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August 2018 NTRWA Newsletter

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FIGHTING DEMONS Internal vs External CONFLICT SEPTEMBER 15

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
September 2018
Volume 36, Issue 9

Meeting Dates:[September](#)[15:](#) Internal/External

Conflict By Jaye Wells

[October 20:](#) Audiobooks By

Kylie Stewart

[November 17:](#) No Meeting[December 15:](#) Holiday Party[April 6, 2019:](#) Damon Suede

FIGHTING DEMONS! Internal vs External Conflict. by Jaye Wells

Conflict is the backbone of EVERY story! Join us on September 15th as we learn from Jaye Wells.

Explore the distinction between internal and external conflict, as well as the the importance of combining the two to create riveting fiction.

Biography of Jaye Wells -

Jaye Wells is the author of several speculative fiction novels. She is best known for writing urban fantasy with her *USA Today* bestselling Sabina Kane series and the Prospero's War series. In 2012, she won the Best Urban Fantasy Reviewers'

2018 BOARD**President**

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Communications**Director**

Lizzie Bailey

Choice Award from *RT Book Reviews* for *Blue-Blooded Vamp*, and her novels *Dirty Magic*, *Volatile Bonds*, and *Silver-Tongued Devil* were also nominated for the award.

Contest Director

Lisa Fenley

Membership**Director**

Randee Leigh

Program Director

Linda Bolton

**#GetPublished for September**

with Cindy Dees

Want to be a part of the NTRWA machine?! Contact Audra - mia@mialondon.com

**2018 Committee Chairs****PAN Liaison**

Chrissy Szarek

PRO Liaison

Randee Leigh

Bylaws

Angi Morgan

QUERY. The word alone is enough to send chills up the spine of every author attempting to get traditionally published. What do you need in a good query? Learn from award-winning author, Cindy Dees.

Cindy will share what she's learned at the GetPublished! mini-meeting at 10am September 15 prior to NTRWA's regular meeting.

The Carolyn

Jen FitzGerald

Great Expectations

Amanda McMurrey,
Susan Miller,
Carolyn Rae

Biography of Cindy Dees -

New York Times and USA Today bestselling author, Cindy Dees started flying airplanes while sitting in her dad's lap at the age of three and got a pilot's license before she got a driver's license. At age fifteen, she dropped out of high school and left the horse farm in Michigan where she grew up to attend the University of Michigan.

Hospitality

Amanda McMurrey

Spotlight

Angi Morgan

Writing Incentives

Kim Miller

35th Anniversary

Jen FitzGerald

Winner of a Golden Heart and Holt Medallion for writing, Cindy is a five-time finalist and two-time winner of the prestigious RITA Award for Romance Fiction, two-time winner of RT Book Review's Best Harlequin Romantic Suspense Novel of the Year, and is a Romantic Times Lifetime Career Achievement nominee.

Two Step 2019**Conference**

Open

From the President

Mia London

With GetPublished! fully underway, and NANOWRIMO around the corner, let's talk about staying motivated to write.

And bear in mind the goal-setting and rewarding yourself that I spoke about early this year.

Borrowing a few techniques from Brian Tracy, you can overcome writer's block and really get motivated to write. Using these techniques, you could write 4-5 books a year.

1. Write Every Day

One of the tricks that artists use and that works well for writers too is to write often. Even when you don't want to type a single word, do it anyways... just write. It triggers something in your brain so that the pathway between your daily routine and your creative side is easier to find.

Create small writing goals that you can achieve every day. You can set goals like, committing to writing 100 words or one page a day. At the end of 365 days, you'll have a 365-page book.

If you want to complete your book faster, you can write a scene or a chapter a day.

Make the time that you sit down to write each day a habit. If you set a time to write in the morning, sit down and write at the same time every morning.

You can also pre-release your book on Amazon and date it to give you extra motivation to have it finished by a certain date. How many of us have done that?

2. Don't Edit As You Write

Save editing for the very end. Switching back and forth between being creative and editing causes you to lose steam.

One of the greatest tools to cultivate motivation is progress. Keep writing and save the editing until you finish the book.

3. Get Rid Of Distractions

Get rid of distractions when you write. Writing a book requires all of your attention. Create a space where there are few if any outside distractions. Put your phone on silent or turn it off. Close down email and social media apps. Leave a do not disturb sign on your door. Filter outside noise with a white noise machine. Your goal is to eliminate all distractions and get into a state of flow.

4. Take A Break

Don't be afraid to put your book aside for a few days when you're feeling blocked, then when you are ready, resume writing. Just make sure that you specify the time that you'll come back to writing. Give yourself a strict deadline, and adhere to it.

Changing your environment may be all you need to jumpstart your creativity. Try writing in a different room, outside, or in a different font color.

5. Use Examples From Others

If you have had the good fortune to read *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill, then you might be familiar with another useful tool for overcoming lacking motivation. That tool is the creation of analogies that support your book.

In *Think and Grow Rich* Hill uses the comparisons of rich and famous people to support or outline his points. When you are stuck, look to people you value and their lives to show examples of what you mean in your book. That process opens up a door that bridges the gap between critical thinking and artistic thinking.

6. Talk It Out

If you're having trouble writing, try talking it out. Write as if you're talking to a friend. As you write, consider that you are telling your story to one of your friends and as you do, write it down. (Talking with a critique partner can be helpful, too.)

Having a conversation with your book is an excellent technique for talking through the problems that you need to solve for others in a casual manner. Talking is often easier than writing which is why this technique helps break your writer's block.

7. Try Creative Writing Prompts

Try creative writing prompts as a way to challenge yourself to write. Those might include: Describe your surroundings — Look out the window and describe the first thing you see in great detail. Keep a journal of these entries as though you are Darwin traipsing through the jungle.

Try a word challenge — Open the dictionary and choose the first word you see. Use that word in a haiku or short quote that your main character might say. There are many writing prompts that writers use to jumpstart their brains and their motivation. Find a few that work well for you.

Being motivated 100% of the time just isn't possible for most authors. So don't get discouraged if you're having a hard time getting started. These tools and techniques may help when you simply did not feel like writing.\

Happy writing!



Amendments to the By-laws

We will have a place set up for voting soon and will send all information to the email loop as we receive it.

You can see the changes in the members-only section of the NT website. Log in with your contact email address.

Your RWA number is your password.

Any questions? Please bring them to the Sept meeting for discussion.



A War of Thumbnails: Is Your Book Cover Helping or Hurting?

by Bethany Brown

About 12 years ago, publishers would really focus on a book's spine. It sounds strange today, I know, but we would spend hours taking spine cutouts to a local bookstore and trying them out within a category (while trying not get caught). We could bring a dozen or more spine strips to a bookstore, stand in front of a category (let's pick parenting) and hold up spine after spine to see what popped among the competition.

- Does the red spine with the white lettering stand out?
- How about a bright blue?
- All Caps?
- Bold or no Bold on that title?
- Neon green (yes—this really pops!)

Don't get me wrong, the cover of a book has always been important. Publishers always wanted something that would "pop," grab a reader's attention, and "leap" off the shelf.

It's just that most books (for years!) were never displayed face out in a store. Sure, there were those on tables or end caps, but the true "war" that we were trying to win was the spine. *What was the most visible, readable spine that jumped out at consumer?*

Now, having a spine with a title, author last name, and publisher logo is important to get a book considered for brick and mortar retail, but the focus has fully shifted back.

What is the most visible, readable, front cover thumbnail that will "jump" off a screen?

Your book cover is likely a thumbnail on a screen that a reader is looking at. Yours could be in a list, table, grid, or even just on your own listing page.

We certainly *strongly* recommend working with a professional cover designer and heeding his or her advice. But don't forget, when you take off your author hat and put on your publisher hat, you will be making marketing, packaging, pricing, *and* design decisions.

With that in mind, here are some important tips when considering your cover design:

Font: Is it readable? Keep in mind that if a reader is *just seeing the thumbnail* and not the title in a listing, you want it to be readable. No, this does not mean a Times New Roman/boring font is required. However, you might want to rethink the super-scripty, upside down swirly font that would take a reader minutes instead of seconds to decipher.

Color: Taking my spine example, it's important to know your category. For example, if category X consists primarily of covers with themes of red, blue, yellow, and/or white, a pop of color—neon, purple, orange—may make some sense. In a sea of books with a similar color palette, something different could really make your cover standout.

Language: It's a ton of fun to develop quirky titles, funky subtitles, and unique ways to title a book. In fact, it's one of my favorite things to do with authors. Here is the thing to keep in mind: Fun, funky, quirky, and unique are fantastic. However, you can't leave it at that. *Something on the cover needs to explain what the book is.* For nonfiction, if you have a quirky title, make sure your subtitle explains exactly what the book is. If the title is pretty straightforward, have some fun with that subtitle. A reader doesn't have the time to work through what the book is if it's not clear in either the title or the subtitle. Rather, they've likely said, "huh?" and moved down to the next book in the list.

Bursts and Violators Can Work: Whether it's an award, a bestseller status, or a really cool endorsement, a break in design to "pop" something off a cover frequently works and helps with that "leap off the page" moment you're looking for.

Imagery: Be smart about the imagery you're using on the cover. Make sure it looks professional, clean and suits your category. This is not the time to *bereally* outside the box. While you definitely want your cover to connect and be visible, make sure it's for the *right reason*. Whatever imagery you use on the cover should be professional, relevant, printable, and in-line with category (see below).

Bend the Rules. Don't Break Them: Don't forget the golden rule of advertising, branding, and marketing...*We teach people what to expect with a category...* That means you can play with the package (purple flowers on my tissue box? Great!) but you can't break the rules entirely (triangle tissues? No thank you). The same is true in books. If a category is *overwhelmingly* all type—play with color, play with font, play with simple imagery. In fact, don't be afraid to add some imagery. But don't break the rule to the point that the reader sees your book cover and it's SO out of category that they skip right by it because they literally don't make the connection.

Actually, we recommend approaching book cover concept design a lot like our book spine research a decade or more ago. Go to your category online and print out several pages in color. See what the colors, fonts, imageries, themes are (they do exist, I promise) and then work with your designer to design your book to compete.

You only have a few seconds before the reader scrolls right by!



Instagram = INSTA-HEADACHE

Okay, I'm exaggerating, but how frustrating is it that you cannot add a link to a post/pic on Instagram without paying for it?

Here are some workarounds.

First, you can add a link to the bio and include it in the posts. But you can add only one link in such a way, so maybe it's your website, blog or Zon page.

Also, there is an app - [Linktree](#) It's a free service that allows you to create a mini website for your Instagram page.

There is no web design knowledge required as the layout is essentially just a list of links. You can add as many links as you want there, plus you can track how many clicks they get.

Start by signing up using your Instagram account on the Linktree website. After that, paste your Linktree in your bio as the sole website. Update your Linktree with a new link every time you post a new photo, and then just put in the caption "link in bio" as always. With this method, at least you don't have to change your bio every time, plus you get some analytics.

Hopefully, Instagram will expand the functionality and make the addition of links available in the nearest future.



September Member Book Releases!

Congratulations to the following members with new releases arriving in September!



New book release in September? Drop us a message to make sure you're featured in your special month - newsletter@ntrwa.org



UPCOMING LOCAL EVENTS

October 20, 2018 | 9:30am-6:00pm

Fort Worth Bookfest

<http://www.fortworthbookfest.com/>

October 21, 2018 | 2:00pm-5:00pm

Buns and Roses Literacy Tea

<http://www.bunsandroses.org>

November 9-11, 2018

Fresh Fiction's Readers and Ritas

<http://www.freshfiction.com>

March 29, 2019 | 11:00am-4:00pm

Home Run Author Event

<https://www.facebook.com/HomeRunAuthorEvent>

Have an event you want to share? Email us via newsletter@ntrwa.org so we can add it to the list!

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES of AUGUST 18, 2018

A regular meeting for the North Texas Romance Writers of America (NTRWA) was held on Saturday, August 18, 2018 at the La Hacienda Restaurant in Colleyville, Texas. The President and the President-Elect were present. The meeting was called to order at 11:05 p.m.

OFFICER REPORTS:

President: Audra Lewandowski:

- There will be mandatory by-law changes for all the RWA chapters. The changes will be sent out on the loop to look over. The vote will take place in September.
 - A cruise committee has been formed to gather information on doing a retreat on a cruise ship in 2019/2020.
-
- The pricing will range from \$400 to \$1000 depending on type of cabin.
 - The tentative date is 4-5 days in November
 - The cruise lines being considered right now are Royal Caribbean or Carnival.
 - More information to come.

President Elect: Chrissy Szarek: No Report.

Secretary: Robin Nelson reported:

- The July 2018 minutes were approved for audit.

Treasurer: Cindy Dees reported:

- There is \$16,483.76 currently in the account.

Program Director: Linda Bolton reported: Not Present.

- The speaker for September will be Holly Fox. She is an attorney, judge and former FBI Agent.

Membership Director: Randee Paraskevopoulos

- One new member.
- Member only section is live.
- The password is your RWA member number.
- Remember to leave name tags at meetings.
- Please contact Randee if you need to change or update the chapter website with new information.

Communications Director: Lizzie Bailey reported: Not Present.

Contests Director: Lisa Fenley reported: Not Present.

- Winner of one of the categories in the Great Expectation contest has gotte her book bought. She wanted to let the chapter know that the critique she got from one of the judges helped get her book sold.
- The contest judges are very much appreciated by the chapter and the entrants. Please consider judging in the future. It really makes a difference. Judges will be needed the end of January 2019.

Great Expectations Contest: Amanda McMurrey reported:

- Category Coordinators are needed for the next year. Please contact Amanda McMurrey if interested. Eight to nine people are needed.

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR REPORTS:**PAN Liaison: Chrissy Szarek reported:**

- RWA pins for milestones (starting at 5 books published.) Pins are \$10 apiece. Order through RWA. If you make PAN let Chrissy Szarkek know.

PRO Liaison: Randee Paraskevopoulos reported:

- 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.

Hospitality: Amanda McMurrey reported:

- Thanks to Cindy Dees for donating books for the raffles.

Unfinished Business: None to report.**New Business:** None to report.

Next Business Meeting: 10:45 a.m. on September 15, 2018 at La Hacienda.
The meeting adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

Submitted electronically by Robin Nelson.

Date Approved: _____

Date Corrected: _____

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www.ntrwa.org*

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