transplant, saving her life but also leaving her broken and not able to trust in her body or life anymore.*

*Needless to say, Inka overcame her doubts and got back on her feet. In 2013 she became the only woman worldwide who had a baby after a double lung and liver transplant.*

*Right now, Inka is writing her second English novel, is cursing the English language from time to time, is on the lookout for her first American literary agent, and inspiring people with her motivational talks on how to raise above all, and become the person you want to be – even if it's a writer.*

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