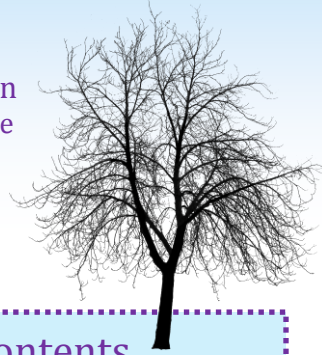




connections

the newsletter of the Connecticut Romance Writers Association
Romance Writers of America, Region One, Chapter One



president's letter

I am a long-time but inconsistent journaler. I write in my journal every day for a while, then abandon it for month, then dust it off again. Apparently, I am not immune to the symbolic meaning of January 1st, because I almost always do my heaviest journaling around the New Year. While I don't actually *call* them New Year's Resolutions, this time of year, I do find myself writing about things that I would like to change in the coming year. And, to be perfectly honest, if I look at what I wrote in prior years, I have to admit to a certain amount of repetition.

If the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results, does it make sense to establish a set of goals that looks suspiciously like last year's list?

Well, yeah.

It's the *execution* that's going to take some work.

My goals are ambitious—that's never going to change. But, this year, I'm resisting my love for putting together complex, multi-layered plans. The more complicated a plan, the more things can go wrong. Bumps in the road aren't necessarily a problem. Trying to travel on too many complex routes simultaneously, on the other hand, can mean you never reach *any* of your destinations.

In this letter, you'll forgive me if I leave out my personal, non-professional goals. As for my writing goals, they are extensive and specific. There are books, both contracted and uncontracted, to finish. There are contracts I plan to obtain, sales figures I plan to reach, advances I plan to receive. My instinct it to put together a giant Gant Chart and plot a series of critical paths. I may still do this—it's a useful exercise in identifying first steps and defining milestones.

And this year, my motto is to keep it simple.

No matter how numerous and ambitious my writing goals, regardless of whether or not I put together my beloved charts, graphs and roadmaps, I need to boil my execution strategies down to the lowest common denominator. My recent involuntary exercise in distilling language (how's that for a euphemism?) has actually turned out to be helpful in this regard.

I came up with a single strategy. One. It's three words long, and following it will be the most effective way to reach my goals, no matter how many or few tasks show up on that Gant Chart or routes are charted on that map. There will still be courses to chart, priorities to determine, false starts, reluctant muses, industry earthquakes and a bunch of things I can't predict. But, no matter what they are, I think my single strategy will get me through them, and closer to those goals.

The strategy: *Work every day.*

The biggest advantage of this strategy is that it *does not intimidate me*. My goals are big and complicated, and can be scary at three in the morning. But the idea of working every day doesn't scare me at all. Some days I'll work long hours, and some days I won't. But, barring a coma, I'll work every day.

So, is that a New Year's Resolution? Call it whatever you want—I've gotta go write it in my journal now.

Looking forward to seeing you in 2011...

Toni Andrews
President, CTRWA

table of contents

President's Letter	1
Calendar	2
Member News	2
Chapter News	2
Member Profile	3
Mixed Messages.....	4
What Your Manuscript Wants	4
Writing Advice.....	5
Our Friend, Ms. Internal Editor...6	
Jim Butcher on Fiction.....	6
Rewards & Reinforcement.....	7
Lessons of 2010	7
Helpful Books for Writers.....	8
Pointless Yet Fun	8
Board Members.....	8

next meeting
january 8th

kristan higgins
talking the talk~the art of
writing dialogue

regular meeting schedule

Critique Group: 9:30

Business Meeting: 11:00

Lunch: 12:00. Don't forget to use
the website to RSVP for either hotel
or brown bag lunch

Speaker 1:00

Post Meeting Workshop
(check calendar)

member news

Hooray for **Beth Seeber**, who took the leap at the last possible moment and entered the Golden Heart! Good luck, Beth!...**Rhonda Lane** has started a short story that first sprouted in the 1990s but has waited patiently for Rhonda's attention....**Huntley Fitzpatrick** is wallowing in revisions but has been assured that there is light at the end of the tunnel and is meanwhile also trying to set up her website.

~ ~ ~ ~

The mighty **Shirley Webb** will be teaching a class at New York University this spring! You go, Shirley!...From **Paula Sharon**: "I'm preparing my list of agents and editors to query on my most recent finished project and am four chapters into another contemporary YA. I figure if I just keep turning out one or two books a year, and putting them out there, eventually, something has got to stick!" That's what we like to hear, Paula!

~ ~ ~ ~

Is there no end to the greatness of **Kathryn Smith**, who just sold three YA steampunks to NAL? Apparently not, because she's also got a prequel short story for her YA from HQN. Go, Kate, go! And don't forget that Kate will be writing under a new name—Kate Locke....**Bob Bonitz** has overhauled an entire manuscript and is sending out queries as we speak. Congrats, Bob!...**Ginger Merante** is polishing up a manuscript and will keep us up to date on her progress.

~ ~ ~ ~

Kristan Higgins is happy to report that in December, *Too Good To Be True* was the bestselling book for Kobo, the e-reader for Borders Books! This is timely news for Kristan who is wrestling with insecurity and despair as she writes the first draft of her 8th book....**Joy Smith** promises to get back to work, the moment her boat docks in the peaceful and gorgeous Caribbean....**Allan Cooper** revised and improved a children's story he wrote some two years ago and will be looking for input from the CTRWA crit group soon.

~ ~ ~ ~

The uber-prolific **Susan Hanniford Crowley** is working on a full length novel that has already been requested by a publisher, working on a book proposal for another full length requested by another publisher, and has started a third book that she'll be writing collaboratively with her critique partner.

~ ~ ~ ~

A special shout-out to **Shirley Webb**, one of our longest-standing members at CTRWA. Shirley will be starting chemo this month, so send her your love and prayers...authorswebb@aol.com.

programming notes from the veep,
jennifer fusco

“ I love planning. I love knowing what I'll be doing in one, two or six months from now. So, with that in mind, I'm proud to share the upcoming programs planned for CTRWA in 2011. Now, keep in mind all are *subject to change*, but I wanted you guys to have a good idea of what was upcoming so that you can make plans now to attend.

January 8th...Writing Dialogue with
Kristan Higgins

Let's learn from the master, people.

February 12th...The "Rescue Me" Panel

A firefighter, dispatcher, EMT, ER PA, doctor and SWAT team member will take your questions.

March 12 - Horror writer Fran Friel

In the upcoming newsletters, I'll share with you more exciting programming news. And if you have an idea for a monthly meeting, please email me at jenniferafusco@gmail.com”

chapter news

Membership Renewal Time! Don't forget to renew your membership in CTRWA. You can pay via our website, www.ctrwa.org, mail a check or money order to CTRWA, P.O. Box 816, North Haven, CT 06473, or bring a check to the January meeting.

The Write Stuff...Judged entries are due back on February 1st! Any problems, just ask kathvethornton@hotmail.com.

member releases!

Following a collision with a tractor trailer in Western, New York, Hollywood bad boy Taylor Boudrain wakes up in the ICU. His nurse is Tessa Patterson—a beautiful single mother, raising her son, Andrew, who suffers from autism—and she isn't impressed by Taylor's Hollywood charm. Or is she?

www.kimberlykfox.com



member of the month...Kourtney Heintz



Tell us about what you're working on now.

After attending the Margie Lawson workshop in November, I'm revising my YA paranormal mystery, *Reckonings*, a time-travel murder mystery that forces a modern-day teenage girl into the body of a Victorian lady. Once I've used the tool and

techniques she taught us, I plan to start querying again in January 2011. My work in progress, *The Six Train to Wisconsin*, is an adult commercial fiction novel about what a husband will do to save his suicidal telepath of a wife. The first draft is incomplete at 62,000 words, but on the back burner until I finish revising the YA novel. I wrote an inspirational short story, *The One-Legged Gingerbread Man*, about my family's first tree trimming after my grandfather died. I queried *Woman's World* a few weeks ago.

What's the next major step you need to take in your writing?

For *Reckonings*, querying agents is my focus when the revisions are complete. Right now, I have the full manuscript (pre-Margie Lawson seminar) out to three agents and am waiting to hear back. I'm also attending classes, workshops and conferences to improve my craft. CTRWA's monthly meeting critique sessions are a great help too. For *The Six Train to Wisconsin*, I need to finish the rest of the first draft, let it breath for a month, and then put it through Margie's rigorous editing process before I start querying it.

What's the hardest part of the writing process for you?

The first round of revisions with the entire manuscript. It's daunting. It's overwhelming. And it takes me a while to admit I have a fat ugly baby that needs Jenny Craig, cardio, and a nose job.

What's your favorite part of the writing process?

Character birthing. I love when I have a hook or a plot concept and then I have to create the characters for the story. Finding out all their back story before I even put fingers to the keyboard. Sometimes, they'll flat out tell me how they became who they are. Other times, it's like removing impacted wisdom teeth. But seeing them come to life and take their first breath—that's my favorite part.

Any quirks or special talents you'd like to share?

I speak and write Chinese (Mandarin and simplified). I'm a decent archer. Inspired by Kevin Costner's Robin Hood at a young age. I spent five years learning to belly dance. Still have the finger cymbals, hip scarves, veils, and coin belts. I can get by in French despite having abandoned it after high school and my tendency to respond to questions in Chinese. Highly entertaining when dining out in Paris.

Have you been given any great advice on writing fiction, or do you have any to impart?

It can take 20 to 400 queries to get an agent. The trick is to keep going and take feedback where you can. Anytime someone has an issue with your writing, it should be considered. You don't have to do what they tell you to do, but you should look at what is causing the problem. And three or more people pointing out the same area or concern means there's an issue requiring immediate attention.

Who are some of your favorite authors and why?

Paige Shelton—The way she writes about her protagonist's life made me want to start canning preserves and selling them at a farmer's market. And I didn't know who the killer was until the very end of the book. Bente Gallagher/Jennie Bentley—Her writing is steeped in her wry humor, highly addictive, and fun to read. Charlaine Harris—No one does paranormal mysteries like Charlaine. Pablo Neruda—He grounds me. Amanda Quick—I want to be one of her protagonists. Enough said.

From the work of Kourtney Heinz

The Six Train to Wisconsin

Christ, I'd handcuffed my wife to the car door for her own good. Never thought I'd be the kind of guy who said that.

Reckonings

Don't get me wrong, I believed in ghosts. I just hadn't seen one since I was nine. And I wasn't in a hurry to repeat that encounter.



Mixed Messages

by ZsuZsa Simandy, CTRWA Member

I'VE BEEN A holistic therapist for over thirty years and as part of my repertoire have taught the power of visualization and manifesting way before *The Secret* became a bestseller. I've practiced what I preached and very successfully.

Then I became a full-fledged writer. Ladies and gents this is a whole other world in the sphere of metaphysics! I used to be quite good at *reading* cosmic signs and messages from the universe, that is, until I became a writer. Suddenly I don't seem to know the rules anymore and even my age-old intuition about synchronistic events and koinkydinks fails me.

Case in point: I visualize meeting a literary agent at a party. It happens. I visualize becoming friends. It happens. We have dinner at a lovely, cozy restaurant, conducive, you'd think, to a meeting of like minds. Not happening!

Throughout dinner she tells me of her woes in personal relationships. To each story I refer to my brilliant self-help book; each time she nods vehemently and tells me my suggestion is something she can use to solve her problems. Each time I repeat: "It's in the book!"

She's not interested.

This is only one example of dozens whereby the Universe—the cryptic rascal she is—hands me a carrot only to sadistically whisk it away.

The latest carrot was Deb Werksman actually listening to half of my query, looking fully engaged. Then the reader came to the word "coma" and Deb exclaims, rather brusquely, I thought: "No comas! No amnesia!" And that was the end of a potentially lucrative literary relationship.

So, if part of my plot is a young man hovering between life and death, and trying to stay grounded in the physical world to be with the girl of his dreams he'd met at a winter carnival, how else can I show that at the moment he is stuck between the corporeal and the spirit world and having some difficulties staying focused? I'm open to suggestions!

One more case of carrot-stealing: I'm at a holiday party with my friend, Paula. We have taken refuge from the revelers in the home's tiny library. I'm expounding upon this strange behavior of the Universe, letting off a lot of steam. After a while I felt better. Then a couple comes in and joins us. Introductions are made, they find out I'm a writer and express interest in my latest literary venture: a reincarnational novel. They quite perk up! The man tells me he was Jude Deveraux's accountant for years and knows all about publishing; the wife proceeds to give me their son's email address AND phone number in Hollywood who, it turns out, is a script agent. I'm thinking: I've let off steam, I cleared the way for attracting something positive, and, look at the AMAZING SYNCHRONICITY!

Again, no cigar. The young man works for TV, not the movies—not interested.

My friend, Paula, a realist, did assert: "It's a long-shot!"

Tried to warn me. To which I, a dreamer, *basic trust* strangely still intact, hastened to reply: "But look at the timing! It's miraculous!" I was SO ready for a miracle.

Guess what came out of all this disappointment? A true insight! I realized: between the concept of miracle and long-shot, is my trusty pal, the Universe, confirming I'm on the right path, encouraging me to keep going, I'm nearing my goal: a successfully published novel.

My latest, redefined, visualization: A phone call from an excited publisher: "We MUST have your book! Promise you won't even show it to anyone else!"

Deb Werksman, eat your heart out!

What Your *Manuscript Really* Wants

by Patti Cavaliere, CTRWA Member

YOO-HOO, OVER here. It's me, your Manuscript. Are you trying to forget? You thought I was pretty good last night didn't you? And now you're having second thoughts. Listen, it happens to all of us. So instead of wishing you'd never mentioned me to all your friends and relatives, let me give you a little advice on what we Manuscripts *really* want.

First off, you can forget all that flowery stuff. Save the poetry for your grandmother. I happen to know that we Manuscripts like you to tell it to us straight. Personally, I don't mind a few choice adjectives, if you know what mean. You don't? Well, let's just say, I'm one of those Manuscripts that likes *Action*. Let's keep this thing rolling. And don't forget, when you tell me what it is that you like to ramble about, it would help us Manuscripts if you *showed* us. You know, a few metaphors never hurt. Don't leave us Manuscripts in the dark, okay? If it's not working out between us, it might help if you *clued us in on what changed*. (Some of my buddies refer to it as the "Inciting Incident") I'm just saying, it might make things a teensy bit more exciting for us Manuscripts if you spelled it out right from the start. You may not believe this, but we really do need a Goal. We've gotta have something to *motivate us* if you expect us to stick this thing out 'til the end.

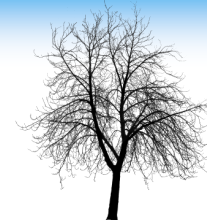
Don't give up on me, Honey Fingers. Lock the door behind you, let yourself go. No more of that Passive stuff. I'll be just you and me tonight.

So talk to me, Baby. But don't ever lose your beautiful Voice.

Patti Cavaliere has previously published short stories, however, her passion of three years is her manuscript, LOOKING FOR LEO. She is never giving up on making it work.

Writing Advice

by J.T. Ellison



I'M ALWAYS RELUCTANT to bill anything I share about the writing process as "advice" because even though I'm currently writing my 8th novel, I'm still learning. I strive to make each book better than the last, to challenge myself, to seek out new information, to try different writing methods. I stretch and grow and am constantly surprised by what I learn, and not at all surprised by how much I don't know. Being open is vitally important to me. But there's one bit of true advice that I'm happy to share. It's especially important now, in the world of Internet distractions and the lure of social networking.

The book comes first.

No matter what.

You may have heard that you MUST Tweet, Facebook, Blog, Tour, Guest Blog, etc., etc. That you have to have a platform. That you won't be taken seriously if you don't have 1,000 daily active commenters on your blog, a built-in fan page at the ready for promotion, a publicist lined up, and a Twitter account full of rabid retweeters.

But none of that is true.

What's important to your success in the publishing industry is a little something I like to call Quality over Quantity. Statistics are all well and good, but what's vitally important is writing the best damn book you can possibly write. Polishing it to within an inch of its life, making each word sing, the story intriguing, the characters relatable, and the ending worthy.

In other words, you've written a masterpiece. A book that good will speak for itself. Yes, it's easier for publishers if you have an established platform. That's why non-fiction authors have an easier time with PR – they've got a built in platform to speak to. There are times when we as fiction writers have to create our own noise, and therein lies the issue – if we aren't talking about ourselves, who is?

But there isn't a single editor in the world who won't say write the book first, then worry about the social networking. In this new age of distraction, the first rule of writing is write first, tweet later.

I'll share another little secret with you – social networking can kill your creative spirit.

There, I've said it. As much fun as Facebook and Twitter are, they eat into the time you could be spending writing, reading, researching, being with your family – the works. Think about it – since you joined Facebook, has your reading time dropped off? I know mine has. And that damages me as a writer, because the more I read, the better I write.

Ahem. A confession. As I was writing this, I checked Twitter. And what popped up? This, from the *Paris*

Review: Writers often give advice they don't follow to the letter themselves. - Tobias Wolff

See, this is why I hate giving advice. At heart, we're all a bit hypocritical when it comes to writing. But it's so true. We love to preach the gospel according to Writer - do as I say, not as I do.

I try very hard to keep to a solid schedule – my best creative time happens to be 12-4 in the afternoon. That's when I normally turn off the phones, turn on my great Freedom application, which shuts off my Internet, and get down to it. There are days, though, that this noble schedule isn't working. Days when I tweet first and write, third, maybe fourth? So the best way to combat this is to have a really solid schedule, a lot of discipline, and a good head on your shoulders. Listen to that gnawing voice in the back of your head that says hey, you really should be working on your masterpiece now, not reading your RSS feed.

“Writers often give advice they don't follow to the letter themselves.”

Trust me, we all fail at this occasionally. And that's okay. But if you make a habit out of writing first, make sitting down at your computer and opening your manuscript your priority, you won't have to worry about the good and bad angels dueling it out on your shoulders.

There are few true rules when it comes to writing, because we all have different paths up the mountain. You have to find what works for you. But the exception is the adage we all live by: Book First. That is truly sacrosanct, for all of us.

JT Ellison is the bestselling author of the critically acclaimed Taylor Jackson series, including All The Pretty Girls, 14, Judas Kiss and The Cold Room. Her novels have been published in 21 countries, and she was named "Best Mystery/Thriller Writer of 2008" by the Nashville Scene.

This article first appeared in the December 2010 issue of Love Notes, the official newsletter of MCRW.

“We are made to persist. That's how we find out who we are.”

— Tobias Wolff

Our Friend, Ms. Internal Editor

by Jackie Kramer

IN MY "OTHER" job, I'm a pediatric nurse. One thing many parents don't understand is how a fever is actually helpful for children. Temperatures between 99-101 degrees Fahrenheit help fight infection and, as long as the child is comfortable, should be left unmedicated. We call this "Our friend, Mr. Fever."

I recently participated in the National Novel Month, a nation-wide challenge to complete a 50,000 word novel in 30 days. Part of the challenge is to lock away your internal editor. You know, the one who insists that when you've written "yellow", you should have said "daffodil". Or that makes you re-write and re-write the same paragraph 17 times. But I learned an important thing about Ms. Internal Editor. She is important and you can't write without her.

When I started NaNoMo, I didn't have a written synopsis, just an idea of how my novel should go. What a mistake! As I jumped into my story, I wrote myself into corners, time after time. Characters changed GMC on a daily basis. Dialogue was stiff and unbelievable. Talk about frustration! I even dumped a week's worth of writing, took a couple days off to work out my new direction, and started again. Disaster to the max.

That's when I realized I needed my internal editor. Just like having a good editor when you're publishing a book, you need a good internal editor when you're writing the book. The key is to control her.

Most of the internal editor's work should be done before you start writing and after you finish the book. She's there to make sure you have a strong GMC for all your characters. She helps you with turning plot points, the black moment and climax, the internal/external conflicts, and the resolutions and HEAs. Once you're finished with the first draft, that's when she can tell you to change "yellow" to "daffodil" or that a particular sentence is passive. Now is when she can be the bitch you need her to be, riding your back until you polish your work.

Once again, you have to keep control on her. Like others, she'll try to make the story hers instead of yours. There should come a moment when you know in your heart the book is ready. Ms. Internal Editor will want to keep going, but you have to tell her "Enough" and submit that manuscript. If she complains, start another book and get her attention on something else. After all, that's her job, right?

Visit Jackie's website at www.jackiekramer.com
This article first appeared in *Inklings*, the newsletter of
Romance Writers Ink, Tulsa, OK.



Jim Butcher on Creating Fiction

by Jane Carver

<http://jimbutcher.livejournal.com>.

AN INNOCUOUS ENOUGH looking internet address, yet this is the one spot where I found the best advice for writing a story, particularly getting over what is lovingly referred to by Butcher and others as "The Great Swampy Middle." He is the author of a series called *The Dresden Files*.

Butcher shares what he knows about writing, an approach "grounded in the notion that a methodical, structured use of learned story craft skills gives a writer an excellent basis on which to approach writing fiction." Sounds a bit like every other guru's hook. After that introductory paragraph I almost left the journal site, but stayed to discover a good path to follow. At least for me. Perhaps others might find it enlightening as well.

Butcher writes with humor, a talent that appeals to me. He also creates images of how to use these writing ideas and, for a visual person like myself, these are tools that help me mentally get from Point A—the opening sentence to hook the reader, past Point B—that bridge he helps you build to navigate over the GSM (Great Swampy Middle) to Point Z—the other side on solid ground again and The End. He defines story, conflict, logical response and point of view as well as scenes/sequel, characters and climax. Then he goes through putting it all together.

At one point at the end of his section on the GSM, he says this: "The ultimate way to get out of the GSM is to keep plowing ahead. Sooner or later, you're bound to pop out on the other side or else stumble onto a discernable path." That is where a lot of authors push back from the keyboard or throw the yellow tablet and pencil across the room and storm out. They just haven't gone far enough to see the light at the edge of the swamp...that HEA (Happily Ever After) so close they can reach out and write it.

I printed his writing journal to use as reference. Like Nora Roberts who says she reviews the how-tos before she writes each new book, I lay Butcher's humorous guide to writing beside me when I sit down at the keyboard. I encourage anyone who would enjoy a short witty tromp through writer's land to visit this site and read how one more guru does his thing.

Jane Carver writes for Midnight Showcase and has published numerous short stories. Her novel Sailing the Astral Tides is available in print from www.midnightshowcase.com. Reach her at janer.carver@gmail.com. This article appeared in the May 2010 issue of the Lone Star Galley, the newsletter of the Northwest Houston RWA.

Rewards & Positive Reinforcement Even When You Don't Succeed

by Christine Glover

I DIDN'T GROW up in a household where there were a lot of rewards for good behavior. And we sure weren't rewarded for *trying* to be good either. So I came to this little idea of rewarding myself for not succeeding very slowly. Apparently cleaning bathrooms after finishing a major project is not considered a reward. This is how well trained I was to not get something good even when I deserved it for all my hard work.

But that is just stinky. Literally. Who wants to clean house after they've finished a book or met a major deadline? Not me. I've learned to give myself breaks, but I had to teach myself to give myself rewards.

Kelly L. Stone articulated that precept for me at the GRWA Moonlight & Magnolias Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. She gave me a few new ideas about how to reward myself while I am working toward a goal. I came home from the conference and implemented one. A successful author pays herself a quarter every time she meets her word count for the day. I decided to make a Reward Jar and got \$20 in quarters to fill it.

I modified the reward system to include meeting every goal I set for the day as a writer. So if my goal was to get a submission ready, a contest entry ready, a chapter read in my media book by Kristen Lamb, or my homework completed in the online workshops I'm taking I drop a quarter into the jar every time I meet the goal.

Another thing I've done is reward myself for having tried and failed. As a writer I must put myself out there all the time with query letters, sending out partials, full manuscripts and entering contests. I am not really into the administrative end of this business, so it is like poking a fork into my eyeball to do these things. I'd rather write my stories or blog than do it. Seriously. But the work must be done. The possibility of rejections must be faced.

So here's how I cope. First, I get a quarter for completing the task. Then I devised a system for rewarding myself if I didn't get the answer I wanted (BIG YES or YOU FINALED!!). I pay myself for not getting those answers. Yup. Now these numbers can be adjusted to be coins, less money, more money, Hershey's kisses--you get the picture.

Here's my payment scale:

Rejected Query? \$1

Rejected Partial? \$5

Rejected Full? \$20

Didn't Final in a Contest? \$5

Last week I didn't final in a contest. BOO. That stinks. I was down in the Personal Pity Party dumps. But then I remembered I got to pay myself \$5 for not finaling. That brought a smile to my face. Yay! I put all the money I pay myself into a pretty box on a shelf in my office. It's up to

you where you put your money (or Hershey's kisses). I am saving the quarters till I have too many to count, buying them back with bills, and putting the bills (usually five dollar bills) in the box, too.

What am I saving this money for? Anything to do with my writing—a nice dress for an awards ceremony, shoes, dinner with writing friends, a regional conference, or to offset expenses at the RWA National Conference.

See? There is shoe shopping involved. This system takes the sting out of not getting what you want and gives you motivation to try again.

Try it. In fact, give yourself a quarter for reading this article today!

This article was first published in Christine Glover's Blog, at www.verandaview.blogspot.com and then appeared in the 2010 December Heart Monitor, newsletter for the Heart of Dixie's northern Alabama RWA chapter.

The Lessons Keep Coming

by Deanna Ponder

I've been thinking about where the year went and what I learned. Here's a few of the things I came up with:

1. Boys do NOT understand the definition of "clean."
2. It is within my control to change how a situation is affecting me based on my attitude about it.
3. When I decide to do something (write two chapters), it's amazing how much I can accomplish in a short span of time.
4. Flash drives are the most convenient device created in the last 10 years.
5. For every scene in your book and every moment in your life, there is a song that fits perfectly.
6. A new job can be scary, but really, it's just a different location. You'll find some of the same personalities and problems at the new place.
7. There is probably a reason that you ran into or were thinking about or stumbled across an old email from someone you haven't seen in more than two years. Go find out why.
8. The Magic 8 Ball is eerily accurate.
9. There's something good to be found in every problem if you're willing to look hard enough.
10. I can do this (and "this" took the form of many things!).

So... what did YOU learn this year?

The following article first appeared in the December 2010 issue of Inklings. Inklings is the newsletter of Romance Writers Ink (Tulsa, OK).

pointless but fun

What was the best movie you saw in 2010?

I saw *Pride and Prejudice* for the first time. (I'm embarrassed to say I have yet to read it as well.) But I loved it, the nuances of the gestures and dialogue, I can't wait to read the book! I have to admit, if you had told me three years ago I would have fallen in love with historicals, I would not have believed you but it's true! — Noelle Brunelle

The Hurt Locker. —Rhonda Lane

Inception—Huntley Fitzpatrick

I enjoyed reading *Ghostwriter* but found that Ewan McGregor and Pierce Brosnan transformed a good mystery novel into a great movie. They're both so yummy! —Marge Reynolds.

Inception. But I haven't seen the new Harry Potter yet, either. —Kate Smith

Easy A. —Candace Hall

Best movie-not new or well known and certainly not romantic, but a favorite classic of our sailing crowd. *Captain Ron.* — First Mate Joy Smith.

Snow White And the Seven Dwarfs, which I replayed from an old video. It's unbelievable what those dwarfs got away with when Snow White moved in. — Allan Cooper

City Island. Such a wonderful story about normal, interesting people with a few secrets...and a charming setting, too! — Kristan Higgins

Knight & Day. It won't be winning any Oscars, but I had fun. — ? (sorry...your editor deleted that email a little prematurely!)



“When I first saw you, I thought you were handsome. Then, of course, you spoke.”

Carol to Melvin in *As Good As It Gets*

2011 ctrwa board

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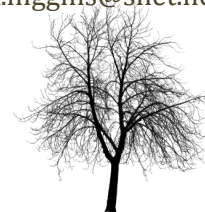
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Helpful Books on Writing Fiction

From whimsical to irreverent to merciless and factual, the following books are widely regarded as some of the best for us writer folks.

- Goal, Motivation and Conflict* by Debra Dixon
- Save the Cat* by Blake Snyder
- Writing the Breakout Novel* by Donald Maass
- Bird by Bird* by Anne Lamott
- On Writing* by Stephen King
- Story* by Robert McKee
- The Writer's Journey* by Christopher Vogler
- The Writing Life* by Annie Dillard

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