

Connections

the official newsletter of the Connecticut Romance Writers Association

Connecticut Chapter, Romance Writers of America, Chapter 1, Region 1

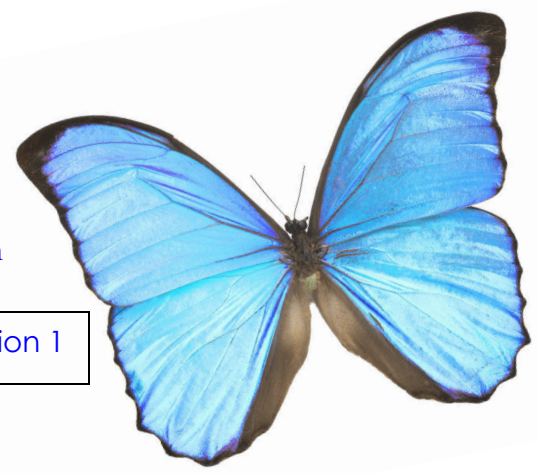


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August 16th: CTRWA Picnic

**Regular meetings
resume on September
13th, when Dr. Karen
Laugel will answer your
medical questions.**

MONTHLY MEETINGS of the CTRWA are held at the Holiday Inn in North Haven. Non-members are welcome to observe a meeting before joining. Meetings begin at 11:00 a.m. with a speaker or workshop at 12:00. PYOW lunch follows at Harry's. Take I-91 to exit 12 and bear right at the end of the exit ramp. The Holiday Inn is 2 blocks north on the left.

President's Letter

July 2008

Ah, summertime and the living is easy...

On what planet, I ask?

I hate the damn heat. I went to a baby shower today and the air conditioner at the restaurant was broken. Ick. To top it off, the mother-to-be is having twins so opening presents took *twice* as long! All in all a nice time, but *hot*.

With the summer sometimes comes procrastination. I'm not going to lecture you on that one. People who live in glass houses yada, yada, yada.

But what I will say is that I've been hearing that several members have submitted their work to the editors and agents who have requested it at our conference. How cool is that? I even sent my non-fiction humor book to my agent to forward along.

So, best of luck to all of us! And those of you who haven't gotten around to it or are polishing, good luck too!

Along with summer comes traveling so I'm going to leave you with one of my Lori Tidbits that I posted on my blog awhile back. If you're going to National or NJ, take heed!

Remember the days when you shoved everything in your suitcase because you "might" need it? Well, those days are gone. To pack for a trip has become a real art now. And by art I mean a pain in the butt.

I recommend taking only a backpack and ONE carry on suitcase. Nuts? Maybe. But if you've had to get off the plane and wait for all the luggage to be unloaded before you got yours, you'd understand. Those who carry on their luggage zip off the plane.

Check out the airline's website for the rules of what you can bring or not bring. They change daily. Now we're up to 3 oz. of a liquid or gel. And your tiny teeny little products have to all fit into ONE Ziploc sandwich bag. By the way, Hefty sells the regular old sandwich bags in a special packet marked "travel bags." There's no difference. Progress. What a country. No jewelry, because it gets too heavy and then you have to deal with the X-ray machines at the airports. If you have to fly standby, NEVER check your luggage or said luggage may be enjoying a tropical Bahamas' sun while YOU are chomping at the bit in Newark.

Seal up that suitcase, snap on an extra strap in case the zipper pops and you're good to go!

— Lori Avocato

"When you have exhausted all possibilities,
remember this — you haven't."

Thomas Edison

CALENDAR

JULY 28-AUGUST 2...RWA National Conference, San Francisco, CA! To all members who are attending, good luck and have a wonderful time!

AUGUST 16...CTRWA Picnic, Lori's house in Meriden. Stay tuned for details coming across the CTRWA bulletin board.

SEPTEMBER 13...Karen Laugel, M.D. and CTRWA chapter member, will answer your medical questions in an attempt to keep you accurate and honest when you weave medical elements into your fiction writing. Don't miss this one, folks!

CHAPTER NOTES

The 2009 Ignite Your Muse Conference is now being planned! Toni Andrews graciously allowed herself to be strong-armed into the role of chairman. Currently, the committee is looking into places and dates for the conference. Toni will also be surveying the membership to see what kind of workshops you want at the conference, so speak up! This conference's purpose is to further your career, so don't be shy about sharing your opinion.

Because of a **surplus in the budget**, the CTRWA board voted to sponsor an **all-day, intensive writing workshop** that will be free of charge to all members. Details are pending, so keep an eye on the CTRWA Bulletin Board, where all pertinent information on our chapter's happenings are posted.

As part of our mission, CTRWA donated \$200 to Literacy of America; \$50 each to the public libraries of Cheshire and Wallingford.

Lindsay Downs donated Leslie Wainger's *Dummy's Guide to Writing a Romance Novel* to the chapter library...thank you, Linds!

The 2009 contest will have an earlier deadline for receipt of entries... Valentine's Day, February 14, will be the big day. Judges will need to be PRO and PAN members, and judging guidelines will be emailed to everyone in the chapter. Honesty, encouragement and kindness are the hallmarks of our contest, and last year's was a resounding success, thanks in large part to our judges and the fabulous Marie Roy, who will be coordinating it again in 2009. Thank you, Marie!

The Nominating Committee is seeking members for all positions. This is a great way to network in the industry and make sure your chapter is serving the membership as best it can. Any and all are welcome to run! The positions are: President; Vice President/Programming (the one who arranges for speakers; Publicity (making sure word of our existence, speakers, workshops and conference gets out); Secretary/Membership (responsible for processing the paperwork on new members). RWA's goal — and the goal of CTRWA as well — is to help you pursue your goals in publishing, so your input is sought and welcomed. The board meets once a month before the general meeting. New board members are sworn in December.

MEMBER NEWS

Terry Diaz has entered two more contests, so keep your fingers crossed for her...Speaking of contests, congratulations to **Lauri Brett**, who scored very well in the Kiss of Death contest. Yay, Lauri!...**Marie Roy** has signed contracts for two new books, *A Catering Affair* and *Deadly Secrets*. Ya-hoo, Marie! She has also just submitted a manuscript to Aspen Mountain Press, a traditional romance departing from Marie's usual erotica. Speaking of Marie's erotica, *Goin' Down*, the anthology featuring stories of, er, elevator malfunctions, is the #6 bestseller at Aspen Mountain Press... **Kristan Higgins** got the new cover for her fourth romantic comedy...right dog, gorgeous design and yes, even her own title! *Too Good To Be True* will be out in February 2009. More importantly, Kristan found *The Dress* for the upcoming RITA awards...**Joy Smith** is reworking *Burden of Proof*, adding some archeological details she pried out of a professor (the meek may inherit, but the bold get things done faster). She also sent *Sea Lust* off to be critiqued by Leslie Wainger...**Susan Rowley, Lori Avocato, Kristan Higgins, Janet Halsted, Toni Andrews and Lindsay Downs** are headed to San Francisco to RWA's National Conference and will, of course, represent Connecticut with extreme dignity, sophistication and superb manners.

CONGRATULATIONS, CONTEST WINNERS!

Paranormal, judged by Hilary Sares of Kensington

1. *True to the Highlander* - Barbara Longley (full manuscript requested)
2. *Dark Guardian* - Robin Perini (full manuscript requested)
3. *Weather Dance* - Darcy Carson
4. *Fallen Angels in Paradise* - Catherine Lemming
5. *Angels at Almack* - Catherine Lemming

Single Title Contemporary, judged by Rose Hilliard of St. Martin's Press

1. *Once Upon a Margarita* - Heidi Luchterhand
2. *Summer in Austin* - Katie Graykowski
3. *Color My Horse* - Bev Petersen
4. *Public Relations* - Amy Atwell
5. *Better Dead* - Pamela Kopfler
6. *Painted Blind* by Amy Atwell

Member Profile...Kelly Morse

A relatively new member to CTRWA, Kelly is notable with her enthusiasm, good cheer and incredible level of energy, all of which should serve her well in her writing career. The director of an adult day care program, Kelly finds having only one job a refreshing change from the time in her life when she had nine different jobs in three different states over the course of one year. Married for nine years to hubby Matt, Kelly enjoys playing with children of friends and refuses to divulge any further personal details. (A phone call to her mother is planned...)

What are you working on right now?

Several projects...the biggest one is revising my second finished book for an editor at Wild Rose, the historical is set in 1854 England.

Why and when did you start writing?

When I was a kid. Books and words were my friends...yes, I was THAT kid. I actually speak now!

Why did you join CTRWA? What are you looking for in the chapter?

I needed help! I'd completed two books, had four partials, and was getting nowhere in the publishing realm. I needed to speak to/pick the brains of people who've been there, done that.

Who are your favorite authors and why?

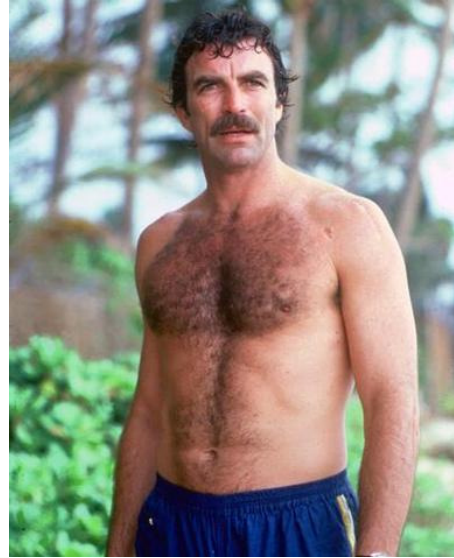
Oh good Lord! There are so many! My first obsession was with Anne McCaffrey; her imagery, her plot and characters just sucked me in. Then of course there's the queen, Kathleen Woodiwiss. The overwhelmingly large characters, the intensity had me on edge! I'd be up reading until 1 am...when I was in High School! Since then there have been so many others, Judith McNaught, her strong female leads, her male heroes, seemingly made of granite, yet delve deeper and there's the vulnerability crack. Julia Quinn, how she can spin a tale! Janet Evanovich, always a great time! I can consume a Stephanie Plum book in a day. I won't get any work done, but I'll be happy. Linda Lael Miller, Mary Balogh....the list does go on!

Favorite CT restaurant, food, drink?

I'm a foodie, I LOVE good food, Jeffrey's in Milford, upscale continental; Crave in Ansonia, Caribbean/Puerto Rican bistro in Ansonia; Bistro Basque, French & Spanish fusion in Milford; Portobello classy Northern Italian in Shelton; Casa Nova, traditional Italian in Shelton; Papa's Pizza in Milford...THE best; Libby's Blue Line Diner for breakfast in Colchester VT. Hubster is a great cook; his chicken Piccata is the best I've ever had, and my all time favorite.

Any celeb you'd cast for your current hero/heroine?

Nope. I tend to take pieces of people I've seen, or even an entire person I've met, although Tom Selleck has always been my fave.



The tawdry pleasures of Magnum, P.I.

A bit of personal trivia you'd care to share?

Honestly, my life is an open book with many warped pages. My mother calls me a good egg, slightly scrambled, but a good egg.

"Simply because I chose not to fight with weapons, does not mean that I have bowed. My war is an unseen one, located within, yours without. We are alike, you and I, more so than would first seem."

From Kelly Morse's current work in progress

Author Promotion

by Tawny Stokes, a.k.a. Vivi Anna

MY FIRST QUESTION is what promotional tool I thought worked the best.

There are two things I know for sure that work for an author. Two things that EVERY author should do for promotion. And these are the only two things I know that work for sure.

1. Write the best book possible.
2. Have a website.

The rest really is touch and go. Some of these things will work for some authors, some won't, and there is really no way to gauge the effectiveness of any of them. So use your best judgment when you consider them. Look at your time and money and what you can logically spare.

Things That Take Little Money But Take Time —

1. Blogging — One of the easiest and least expensive ways is to keep a blog. Now the key to a successful blog is to do it daily and have something unique and interesting about it. Readers won't visit daily if all you're going to talk about are your new releases. Readers like to see what goes on behind the scenes. So, make your posts about your writing processes, or pick themes to tackle every week. One week discuss something fun like summer recipes and the next week talk about inspiration. Mix it up. Keep it fresh.

...A caveat about blogging...It can be a time and energy sucker, so beware of that before you start one. Not everyone needs a blog! Read: Don't be a blog troll and waste all your time and energy on gossip and posts meant to enrage and upset the community!

2. Newsletter — If you do it yourself, it will take some time to create and to send out, if you hire someone else to do it, it will take some money. Either way, you have to make sure your newsletter is interesting and informative. Something your readers will want to read every month not just delete from their inbox. Don't just talk about your books, give them something to look forward to — recipes, free stories, hot pictures, interesting articles about crime scene investigation, whatever matches what you write about. If you write erotic romance, maybe include sex positions to try at home.

3. Chats — Different communities offer chat room opportunities to authors. You can set a date for a chat, tell everyone about it, and hope for a good turn out. These are definitely for authors who like to talk and mingle with their readers. Most times you will get the same people at your chats every month. So if you are looking to find new readers, this might not be the best option.

4. Get involved with others — There are a few ways you can do this. There are a ton of yahoo groups for readers and writers that you could join. It can be a great way to get your name out there and get to know others in your community and

genre. But don't join if you only want to promote yourself. Join if you are honestly interested in getting to know other people. Readers can spot a phony. Another way is to get involved in different forums. Romantic Times has a great reader forum with tons of threads to talk about books, movies, and other romance related things. Again, only join if you are interested in others.

5. Book signing — Most bookstores will welcome an author for a book signing. But you will likely have to do most of the work yourself, like picking the date, contacting the manager, making sure your books get orders, making signage and advertising it. Once you're there, it can be an awkward and lonely experience. So my advice is to do a group book signing. Its way more fun and then you have someone to talk to if no one comes to buy your books. :—)

Things That Take Money —

1. Ads — You can either advertise in magazines like Romantic Times or the RWR, or on various romance communities online. It can get very expensive so consider your audience, the cost and your main goal beforehand. A one time ad in RT isn't going to do much for you. Readers need to see your name more than once for them to recognize it.

2. Author communities — There's noveltalk.com, freshfiction.com, accessromance.com, romancedesigns.com, betweentheshets.com and others. Most have their own readership with a newsletter list in the thousands. Weigh the cost with what you are going to get out of it. Sometimes they can be beneficial. Talk to some of the authors involved before you join.

3. Promo items — Bookmarks, postcards, calendars, and other promotional items can be a good promotional tool if used properly. The places you need to send these are to bookstores. And in particular bookstores that WANT these items. I know of two ways that you can do this. Use Romantic Times bookstores that care program, or contact Pat Rouse and get her list of romance loving bookstores that host book clubs eager for author promotional gear. Bookmarks and postcards can also act as your business card. So always carry some with you.

This article is based on a workshop hosted by Calgary RWA, Sue Garner posting.



Rejection Hurts

By Pat Hunter

MY HEART SANK when I read my first rejection letter from Avon many years ago. I remember sending a query letter and synopsis to the acquiring editor. (His name slips me but it's in my files somewhere) While waiting for his response, I was diagnosed with carpal tunnel syndrome and had surgery on both hands. I surmised this was from pounding out a manuscript on an old-fashioned typewriter. Friends asked me why I had carpal tunnel syndrome since I didn't work in an office. Being a closet writer, I gave the lame excuse, "Maybe it's the repetition of running the sweeper."

As my hands healed from surgery, I heard from the editor at Avon and he requested my complete manuscript. I was thrilled! This is it; I'm getting published! I remember thinking. My hopes quickly dashed when he rejected my story. Looking back, I can understand why. I had so much to learn about the business of writing. The editor had a ton of reasons to reject my work.

I've since accumulated enough rejection letters to wallpaper the office. Instead, I shove them into the file cabinet, as I don't need a constant reminder of failure. With each rejection, I mope around feeling sorry for myself, and just about give up writing.

When Jenn Stark graciously worked with COFW members on their Writing Bands, I didn't have the heart to tell her that I hadn't completely filled out the worksheets because I was dealing with "rejection slump." Yet I learned a lot from her program.

I only share my writing life with my writing peers, which is a blessing to know such talented people. My husband let it slip to a few people that I write romances. When I run into these friends, the first thing out of their mouths is, "Are you published yet?" Sadly, I reply, "No." How embarrassing is that? People unfamiliar with the writing world think authors become successful overnight. It doesn't happen that way. Of course, I'd shout it from the rooftop if I were to get a contract.

Rejection has been a rollercoaster ride for me, and friends advise to develop a thick skin. Yet, I beat myself up, doubting my writing ability. Then I find myself drifting back to the computer, retrieving my manuscripts, and revising them. I have a passion to get published. I've come far since the first rejection letter. I must be doing something right. I've had short fiction stories published in magazines.

Over time, I noticed a change as more rejection letters came. The editors wrote positive comments about my writing. This bolstered my confidence and I hung onto every tidbit they cared to share.

Editors and agents are busy and often don't have time to write a personal reply. So I treasure their comments when they make suggestions. One editor wrote, "While you have wonderful descriptions, strong characters, and good dialog, you still need to work on POV." The feedback helped me immensely! It gave me something to work with. It gave me hope! Another editor wrote, "Although your story is well written and an interesting read, it does not end HEA. We encourage you to submit more stories in the future." I have since revised this story and submitted it to another editor. Just a few words of encouragement go a long way.

At the COFW meetings, those of us who have submitted our work to editors, received rejection letters, or offered contracts, get to dip into the Incentives Basket and help ourselves to chocolate, writing supplies, or whatever, as a way to reward our progress. I joke that with all my rejection letters I should just take the goodie-basket home, and be done with it. Then I look on the bright side. I am writing and submitting my work. I am making every effort to get published! What better reward is there than to someday hold your book in your hands?

I've tacked affirmations by my computer: Hold on to your dreams. If you can perceive it, you can achieve it. Don't give up!

Kudos to all published authors. You've earned the prestige of seeing your books in print. What a fabulous accomplishment!

To any of you struggling to sell your first book don't give up! I won't!

Pat Hunter has been a member of COFW for 19 years. Her writing has been published in True Confessions and Senior Times, and her photos in Birds & Blooms, Senior Times, True Romance, and True Story magazines. This article first appeared in Write From the Heart, the newsletter of the Central Ohio Fiction Writers, June 2008 edition.

The City by the Bay

Going to San Francisco for the RWA National Conference? Did you know...

...The oldest building in the city is Mission Dolores, built in 1791.

...The highest point in San Francisco is Mt. Davidson.

...There are 43 official hills in hilly San Francisco.

...Within the city, there are 14,000 Victorian houses.

...The San Francisco Ballet is America's oldest professional ballet company.

...Golden Gate Park was once covered with sand dunes.

...There are 5,369 places to eat in San Fran, providing more dining options per capita than in major city in the country.

...San Francisco cable cars are the only moving National Historic Landmark, and 9.7 million people take a nine mile per hour ride on them each year.

...Alcatraz means pelican in Spanish. The rocky pelican's island was a military fort before it became a prison. Famous former prisoners include Al Capone, George "Machine Gun" Kelly and Robert "Birdman" Stroud.

Staying Motivated During the Summer Months

by Karen Hall

SUMMERTIME AND THE living is easy. . . No school, vacation plans abound and all those things we didn't get done will go on the to do list now that we have the time. But did you remember to put writing on that list? With all this time on our hands (Ha!) how do we keep motivated to keep (or start) writing?

Motivation. Exactly what is that? My best guess without consulting Webster's (let them have some time off-they deserve it) is it is a force or event/experience that prompts action to change or begin a desired outcome. Sometimes the event is a need. Your doctor tells you to stop smoking or your health will worsen. Sometimes it is a cause needing help. You see a TV special on Saving the Wild Quinquina and you look up the local group at their website. The list is endless.

But in the case of writers, motivation is what keeps us at this zany work. Who else but writers would want to spend hours plotting and scheming the myriad of ways to get our characters to their happy endings?

So. Staying motivated during the summer. Staying motivated at all. The well has run dry, we're more about not writing and we just can't get going. Let's consider.

As Vincini taught us in *The Princess Bride* (required viewing) "Go back to the beginning." Think about what first inspired you to take up the writer's journey. A really good book? A really bad one (I can do better than that!) Or an idea and a set of characters that showed up in our head and simply will not stop talking to us. Read that book again. Write those ideas down.

You don't know what you want to do next. Set down with some fellow writers or critique partners and have an afternoon of idea swapping. Give each other exercises so you are forced to write outside your comfort level/genre. If you have never tried your hand at a paranormal, do it. Even if it has your friends rolling on the floor in laughter, do it. Who knows what idea it may inspire?

Try a visual exercise. You accepting your First RITA (or second or third) I already have my acceptance speech prepared. Or Spielberg BEGGING you to direct your book. Better yet, one of your favorite actors (Depp, Northam, Washington, Rickman) begging you to let him do whatever. It's a bit silly, but hey, we could use a little silliness.

Enter a contest. Feedback from a stranger might turn your book upside down and help you learn why it isn't working. A stranger has no barriers to "letting you have it" and their feedback may get you out of your rut.

SPRINT! Give yourself assigned periods of time and try, try, try to turn off the internal editor.

"I can't get motivated because. . .(fill in the blank). I'm talking the day to day stuff here. Some things can wait (housework, watching TV, calling a friend just to chat) Unless the Health Department is banging on your door, housework can wait. Tape the TV program. Send an e-mail. These are not reasons (and I use the housework/gardening with the skill of a master) they are excuses.

Don't say, I will never be as good as (insert your favorite author). Maybe not. But you can still be published and have the satisfaction of being able to say, "I'm a published writer." People will stare at you in amazement and say, "Gee, that's great. I could never do that." You already have. BRAVA!

Two final thoughts. Writing, if you are taking it seriously, is work. Work takes a certain amount of discipline. (ARG! There's that word) Only you can really motivate yourself. Give yourself a goal of writing a certain amount of time and a certain length. Even if you think it's junk, do it. Eventually, it will pay off.

Finally, while the desire to be published and have fans at conferences knock each other over for our autographs, pictures or advice, life sometimes gets in the way of even the most disciplined. It upsets our plans and goals and between managing emergencies, writing becomes a luxury of time we can't afford. When this happens, BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. Believe in yourself. Always.

Karen Hall writes Victorian romantic fiction. Her first short story A Zebra in a Manger will be released from The Wild Rose Press in December 2008.

This article first appeared in the June 2008 edition of Smoke Signals, newsletter for the Smoky Mountain Romance Writers.

Key Elements of Chapter 1

What *must* you have in your first chapter (or prologue if you've got one)? A short list for reference...

1. A great opening line that conveys the tone of the rest of the book.
2. An interesting character(s) who is immediately likeable/funny/in danger/fascinating.
3. Immediate motivation. Why does this character want or need life to change right now?
4. Identifiable goal. What is the outer goal that will define the plot?
5. A reason to start at this particular point. Something's about to change, so what is life like before that change?
6. A strong voice. Of course.

And what *shouldn't* be in Chapter 1?

1. Back story. Keep some mystery about why the hero/heroine is the tortured, goofball, screwed-up mess he/she is.
2. Instant compatibility between hero and heroine. Instant attraction is okay...but not compatibility. Give them something to overcome.
3. Too much detail on any one thing.

Chapter 1 is the invitation to your reader. Make it one they can't refuse.

The Language of Writers

By Nikki Duncan

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'VE SOLD that manuscript and survived the reading and signing of your contract. Now, do you know what half of the words coming out of your editor's mouth are? In researching this article, I've discovered that while the industry has a definition for something, authors have a different one. It's my hope, that this will help you avoid some of the confusion when your time comes.

ARC: Advanced reading copy. This one's pretty self-explanatory when it's broken into words rather than three letters, but these are books the publishers will send to the author for promotion. In some cases, the publishers may send them out to reviewers and booksellers to build up a book.

Line Edits: These may be done by your editor or they may be contracted out, but a line edit is the first read through on a book looking for story logic. In this round, they look for things that are unclear or for the answer to that ever bothersome question 'why'.

Copy Edits: This is when things like typos, punctuation, spelling, and grammar are checked. It is one of the last steps before the book goes to print. This could also be when typesetter marks are added.

Line Editor - Edits for story logic and clarity. Points out things that don't make sense or if your hero had blue eyes on page 2 but they were brown on page 200. This is also the person responsible for helping you find places where you've broken the rules of your own "world" whether in relation to your character development or something bigger and deeper.

Copy Editor - Checks for grammar and punctuation. They work to make sure the manuscript is stylistically accurate. They also add in the typesetter marks.

Galleys/Page Proofs - These come after the edits. This is the last chance to read through for typos and small changes like an editor changing a word or piece of slang that you intentionally used a certain way. This is not the time to decide you want to rewrite a chapter, as you may have to pay for large changes.

Editing Marks & Code/Style Sheets - Different editors sometimes use different kinds of editing marks to tell you what changes they want. They will include a style sheet to let you know what those marks mean. If they don't, ask for it.

Cover Art - Some publishers will ask you for input on the cover, listening to what you do and do not want. Some will listen, others will not. This is often decided by the editor and the art department.

Cover Quotes - When a published author reads your book and does a quote for the cover. These are usually obtained by the publisher or agent, but if you know an author that would be willing to do a cover quote, let your editor or agent know. Be sure to send a thank you note or gift to whoever does the quote for you.

Cover Flats - Printed covers of your book that haven't been wrapped around the actual book. Some publishers send them to you, some don't. They can be used as giveaways, placed in bookstores, or put on excerpt booklets to use for promotional purposes.

Dedication & Acknowledgements Page - This is where you thank the people who've helped you or encouraged you with the book, or mention where you've done research you've used in the book. Send this in when you send in the manuscript to your editor - before edits.

Complimentary Copies/Author Copies - You should receive at least 25 complimentary copies of your book once it's printed. Sometimes you receive less or more, but the quantity should be spelled out in your contract.

Your editor should be willing to answer any questions you have on what is expected from you and what different terms are, but hopefully these explanations will give you a better understanding and make your working relationship with an editor easier.

Nikki's been a member of North Texas Romance Writers of America for close to two years, and has been recognized as an RWA PRO. She's completed three novels and one novella. If you would like to discuss more writing terms and their meanings, visit Nikki at The Romantic Realm of Shadows at <http://runboard.com/bromanticrealmofshadow>, where a writer's dictionary and other helpful writing tips can be found.

This article originated in the North Texas Romance Writers' Newsletter, Heart to Heart, in April 2008.

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Pointless But Fun

Who was your first crush?

Danny Rice. He was my uncle's best friend, and he was blond and had long golden eyelashes and played the guitar. I was seven, he and my uncle were fifteen, they were babysitting, and I just sat there and blushed all night long. He's a musician today, out in Sedona. My uncle told me that Danny recently said he should've married me when he had the chance. Glad to see he learned his lesson! — Kristan Higgins

My first crush was probably in first grade. His name was Richard Urban. He also had a crush on me, and the kids would tease him about it. One day on the bus, they were teasing him, and I was so embarrassed by it, I cried all the way home. Go figure. — Marie Roy

About my first crush. It was more than a crush. As a HS frosh, I was in love with a gorgeous dark haired junior guy. My dad was sure he was a hoodlum, because he wore a black leather jacket and black shoes and smoked cigarettes. I went steady with him anyway, for over a year, before we broke up. I've never forgotten him, but our relationship would have never worked out, given our different perspectives on life. Oddly, I passed him and nodded hello at a diamond dealer's. He was entering and I was exiting with my fiancé. He still looked gorgeous. — Joy Smith

He was a tall teenager who lived next door to a friend of mine in other town, where I often spent the night. We were sixteen and in our junior year of high school. One morning I saw through the window of the house next door, this handsome boy eating breakfast. Later on, he knocked on the back door. He asked my friend's father if this was a convenient time to mow their lawn. He was even more handsome than when I had seen him eating breakfast! My friend and I got on our bathing suits and headed straight for her pool in the backyard. We were all poised beside the pool when he began to cut the lawn. Needless to say, we were very good looking then, and proud of our gorgeous tans. My friend asked him if he was thirsty. Of course, we had taken a pitcher of water to the pool and several glasses just for this purpose. We thought we had died and gone to heaven when he took the glass of water from me, and said, "I understand you are a Rainbow Girl (a Masonic girls' organization). I said yes. And then he told me he was a Demolay. (The boys group of the Masons). He invited me to go to a dance that the Demolay were having the next weekend. They could only invite a Rainbow Girl. He came to my house in his mother's car and picked me up for the dance. I had begged and borrowed anything to get that green ballerina length dress with the shiny bangles all over it. We went to the dance and I had several dates with him that summer. Then he went off to college in Lexington, Kentucky and I never saw him again. — Shirley Webb

My first crush was McKinley "sugar-baby" Bradley. We were in the same classroom that year, but different grades. He would chase me around the playground at recess and write me love notes. My father died that Summer, and I moved to Connecticut and never saw him again. I have a little scar on my knee that reminds me of him from time to time. — Shirley D. Webb

My first love was Clark Gable. Before that, *Gone With the Wind*. — Janet Messina

Help!

Your beleaguered yet still intrepid newsletter editor is looking for articles from CTRWA members! A few topics to consider...

Balancing family and writing...

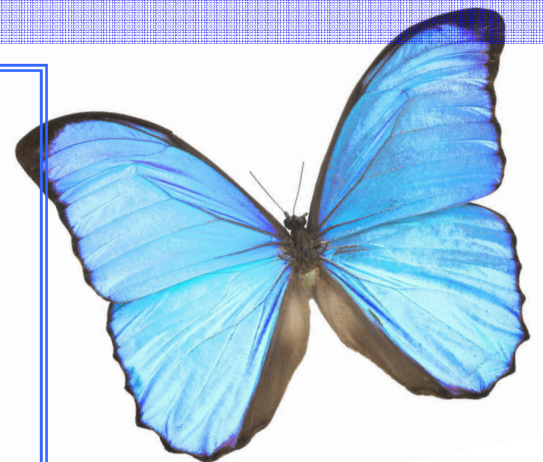
What you learned from your very first attempt at writing...

Researching without leaving your home...

Conference feedback and how to use to improve your work...

What you've learned about writing by reading certain authors...

So how about it, folks? Of course, any other topics are more than welcome. Every member of CTRWA has something to offer to the rest of us, whether it's through "what not to do" or methods that have saved you time and anguish. E-mail me at k.higgins@snet.net. I'll be waiting!



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