

Connections

The newsletter of The Connecticut Chapter of Romance Writers of America
Region One, Chapter One

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Next Meeting

February 11, 2012

Sarah Humphries

The "WOW" Factor

Jamie Schmidt &

Jane Haertel

Push to PRO

Regular Meeting Schedule

Critique Group: 9:30

Business Meeting: 11:00

Speaker: 1:00

President's Letter

Happy New Year! I love January, not only is it my birthday month and the year of the big 3-9, I love it because January ushers in a new year and with it, new possibilities. It's the time when we set our goals, and plan while keeping in mind that anything we set out to accomplish is possible. During my membership at CTRWA, I've seen many members' dreams become realities. In 2011 alone, many of our members signed with agents, sold manuscripts, placed in contests or were featured in newspapers and national magazines. Here, at CTRWA, we make things happen.

But it takes all of us to make great things happen, especially a Board of Directors who lead with their hearts, and always make decisions with the good of the membership in mind. This year we are lucky to have that. I'd like to thank former President, and now 2012 Treasurer, Toni Andrews, for a great two year run as President. I wouldn't have felt comfortable filling her shoes without her guidance, her knowledge and her blessing. She is a valued resource and a wonderful person. I'm thankful she's agreed to stay on in the role of Treasurer, not an easy job, I assure you.

To fill the hardest job on the board, Vice President, we were lucky to have had two very capable ladies run for the office. Gail Chianese was elected to the role, and I have appointed Katy Lee, to the position of one of the two Members at Large. Both of these great people welcomed their new responsibilities with gusto, and I can tell you Gail's programming and Fiction Fest planning efforts are well underway. Occasionally, she may put out a call for help to fill a craft corner or monthly speaking spot. Please help her if you can, good talent is hard to find.

The newly elected, tech savvy, Christine Wunch, serving as 2012 Media Director, and the lovable Gerard Chartier, 2012 PR Director, will keep you guys up-to-date and informed both online and in print, (and if I can convince them both, hopefully, via Twitter, too.)

Continued on page 4.....



Member News

Peter Andrews will be teaching "How to Write FAST" online for Yosemite Romance Writers starting February 3 (see

<http://www.yosemiteromancewriters.com/id33.html>).

He'll teach the same course face-to-face at Westchester Community College starting March 26. He'll also be teaching "Write Flash Fiction!" at WCC starting on April 16. (He'll be at their Valhalla campus. See the WCC spring catalogue at

http://www.sunywcc.edu/continuing_ed/welcome/cont_ed_welcome.htm)

Jamie Pope has joined the PRO ranks. Yay, Jamie! (Watch out **Gerard**, you're next on our list.) And speaking of PRO, **Jamie Schmidt** and **Jane Haertel** are 2012 PRO liaisons

Rhonda Lane wrote advertising copy for an upcoming show horse sire guide describing the histories, show records and genetic potential of various breeding stallions.... **Patti Cavaliere's** story, THE CLAY LADY, received Honorable Mention in the Women On Writing Summer 2011 Flash Fiction Contest. She was recently given a gift on behalf of her late friend, Brian Silverlieb, V.M.D-- his beautiful four-year-old thoroughbred named Epic Romance. He goes by the name Romeo, and he is the love she's been looking for. Way to go Patti! **Alan Cooper** is still working on his "Great American Romance" novel. But as an early New Year's resolution, he's promised to spend more time on his novel and less on short stories.

Kristan Higgins was very excited to have both her 2011 releases featured on "Best of" lists: UNTIL THERE WAS YOU was one of the top six romances of the year, according to Barnes & Noble; MY ONE AND ONLY was voted one of the top 20 by The Reading Frenzy and Romance Reviews Today. Both books hit the USA and NYT bestseller lists, too, leaving Kristan in an exhausted, happy heap, wondering how the heck Jessica Andersen can handle more than one book a year. Congrats Kristan!!.... **Christine Wunch** (aka Casey Wyatt) has sold THE UNDEAD SPACE INITIATIVE to Pink Petal Books.



Calendar

January 14: Hillary Rettig on Time Management and Procrastination. The wonderful, newly published, **Bob Bonitz** will talk about his experience with DWB Publishing during Craft Corner. To round out our day **Kate Rothwell**, will present a hands on synopsis workshop.

February 11: Sara Humphries: "The WOW Factor". This 45 minute interactive seminar delves into the heart of interpersonal communication skills & the impact it has on our day to day professional interactions. Whether it's communication with co-workers, readers, publishers or agents. Learn how to engage and dazzle your audience of 1 or 100. Bonus Session: **Jamie Schmidt** & Jane Haertel: Push to PRO

Anyone interested in having their author photo taken by photographer Mark Borderud should contact Jennifer Fusco @ jenniferafusco@gmail.com.

Sitting fee plus one retouched digital photo costs \$100. Other larger packages are available.

Photo session will be **February 11, 2012** after the bonus session in the afternoon.



Member of the Month: Jane Haertel w/a Susannah Hardy

Tell us about what you're working on now.

I'm very excited about my new cozy mystery, complete with a cantankerous old relative, a quirky heroine (Caroline), and a hot love interest (doesn't have a name yet – who wants to name my guy? No, Jen Moncuse, I'm not naming him "Alexander Skarsgard"). Somebody is going to die in a quite horrible but original way. I'm not revealing the method yet because I don't want to give any of you murderous CTRWA members any ideas about how you can do away with your enemies. My plan is to have it done in time to pitch at Fiction Fest. After that I have a WIP to finish, and I may try my hand at a category romance, just for fun and because I have an idea for a Harlequin Intrigue story.

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

Easy. I need to sell my first novel! And I need to approach my writing more like a profession rather than a hobby.

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

Knowing when to call it done and move on.

What's your favorite part of the writing process?

Well, please don't think I'm a complete freakazoid, but I love editing for grammar, word choice, punctuation, and spelling. I think it's because that part comes naturally to me, and the process is mostly black and white, just a matter of following the rules – while knowing how to break the rules judiciously. I love the way a nice, clean, close-to-perfect page looks in a book or manuscript. Okay, maybe I am a freakazoid.

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

Quirks or special talents? I'll take quirks. I usually eat my hamburgers and sandwiches with a knife and fork. This drives my teenager insane. I also do housework while blasting Meat Loaf's Bat Out of Hell album and singing at the top of my lungs (sometimes, for a change of pace, I'll put on Bruce Springsteen's Born in the USA). I know all the words to all the songs. This makes my teenager run screaming from the house. Part of my master plan.

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

Um, have you been to a CTRWA meeting? How about great advice on different topics every single month?! The best advice I've ever received is probably the simplest: Don't give up.

Who are some of your favorite authors and why?

I love the Brontes and Jane Austen, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Thomas Hardy, Tess Gerritsen, Sue Grafton, Stephen King, Janet Evanovich, and Jacqueline Winspear, all for different reasons. Since I've joined CTRWA I've discovered a whole lot of new favorites – Kristan Higgins, Toni Andrews, Laura Moore, Thea Devine, Jessica Andersen Heuschele – and if you're published and I didn't name you, it's only because I haven't gotten to you yet! I'm doing my best to read something from everybody in our chapter. You're all amazing!

Best CT restaurant in your humble opinion?

Ooh! Are you asking me on a date? No? then I'm going to be a rebel and a rule-breaker and give you the name of a Massachusetts restaurant, since I live so close to the border: The Federal in Agawam. The food is amazing, creative, and incredibly delicious. I suggest going when somebody else is paying, though. Perhaps a rich relative or a Sugar Daddy/Mama? It's quite pricey!

If you could cast your current hero or heroine, who'd get the call?

Caroline – Amy Adams. Unnamed studmuffin – how about Patrick Dempsey? Yes. Patrick Dempsey.



Jane and Janet Evanovich

Excerpt from: *Sugar, Sugar*

"Don't do anything we'll both regret," Richard warned.

Caroline hefted the plate – good solid white china that could do some damage. A delicious cheesy aroma wafted up into her nostrils and she looked from the asparagus risotto to Richard and back again. "Waiter? Can I get a to-go box?"

President's Letter continued....

With these guys at the helm, CTRWA will be positioned as the home for serious romance writers in our region. We are lucky to have them among our ranks.

And last but not least, I've asked Bob Bonitz to remain on the Board as a Member at Large, assisting, the always cheerful, Gerri Brousseau, 2012 Membership Secretary. Gerri will be hounding you (if she hasn't already) to renew your membership, and she's also tasked with making sure your RWA National Dues remain in good standing. If you need assistance paying your dues, there is help available. Requests for assistance will be confidential, so, please let Gerri know if there is a need.

These seven leaders, along with the two PRO Liaisons, Jamie Schmidt and Jane Haertel, and me, will do our very best to help your writing dreams become a reality. And, we also need...you!

We need you to keep writing, keep submitting, keep querying, and keep dreaming! We need you to come to meetings, meet fellow members, and keep taking advantage of all that our chapter has to offer.

Together, dreams do become reality. So, go for it, CTRWA. Dream on!

Jennifer Fusco
2012 CTRWA, President

Trust By Jessie Verino

If you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times:

Trust is earned.

You don't trust a 16 year-old with a Ferrari. You don't trust that the guy on the street corner is really selling Rolex watches for twenty bucks. You don't trust the marital advice given by a person who's been divorced three times.

Do you trust yourself?

Well, maybe not when it comes to the fresh-baked brownies, but in issues dealing with life, career, family, money, you probably do.

And, it's probably not accurate.

It's why you tell yourself that you can skip a day of writing and do the catch up tomorrow. You trust that you *will actually* write the next day, including the make-up words.

How often does this work?

Yeah, not so much for me either.

If this is a cycle for you, I've got some bad news. Your trust in yourself is misplaced. You're the teenager with the Ferrari, the shyster on the corner, the giver of bad advice. You ate all the warm brownies.

Fool me once: If this is not a pattern for you, congratulations! Have another brownie, you deserve it.

Fool me twice: Shame on you. You need to rebuild trust.

But how?

Keep a calendar or daily log. Ink (no pencils allowed

here) in some writing time. It doesn't have to be a huge chunk of time. Start small, like 15 minutes or 100 words. The point here is to build a habit.

The buddy system. Find a friend, and not a sympathetic friend, to bully and badger you until you've reported in with new words.

Find a reward system that works. Get in your writing time – get a brownie, or some other treat, like a dollar or bit of change to go into the tip jar. (Don't use the tip jar as a penalty method. Paying yourself for not working is not a penalty, and will only foster bad habits.) When the tip jar gets a good amount of money, go buy yourself something nice.

Or more brownies.

The following article appeared in the November 2011 edition of SMOKE SIGNALS, the monthly newsletter for the RWA Chapter, Smoky Mountain Romance Writer's.



Is NaNoWriMo Right for You?

"Honey? Put down the pie and back away. One more bite and your



Cure For Writer Anxiety

By Joan Reeves

I have had a thorny writing problem in my current manuscript. The biggest problem was that I couldn't put my finger on exactly what was wrong. There was this uneasiness in the back of my mind when I thought about the story as I'd written it. Experience has taught me that this vague anxiety usually means something is wrong somewhere--character, motivation, pacing, or something. Gee, that really narrows it down, doesn't it? But I bet that most of you writers out there know exactly what I'm talking about.

Beware the first stage of the infectious disease I call Writer Anxiety. It's a common disease though little known to the general public. If the symptoms aren't treated immediately, the progression of the disease is slow but inexorable.

Eventually, the writer becomes paralyzed and is unable to write the rest of the story. Sometimes, even if a new story is started, the paralysis continues until the writer becomes afflicted with the worst disease known to literary kind, Writer's Block.

Fortunately, I have my tried and true remedies to prevent the escalation of Writer Anxiety. I took the first medication this morning by pulling my dog-eared, broken spin copy of Leonard Bishop's book *Dare To Be A Great Writer* from my bookshelf. I've talked about this book before, and I highly recommend it.

My copy is now difficult to page through because so many of the pages are broken from the spine and tend to fall out if I'm not careful. I still manage to skim through the different topics - 329 in all - searching for something that my unconscious will recognize.

It usually works. worked. I found my problem on Page 109 where it discusses Spoken Flashback. Good old flashbacks, the bane of the writer's existence. In reading the short section, I realized that I had a scene that I'd written as a flashback. The scene is important, but the flashback takes away from the pacing.

What happens in the flashback is inherently dramatic, but it doesn't come across that way as I had written it. I needed to make the flashback a scene happening "in front of the reader" not merely a "telling" of the scene from the character's memory. If I didn't already know how to do that, the book shows how.

This book is one of my brainstorming tools. I have many in my writer's toolkit. Do you?

*Joan Reeves is a bestselling Kindle author who will be publishing 3 ebooks in November: *Old Enough To Know Better*, *Nobody's Cinderella*, and *Ebook Success: Joan Sells & Tells All*.*

*The following article first appeared in the November 2011 issue of *In Print!*, the monthly newsletter of Houston Bay Area RWA.*

2012 CTRWA Board of Directors

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Twitterpated

I admit I was reluctant to take the plunge and join Twitter. My thought was - *Ugh, another thing I have to do on top of Facebook and the blogs.*

And it is another thing to keep track of ... except I like Twitter it.

Maybe too much. It appeals to my impatient nature and is a great opportunity to spend time **avoiding writing**. I get instant feedback and someone, somewhere is always tweeting about something interesting.

So what is Twitter?

It's a social media tool that allows you to speak to your "followers" or "tweeps" in 140 characters or less. People have to choose to follow you. And you choose to follow them. You can only read comments from those people or organizations you follow. And they in turn will only read your comments if they follow you. (Twitter allows you to directly message people if you know their user name).

Marketing guru **Jennifer Fusco** likens Twitter to a cocktail party. I think that is a great analogy.

Except - I like the party a little too much.

So what's a writer to do?

Limit yourself - I re-tweet (a function that allows you to share tweets you like with your followers). I publicize for the group blog - Writing Secrets of 7 Scribes (**@Secretsof7Scrib**) and for my pen name Casey Wyatt (**@CaseyWyatt1**). I try to read the "feeds" only a few times a day, rather than all day long.

Connect - Many applications "talk" to each

other. I allow Twitter, Facebook and Wordpress access to each other. When I tweet or re-tweet, it appears on my Facebook wall and on my blog page. Kinda of neat, huh?

Be Meaningful - Ask yourself before you tweet- does anyone care what you ate for lunch? My yardstick for a RT (re-tweet) is - would I like to share this with my followers? Is this an interesting tweet (example, it leads to cool blog post or a contest)? Be mindful of other's time. Tweet with a purpose. And remember to always be professional.

Follow - Follow others and they will follow you back (for the most part). And don't stick to just other writers. I've branched out and started following review sites, artists, even the Dalai Lama (he has very sage advice).

And speaking of advice - embrace some form of social media. It's not going away anytime soon. Pick something you like and can manage. Remember, writing should always come first. We can't sell a blank page!

p.s. follow me, I follow back!

Christine Wunch (aka Casey Wyatt) is a proud member of CTRWA. Her first novel, MYSTIC INK, will be published January 2012 by Soul Mate publishing.

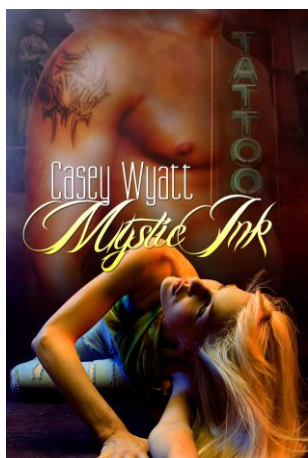


Fun at the MargaRITAs

And the Winners are....



Member Releases!



The last thing Nix, a Sea Nymph, wants to see behind the dumpster near her tattoo shop is another dead mortal. She also doesn't want to hear Hades piss and moan about how the souls of the dead aren't making it to the Underworld. And Nix certainly doesn't want to be attracted to supernatural police agent, Calder Quinne when he comes to investigate. All Nix really wants is to run her tattoo shop in peace and quiet. Hey, we don't always get what we want, now do we?

Coming January 2012 Soul Mate Publishing

For more info visit – www.caseywyatt.com

