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Jan/Feb 2018 NTRWA Newsletter

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## North Texas Romance Writers of America

# Daniel Wells

February 17th, 11:00 am

**GET PUBLISHED 10:00 to 10:30**

**BUSINESS MEETING & LUNCH 12:15 to 1:30**

### [The Heart to Heart](#)

NTRWA  
Founded March 1983  
Chapter 33, Region 5  
Jan/February 2018  
Volume 36, Issue 1

### **2018 BOARD**

#### **President**

Mia London

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C.A. Szarek

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#### **Contest Director**

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Randee Leigh

### [Swiss Army Writer](#)

### [Diversification Through Screenwriting](#)

"The Modern Writer is Evolving."

Writers have to be media machines, query conquerors, and storytelling experts. We have to rub elbows and write hundreds of thousands of words a year. As the demands asked of the average writer grow, so does our frustration with the industry.

But the landscape of television and film is evolving rapidly as well. As business is moving from theaters to streaming services, and the technology surrounding the film industry evolves, the demand for high-concept films and television series is rising, and audiences take their conversation about their favorite films/series to social media.

Join us Saturday, February 17th for *Swiss Army Writer - Diversification through Screenwriting*. We'll discuss the business of screenwriting, screenplay format, and the similarities/differences between writing prose and writing for the screen."



In 2015, Daniel

**Program Director**  
Linda Bolton

YOU CAN BE A PART OF THE  
NT MACHINE!! CONTACT MIA.

**2018  
Committee  
Chairs**

**PAN Liaison**  
Chrissy Szarek

**PRO Liaison**  
Ranee Leigh

**Bylaws**  
Angi Morgan

**The Carolyn**  
Jen FitzGerald

**Great  
Expectations**  
Amanda McMurrey,  
Susan Miller,  
Carolyn Rae

**Hospitality**  
Amanda McMurrey

**Spotlight**  
Angi Morgan

**Writing  
Incentives**  
Kim Miller

**35th Anniversary**  
Jen FitzGerald

**Two Step 2019  
Conference**  
Open



returned to Dallas with one goal: to find his tribe by visiting as many writing organizations in Dallas as possible. After visiting and participating in over a dozen groups, Daniel found Dallas Screenwriting Crew, submitted to a short screenplay pitch contest, and won: *The Lamp* was filmed, and premiered Summer, 2016.

Daniel stepped up as the Creative Director for DSC and Development Executive of Dallas Film Crew in 2016, and has transformed DSC into a non-profit within Dallas Film Alliance. DSC sponsors table reads, pitch rounds, and workshops which explore the world of writing for film.

Daniel is an acting organizer with WORD--Writing Organizations 'Round Dallas--and works to make Dallas a haven for writers and filmmakers.

*Lily is Here*, Daniel's Feature-length Screenplay, is in development with Carpe Diem Pictures, and is scheduled to beginning filming Summer, 2018.



**The Carolyn  
Readers  
Choice  
Award**



- Accepting entries

through Feb. 14th

- Books published in 2017
- NTRWA members \$25.00
- **Winners'** covers receive two weeks July ad space on RT's Daily Blog.



## From the President

### Mia London

Last month we talked about goals. Let's take it a step further.

When you set up your big goals—like going to Europe, buying a new car, making NYT—you break it down into smaller steps. Even if you don't realize it, you recognize the little things add up.

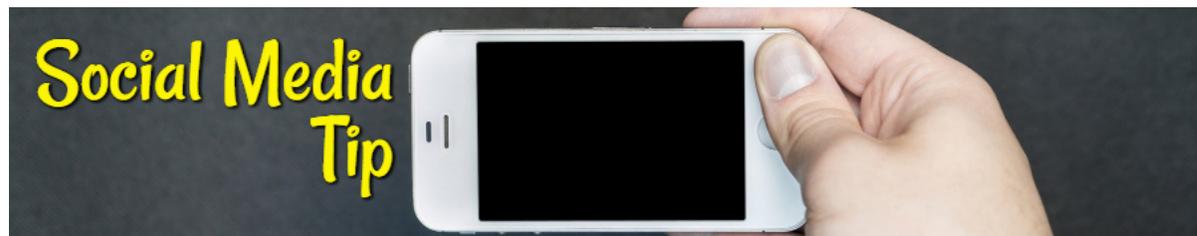
Well, sometimes we need motivation to accomplish those little things. A reward is key! Here's how...

I remember listening to a speaker who asked if anyone in the audience liked watching Shark Tank. Many hands went up. He said "I love it. I love it so much I use it as a reward." He would lay out his goals, things he wanted to accomplish, for the week. Very often they are the same week after week, like meet so many people, (in our case, write so many words). Then he used Shark Tank as a reward on the weekend when he completed what he'd set out to do.

- Here's the key: you want a reward (watching Shark Tank), so your brain focuses on the tasks necessary to get that reward (writing). Make sense?

So when you set your goals, set your rewards for your milestones, too!  
He told the audience he would binge watch 3 episodes that he'd recorded. *Rooky*.

Drop me a line anytime. Hugs!



Want to learn what type of social media works for your genre?  
Do some research.

Stalk the leading authors (of your genre) to discover what they do to  
engage their audiences.

Repost, Retweet. Like. Comment. Observe what their fans enjoy.



by *Susan Person*

Are you a plotter or a pantster? I'm part of the group that likes to call ourselves plantsters. Whether you're a plotter, pantster, or a plantster, we all need to have some kind of idea of our yearly goals, achievements, business plan, and earnings.



Last year, I caught a Facebook Live Robin Covington did on Bria Quinlan's *AuthorLife Planner*. She walked through all the different components of it, and I thought it was worth the investment to give it a try. As an unpublished RWA PRO member, it helped me identify personal and professional goals as well as gave me guide posts to achieve those. I think a published author, especially an indie published author, would get even greater benefit.

The planner starts with seven exercises designed to help you identify your dreams, goals, what's important to you, where you spend your time, what makes up your income, and what you value most. Once you have this broad scope, you can make them more specific and rank your most important and most urgent tasks. When I completed the ranking exercise, my most urgent task was polishing my submission to the Golden Heart contest. My mom had not been on a vacation since my dad got sick several years before he passed away, and that topped my most important list. Looking back, I can say I completed both of those with one writing related and one not. Although, I did get some good writing inspiration from the vacation with Mom! Merging your writing tasks and non-writing tasks is part of the goal of the exercises and helps with time management. It, also, shows if you are focused on the right things or if time spent is on the area you meant it to be.

Then the planner moves into exercises that cover expenses and scheduling time on the calendar for projects, social media, deadlines, etc. Not being published with formal deadlines, I found this section a little more difficult. I had to wrangle myself in to set my own deadlines. Overall, it did help me by forcing me to schedule.

The last three quarters of the workbook is made of monthly and weekly calendars to track tasks, writing/editing, marketing/business, life, and joy. Each month includes a "Month in Review" to take a look at how it turned out as far as goals and financially. This is where successes, lessons learned, and changes for next month can be recorded. Since I'm not yet published, I tracked my word goals and successes related to those here. If you are published, it's a great place to have a glance at how the month went financially too. I track my word goals on Scrivener, but the daily total disappears at midnight. This was a great place for me to record it.

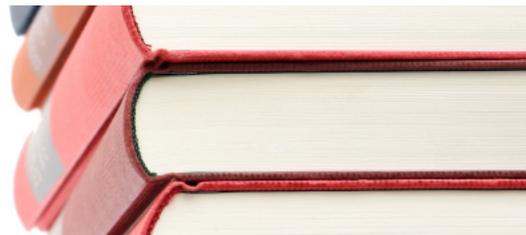
One of the best parts about the planner is the year end wrap up where you can reflect on the year with a series of questions. Some of them are writing related, but there are other life questions to see the misses and, more importantly, all the good things you have done in the year. This leads in to a retrospective section where changes for the next year can be pinpointed. For me, I found during NaNoWriMo I tend to get more writing done in the evening if I get up a little early to write some words. Whether it is 100, 500, or 1500, it amps up my motivation for when I get home from the day job. As an added plus, I do not have regret if life happens since I got words down for the day.

Whether you are an expert planner like Robin Covington or a less than perfect one like me, this workbook/planner does the job. It's not too late to pick the 2018 version up and start your year off right! I'm ordering mine today! Here's the [Amazon link](#) if you want to check it out.

# Get Published

## Cindy Dees

10:00 to 10:30



Cindy Dees kicks off the GET PUBLISHED programs at the February meeting. She'll share craft tips about story structure and how to "drop in" big story ideas.

MARCH = CA Szarek, Self-Editing Tips    APRIL = Kym Roberts, Crafting Fight Scenes

### CONTESTS NEEDS

NT's primary source of income to provide great speakers at our meetings is our two contests:

- The Great Expectations Contest for unpublished works

- The Carolyn Readers Choice Award for 2017 published titles

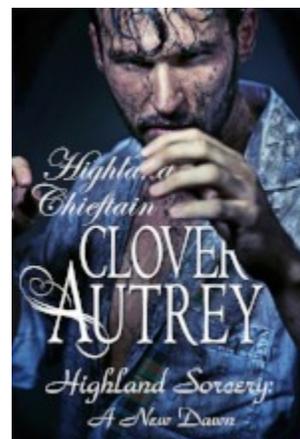
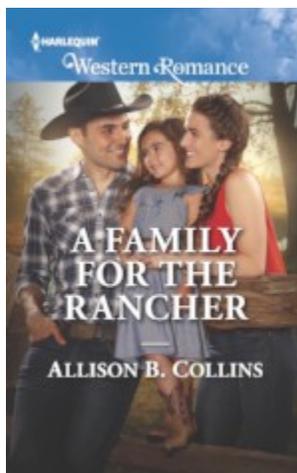
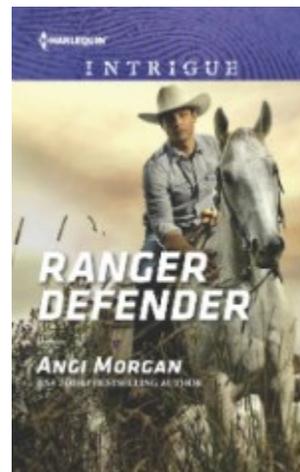
How can **YOU** contribute? (or volunteer?)

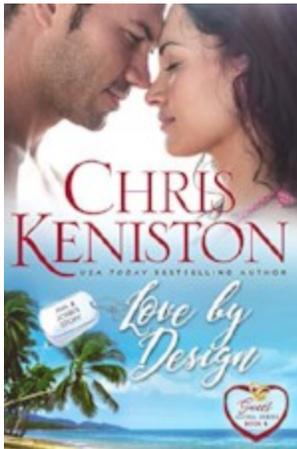
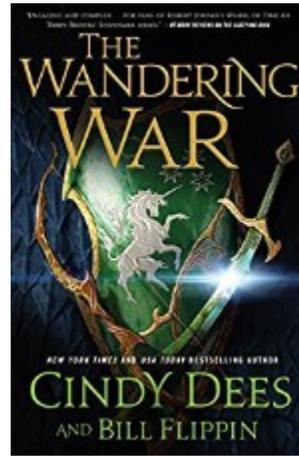
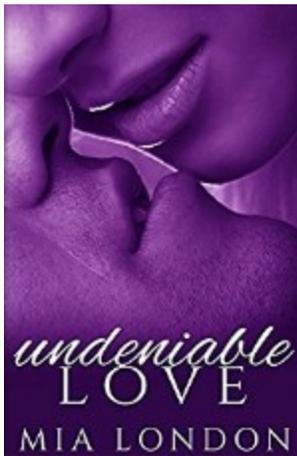
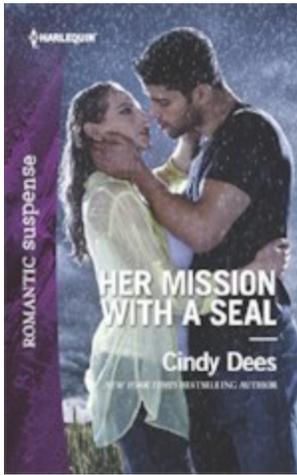
- **SPREAD THE WORD** ~Forward requests & information to fellow writers
- **BLOG POSTER** ~post updates as needed to the contest blogs (through May)
- **GE FIRST ROUND JUDGE** ~ at least one entry or up to FIVE
- **TCRCA ENTRY/CONFIRMATION** ~as entries arrive, enter information into the master spreadsheet and send pre-written confirmation emails (through Feb 15)
- **TCRCA REMINDERS** ~send pre-written reminders to judges (through April)
- **TCRCA VERIFICATIONS** ~compare the entry form data to the contest spreadsheet verifying entered scores and that the judge is marked ready to receive the next book (through April)

Training will be provided for all volunteer positions. If you can help, please contact the Contest Director, Lisa Fenley, at [FenleyGrant.Author@gmail.com](mailto:FenleyGrant.Author@gmail.com)

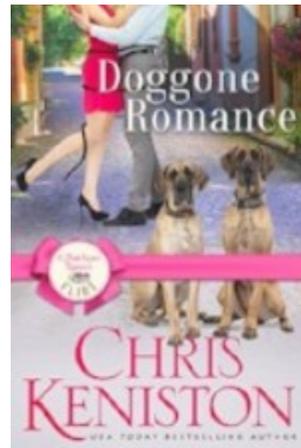
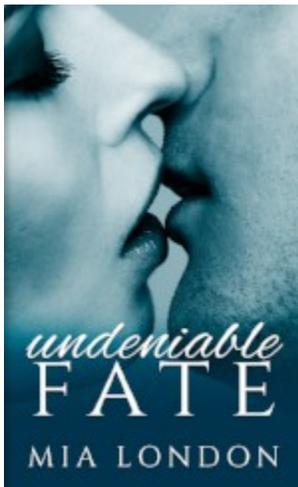
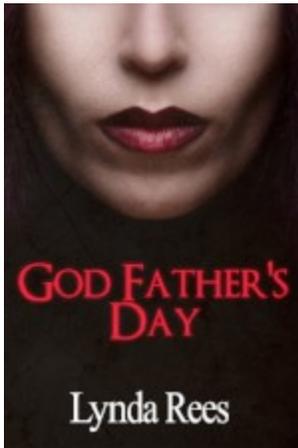
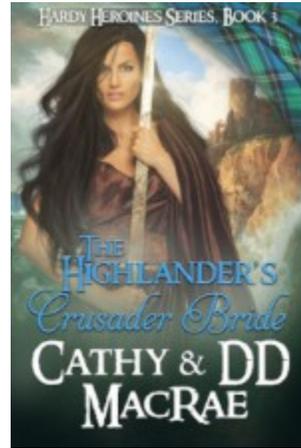
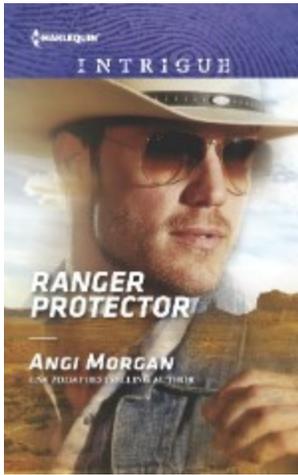


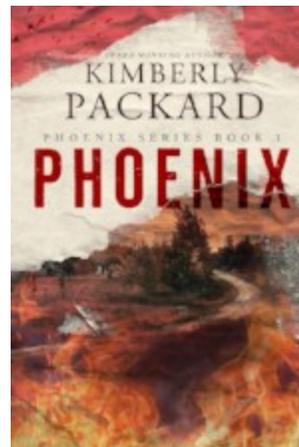
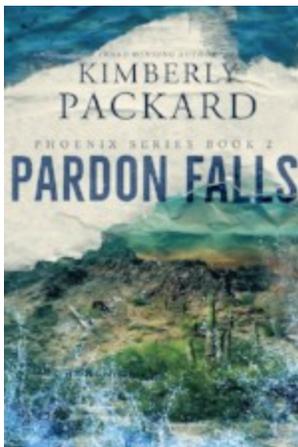
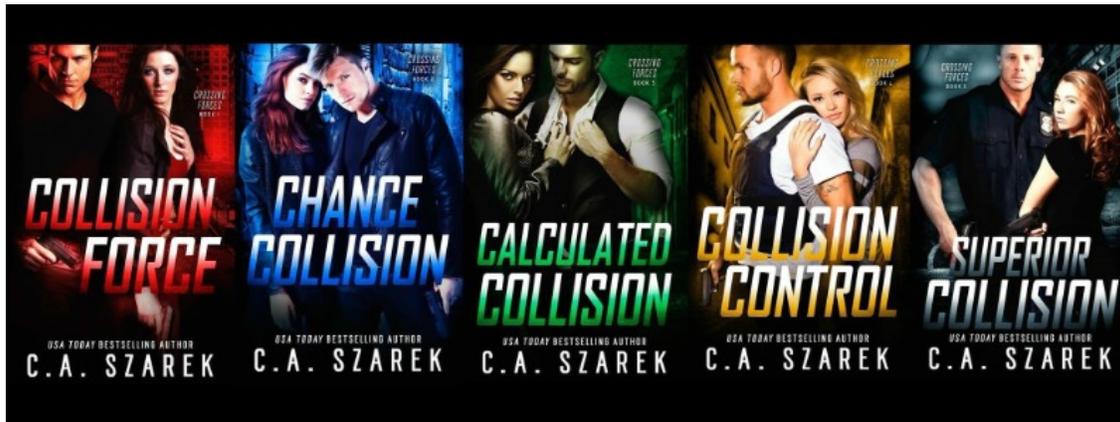
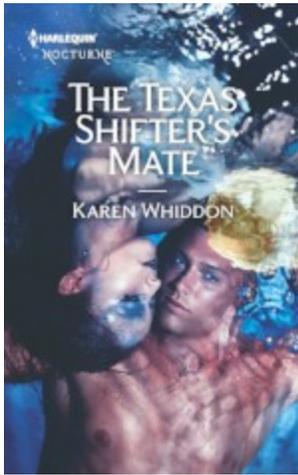
## FEBRUARY

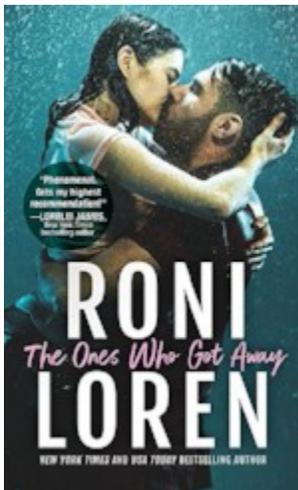
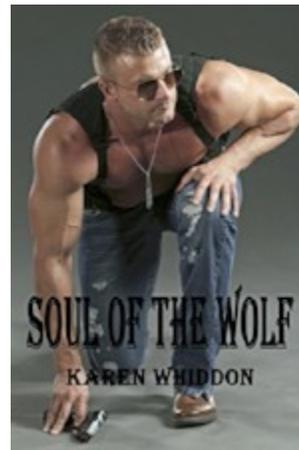




**JANUARY**







**TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP**

PAY

MEMBERSHIP FORM

## **CARVING OUT TIME FOR WRITING**

Recap of Dean Wesley Smith's Lecture  
by Jen FitzGerald



One of our chapter mates—you know who you are, RR—shared Dean Wesley Smith's offer of a free lecture. Unfortunately, it was a lecture of his choice, but it was free, so no looking a gift horse in the mouth, eh?

Many of you know that a lot of what DWS says resonates with me, so I went ahead and listened to the lecture. I liked that his 72-minute talk was broken up into 8 shorter sections. I didn't have to commit the whole she-bang at once, but could listen in fits and starts between other tasks. On the other hand, I didn't feel like this lecture was worth the \$50 he normally charges for it, but I suppose you're paying for the name as much as you

are for the content.

*Onto the lecture notes...*

DWS's first suggestion was to log your day for seven days in fifteen-minute increments. Yep. Keep track of everything you do in each fifteen-minute segment of your day. For seven days. It's an onerous task, but if you're really busy and really want to know how you spend your time and really want to find time to write, well, this is definitely one way to do it.

Once you've logged your time, you can see how much you spend watching tv, how much you spend on social media, spend time with family, on yourself, etc. With facts in hand, you can see how much time you may be wasting on nonsense and that you can use to write. Even in fifteen-minute increments.

He recommends you get your spouse/partner/significant other and family on board. Explain to them what you want to do. Many of you know it's hard to accomplish things without family support and sometimes even help.

Back to the fifteen minutes for a moment...yes, he wants you to write in any chunk you find and not try to cobble them together for thirty-minute or hour-long sessions. The goal is *carving* out the time, not rearranging your daily schedule. The goal is also to find a mere 4 to 6 hours each week.

Let's look at the math really quick. If you can write 50 words in fifteen minutes, you'll have 800 to 1200 words a week. Increase your productivity to 100 words and you're looking at 1600 to 2400 words a week. You see how the numbers can increase the more you use those writing muscles and learn to focus on just writing during those fifteen minutes. He also stipulates that you're either writing or staring at the screen during those fifteen minutes--nothing else.

Okay, so now that I've contemplated DWS's words and I'm sitting down to write this article, I realize that everything else he talks about is more motivation to carve out the time to write than suggestions on how to do so, but the title indicates this is a recap, so I'll press on.

à **Deadlines.** If you write for a publisher then you have deadlines. Your mileage may vary on how motivating versus stress-causing a deadline is, but, either way, you have a target date to finish by and there are consequences if you don't. If you're your own publisher, you may give yourself a deadline, but is there a severe enough consequence for you if you miss it? Sure, you miss out on potential income, but I don't feel like there's enough immediacy there. It takes time before you get those royalty payments. Perhaps finding a fellow writer and placing a wager. Loser buys the winner a meal. Perhaps putting money in a personal kitty and only taking the funds out once you've met your deadline. You're writing fiction, I'm sure you can come up with a consequence that works for you.

à **Streaks & Challenges.** By this he means, use a streak to encourage yourself to write. For example: I'm going to write 250 words a day, every day, for two months. The goal may seem a bit daunting on the front end of it, but as you pass a week, two weeks, four weeks, etc, you gain momentum, you feel excited and possibly eager to continue the streak. Using a challenge can help get you started.

With all of the above items, having an accountability group/partner is helpful and definitely recommended. They can enforce the consequences, they {obviously} keep you accountable, they will cheer you on as you go.

à Another thing that DWS talks about is sacrifice. Once you've got that log and you see where your time is being

spent, are there things you're willing to sacrifice to gain more writing time? Are you willing to sacrifice tv time? One episode of an hour-long show gives you three or four fifteen-minute time segments to utilize, depending on whether you watch with or without commercials. Are you willing to sacrifice sleep? Can you get up an hour earlier or go to bed an hour later every day or even two or three days a week to gain some time?

He likens this to attending college. You're willing to sacrifice huge amounts of money on top of the time it takes to go to class and complete homework. Aren't you willing to do the same for a writing career you presumably want? Also, the cost here is much less, though not necessarily non-existent if you're attending conferences and taking classes.

He does not recommend sacrificing time with your family. Do not give up date night. Do not give up church. Do not give up time watching your kids grow up. Do not give up time living life. That's counterproductive.

à Give your writing value. Writing and creating has value even though you may feel your work is not that good at this point in time. Give the writing profession its due. In the grand scheme of things, books have value. The people who write them have value. Apply that to yourself and to your work.

DWS is huge believer in Heinlein's rules of writing, especially the "business habits" as Heinlein terms them. They are as follows:

1. You must write.
2. You must finish what you start.
3. You must refrain from rewriting except to editorial order.
4. You must put it on the market.
5. You must keep it on the market until sold.

I think 3 and 4 are his favorites. In terms of indie publishers, he tweaks it to say "publish it." Some of you may remember these rules from our trek through DWS's "Myths of Publishing" on the PRO Loop a while back. This list made waves amongst those who participated in the discussion.

Why did I include them? Because DWS also says that writers are notoriously bad at judging their own work. By putting your work on the market quickly, you allow readers to judge and give value to your work when you, yourself, may not be able to.

So that's the gist of DWS's lecture. You have until January 22, 2018, to listen for yourself for free, if you're so inclined. Go [here](#) and follow DWS's instructions.

~

*Jen FitzGerald has loved romance since her Winnie the Pooh days. Christopher Robin and Piglet have always been platonic soulmates. As a teen, Jen cut her romance teeth on Silhouette's teen romance line and Danielle Steele books concurrently. She's still an avid reader, but these days, Jen has added writing romances of her own to her list of fun things to do. Jen lives in Fort Worth, Texas, with her husband and their dog. Their three children are now adults and out terrorizing the world at large instead of them. When not working her day job, Jen spends a lot of time reading, writing, watching sports, and perusing her social media platforms of preference. She also enjoys music, cross stitching, and chatting online with writer friends.*





## SNOW

"Not much, but we'll take it."

Cathy MacRae

Romance in a Kilt

[www.cathymacraeauthor.com](http://www.cathymacraeauthor.com)



### **NOTES FROM A CONTEST JUDGE: ONE POV**

*by Anne Peck*

I've judged over 20 entries in three different RWA chapter contests in the past six months, and for the most part, I've enjoyed the process. As I look at the differences and similarities in the three different processes, I thought I'd share what I've taken away from the experience. I judge as a reader rather than a writer, and this is one judge's opinion. See what you think.

1. The more specific the criteria on the score sheet, the easier it is for the judge to know what s/he is evaluating and for the entrant to understand what part of the craft was judged.
2. As a reader, I want something to happen in the first three pages, and it should be life-changing, e.g., a murder, boy meets girl, the will is read, a child is missing. All of us start with too much background that the reader just has to know before the story starts—and the reader doesn't. Engage her curiosity on what happens

next and skip how they became best friends beforehand. In almost every entry I judged there was a scene that met my criteria, and I could suggest that s/he begin there and use the background sparingly in flashbacks. This is something I learned as a contestant last year, and it's universal in the entries I see.

3. Every story needs a plot, but a romance effectively requires a second plot. The romance is the important one—when they meet, sparks fly; they get pulled apart emotionally and/or physically; things get tougher as they get together/pull apart; and eventually they overcome their personal issues (internal conflict) and the story difficulties (external conflict) for a HEA. The story plot provides difficulties beyond their emotional ones, but it should not take precedence over the romance, or you're no longer writing a romance novel.

4. Description is important to draw the reader into the story, but paragraphs of insects buzzing and birds chirping (or background) do not advance the story. Pacing is the speed at which the story progresses—things happen. Pages of description in which nothing is happening but the environment bring the story to a halt. A little goes a long way to help the reader experience the scene. As a reader I want enough to description to imagine the rest as the scene's activity occurs.

I think these are the areas where we judges can provide the most input to the contestants. It also gives us specific approaches to evaluating entries across diverse categories, since these four areas apply to all of them.

*Anne Peck's colorful—if not checkered—career has involved global travel, an ability to improvise, and a sense of humor about the unexpected. She's been a Latin teacher, a career Air Force logistics officer, and taught appliqué. Currently, she's working on a contemporary romantic suspense novel. She and husband Ron are staff for their Siamese, Fitzwilliam Darcy. Find her on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).*

Sign up to judge for the Great Expectations chapter contest.  
Even TWO entries is a great help.  
[http://bit.ly/NTRWA\\_GE\\_JudgeForm](http://bit.ly/NTRWA_GE_JudgeForm)

## GENERAL MEETING MINUTES of JANUARY 20, 2018

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on **Saturday, January 20, 2018** at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The President and the President-Elect were present. The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m.

### OFFICER REPORTS:

**President: Audra Lewandowski reported:** Regular meetings will now start at 10:45. From 10-10:30 meetings will focus on the Get Published Program. Focus will be on working towards getting members published. Mentors are needed. If you are interested in joining in as a mentor or mentee contact mia@mialondon.com. No Texas Two Step this year. Will focus on new Get Published Program. New program called Get Published. Meeting will start now at 10:00 with Regular Meeting at 10:45.

**Secretary: Robin Nelson reported:** The December 10, 2017 meeting minutes were approved and filed for audit.

**Treasurer: Cindy Dees reported:** The Treasurer's report was presented and filed for audit. Thanks to Lisa Fenley for suggesting the contest move. We are bringing in more money for this year.

**Program Director: Linda Bolton reported:** February's Meeting: Daniel Wells – Screenwriting.

**Membership Director: Randee Leigh reported:** Notes about renewing membership coming out soon

**Communications Director: Angi Morgan reported:** Not Present.

**Contests Director: Lisa Fenley reported: 53 Entries in GE so far, more than normal for this early on.**

**The Carolyn Coordinator Jen FitzGerald reported:** A new coordinator will be needed for next year; 92 books entered and 132 judges; More help needed with contest; Contemporary is very full but still accepting entries. All other genres have many openings.

**COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS: PAN Liaison: Chrissy Szarek reported:** 5 pencils for Jen

Fitzgerald for 2017. 1 Pencil for Clover Autrey. 1 pencil for Audra Lewandowski. There are unclaimed pencils from 2016/2017. They are going to be redone for new books. RWA pins for milestones (starting at 5 books published.) Pins are \$10 apiece. Order through RWA. If you make PAN let Chrissy Szarek know.

**PRO Liaison Randee Lee:** If you are not a PRO member, please see Randee 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. Will be emailing members to discuss what you need to get published this year.

**Hospitality: Amanda McMurrey reported:** No Report. **Not Present.**

**Bylaws: Angi Morgan reported:** Not Present.

**35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Charm Program: Chrissy Szarek reported:** Two more months. Twenty-four people participating. March 18 is the finish date. Jen Fitzgerald Clover Autry, Allison Collins, and Linda LaRoque finished books.

**35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Anthology / Continuity: Jen Fitzgerald reported:** If you signed up please send your work in. Must take place in Dew Drop, Texas. Due January 27, 2018. Must be romance, but no Erotic allowed. Must be PG13, Words 3000 to 3500. E-book only. The NTRWA website has a link to find more information and the town 'bible'. Sign up for your space in the anthology. Twenty people participating so far. There is room for more.

**Unfinished Business:** No unfinished business to report.

**New Business:** No new business to report.

**Next Business Meeting:** 10:30 a.m. on February 17, 2018 at La Hacienda.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m. Submitted electronically by Robin Nelson.

## GENERAL MEETING MINUTES of DECEMBER 9, 2017

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on **Saturday, December 9, 2017** at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The President and the President-Elect were present. The meeting was called to order at 10:59 a.m.

### **OFFICER REPORTS:**

**President: Kim Miller reported:**

New Elected Officers and Committee Chairs for 2018: President Elect: Chrissy Szarek; Treasurer: Cindy Dees; Secretary: Robin Nelson; Communications Director: Angi Morgan; Contests Director: Lisa Fenley; Membership Director: Randee Paraskevopoulos; Program Director: Linda Bolton; Pan Liason: Chris Keniston; Hospitality Chair: Amanda McMurrey

Most Words Written and Most Edited Awards for 2017 for published and unpublished Members:

- Golden Spur for most edited by a published member goes to Angi Morgan
- Shining Star for most written pages by a published member goes to Cindy Dees.
- Silver Spur for most edited pages by an unpublished member goes to Carolyn Rae
- Rising Star for most pages written pages by an unpublished member goes to Fenley Grant.

Yellow Rose awarded to Amanda McMurrey for her service.

Free NT membership drawing winner: Randee Paraskevopoulos.

**Secretary: Robin Nelson reported:** The October 21, 2017 meeting minutes were approved and filed for audit.

**Treasurer: Cindy Dees reported:** The Treasurer's report was presented and filed for audit.

**Program Director: Amanda McMurrey reported:** January's Meeting: Sara Megibow of KT Literacy Agency. February Daniel Wells with a program on screen writing.

**Membership Director: Angi Morgan reported:** Renewal is in January and February. Let us know if you renewed in December 2017. One New Member. Fifty-nine Members in total.

**Communications Director: Jen Fitzgerald reported:** Not Present.

**Contests Director: Lisa Fenley reported:** Three Co-Chairs Carolyn Williamson, Amanda McMurrey, Susan Miller for GE.

Great Expectations deadline is January 27. The technical issues being resolved. The Carolyn contest has 47 books entered and 111 judges. Take advantage of discount to sign up. More help needed with contest. Contact Jen Fitzgerald.

**COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:**

**PAN Liaison: Chrissy Szarek reported:** Pencils for 2017 handed out. RWA pins for milestones (starting at 5 books published.) Pins are \$10 apiece. Order through RWA. You must order your pins yourself. If you make PAN let Chrissy Szarek know.

**PRO Liaison:** Need someone to take position.

**Hospitality: Jen FitzGerald reported:** Not Present.

**Bylaws: Angi Morgan reported:** No Report.

**35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Charm Program: Chrissy Szarek reported:** Finished Book Charms awarded to Gina Nelson, Marsha West, Jen Fitzgerald and Kym Roberts.

**35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Anthology / Continuity: Jen FitzGerald reported: Not Present:** If you signed up please send it in.

Must take place in Dew Drop, Texas. Due January 27, 2018. Must be romance, but no Erotic allowed. Must be PG13

Words 3000 to 3500. E-book only. The NTRWA website has a link to find more information and the town 'bible'. Sign up for your space in the anthology. Twenty people participating so far. There is room for more.

**Unfinished Business:** No unfinished business to report.

**New Business:** No new business to report.

**Next Business Meeting:** 10:30 a.m. on January 20, 2018 at La Hacienda.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m. Submitted electronically by Robin Nelson.



Send your news, book covers, articles or reports  
to [newsletter@ntrwa.org](mailto:newsletter@ntrwa.org).  
~Angi, NT 2018 Communications Director

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