



Heart to Heart

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ROMANCE WRITERS
OF NEW ZEALAND

September 2017

2017 A Year Where Romance Wins: Highlights From The RWNZ Awards Dinner

Megan Cameron et al

What a wonderful year it has been for RWNZ Writers! From the 'Great Beginning Contest to the Koru Awards we have been treated to a feast of Romantic Writing. As such it only seems right that we acknowledge those who have done so well this year.

Great Beginning Contest – Finalists 2016-2017

Agent's choice:

- 1st- Charming the Devil by Lisa Matthews
- 2nd- Chameleon in New York by Marija Greenhill

Editor's choice:

- 1st- Chameleon in New York by Marija Greenhill
- 2nd- Charming the Devil by Lisa Matthews

The other finalists were (in alphabetical order):

- Ruled by Shadows by Samantha Charlton
- Bodyguard by Jennifer Raines
- Endangered Love by Jackie Rutherford

A special thanks to our professional judges:

- Editor: Victoria Britton - Commission Editor, Harlequin UK Office
- Agent: Patricia Nelson - Marshal Lyon Literary Agency

Daphne Clair de Jong First Kiss Contest – Finalists 2017

Congratulations to:

- 1st - Pizza, Punk Rock and her Perfect Princess by Emma Bryson
- 2nd- Tempt ME, Tease ME, Love ME by Bronwen Evans
- 3rd - The Bad Boy Next Door by Becky Watts

Finalist – JC Harroway

Please join me in congratulating our prize winners!
I'd also like to thank the New Zealand Society of Authors

Northland Branch for sponsoring the competition this year. We really appreciate it!

Chapter Short Story Contest – Finalists 2017

They are as follows (in alphabetical order):

- Donna Capil
- Susan Frame (x2)
- Charlotte Kieft
- Eileen Mueller
- Pamela Swain

And the winner is...

- 1st – Lost Moments by Donna Capil
- 2nd – Books, Covers and Other Things by Susan Frame
- 3rd – Leap of Faith by Pamela Swain

The final judge, Gaynor Davies, had this to say about our six finalists' efforts: "I was impressed in every case with the strength of the writing and the sense of energy behind it"

Congratulations, everyone. You are amazing!

These stories and the rest of the top eleven will be available in the up-coming Liaisons magazine – RWNZ's in-house magazine. I've had a sneak preview of it and know you'll all want to get your hands on a copy.

Huge thanks to Kristine Pearson and Philip for making the magic happen!

Pacific Hearts Award 2017 (Unpublished Writers)

- 1st – Bodyguard by Jennifer Raines
- 2nd – Worlds Collide by Shelley Nixon
- 3rd – Loving is Believing by Jennifer Raines
- Finalist – Chameleon in New York by Marija Greenhill

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Koru Published Book Award – Finalists 2017

LONG ROMANCE

1st – Deception Island by Brynn Kelly
2nd – Unmasking Miss Appleby by Emily Larkin
3rd - Bound to the Bounty Hunter by Hayson Manning
AND Recovery by J.C. Harroway

SHORT SEXY ROMANCE

1st - Italian Undercover Affair by Jayne Castel
2nd- An Improper Governess by Amy Rose Bennett
3rd – The Most Scandalous Ravensdale by Melanie Milburne

SHORT SWEET ROMANCE

1st – Backpack and a Red Dress by Maddie Jane
2nd – Tempting Fate by Erin Moira O’Hara
3rd – Fixed Up by Maddie Jane

BEST FIRST BOOK

1st – Deception Island by Brynn Kelly
2nd- Recovery by J.C. Harroway
3rd- Fixed Up by Maddie Jane

AND WINNER ON THE NIGHT WITH HIGHEST OVER-ALL SCORE

1st – Backpack and a Red Dress by Maddie Jane
2nd– Deception Island by Brynn Kelly
3rd – Unmasking Miss Appleby by Emily Larkin

Well done to everyone who entered, and congratulations to the winners and all finalists!

SOME THOUGHTS FROM OUR CONTESTENTS



“I was thrilled to win two Koru awards for Backpack and a Red Dress— Short, Sweet Romance and Overall Winner. This is the first book I ever finished. The book I spent ages ang- sting over. So I am particularly happy all the angst and the cries of “Just finish the damn book” from writer friends, were worth it. Thanks again to

RWNZ and Escape Publishing. I really appreciate all the encouragement and support.” - Maddie Jane



“I was thrilled to be a finalist in the 2017 Koru Awards in the Best Long Romance and Best First Book cat- egories and happy to stand besides such amazing authors. And of course celebrating later with bubbles topped off a memorable awards dinner. Congratulations to all fellow finalists and to the awesome winners.” - Jo

Harris (w/a J C Harroway)



“My thoughts? This was the third year in a row I had finalled in this contest and to get a place in the 2017 Chapter was an absolute thrill. While I wasn’t the ‘bride’ I was soooooo happy to be Donna Capil’s ‘Maid of Honour’. Pleased. So pleased.” - Susan Frame



“I won the Short Sexy Category of the Koru Award for my novel ITAL- IAN UNDERCOVER AFFAIR and was a finalist for RULED BY SHAD- OWS in Great Beginnings.

I was delighted to win a Koru for ITALIAN UNDERCOVER AFFAIR.

As the name suggests, this is a contemporary romance set in Italy, specifically Rome where I lived for many years. As such, this is a setting close to my heart! My partner Tim (who is also my editor) and I worked very hard on this book - and there were a few drafts before we were both happy with it! Tim plays a huge part in getting my books ready for publication. We might not always agree during the structural and copy edit, but I believe the finished product reflects a really thorough editing process! As a self-published author, I’m particularly proud of this year’s win. I take great care to produce a polished final product that hopefully is indistin- guishable from a traditionally published work. My placing in Great Beginnings was also really motivating for me. The novel RULED BY SHADOWS (an Epic Fantasy Ro- mance) is now complete and available on pre-order, and the feedback I received on the first three chapters was invaluable.” - Samantha Charlton

“When I learned I had two manuscripts in the final, I quickly booked tickets from Australia to the conference. My first. The conference was brilliant. Aside from the excellent speakers, everyone was friendly and support- ive. I came alone, so was rather pleased to find myself beside Robyn Donald at the Awards dinner. Chatting to her made the evening fly and helped manage my nerves. The actual presentation flashes by. You’re out the front, not knowing what will happen, then your name is called. Then you’re back in your seat. The slow burn of joy comes after that. As the news settles inside you. As strangers congratulate you. As family and friends send messages from home. As you wake the next morning and it’s still true. I’m still excited. Thrilled about the prizes – professional assessment of your work is such a gift. It’s also given me the confidence to submit. Thank you RWNZ for years of support and encouragement.” - Jen- nifer Raines

“Solitude is a hallmark of writing and as such I think it feeds directly into the crippling self-doubt that all of us struggle with from time to time (cue a subtle plug on how amazing and important conference and local chapter meeting are for creating support systems). Competition feedback helps with keeping your perspective straight:

what needs work, what's already good, what could be great. Being an award winner takes that next level and the encouragement is invaluable - sometimes knowing that 'I won that, so it can't be complete crap' is exactly what's needed to keep going". - Becky Watts

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membership@romancewriters.co.nz

"No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader. No surprise in the writer, no surprise in the reader."

- Robert Frost

My First Conference

Lyssa Randolph



Being a new writer to the field, I had started writing with one initial goal: how to publish my first novel. As I had hoped and anticipated, I came away from the conference with a clearer sense of where and how I might develop and position my work.

The conference enabled me to more clearly consider my voice, writer identity, and who my readers might be. Every element – whether keynote, workshop, or 'cold read' – orientated me within the romance and women's fiction market. The weekend gave me a far better understanding of the options for publishing, as well as what the possible pros and cons are in seeking an agent, finding a publisher or deciding to self-publish. What I'd already studied and understood about book crafting and good writing was reinforced and greatly enhanced by participating in workshops with successful and inspiring writers. For a writer in the very early stage of her craft, I came away from the enriching discussions with some good tools and tips for aspects of writing such as plot, characterisation and pacing.

I particularly felt, and valued, the strong sense of generosity and the openness of the community of writers, both in terms of the content of the programme and also on a personal and social level. I felt welcome, that I was easily able to participate and contribute. Having had experience of belonging to an academic community, I felt this to be a more equitable and less competitive atmosphere.

I chose to pitch to two publishers who I had intended to send my, yet unfinished, manuscript to. It was a fraught decision and a nerve-wracking experience for me, but I found it worthwhile because preparing and delivering my pitch focussed my mind and project marvellously! Cold Reads sessions were also very valuable; participants got to listen to others' work and appreciate its strengths, and weaknesses; particularly from the perspective of several commercial voices, and how an editor or publisher might respond to those.

RWNZ is a big event with a comprehensive programme: the conference was very well coordinated and run, perhaps particularly so given the voluntary nature of the organisation and organisers. An invigorating and enriching experience!

An academic writer, Lyssa has recently changed gears to writing Historical Romance. Her current romance is set in colonial New Zealand. Lyssa recently immigrated to NZ from England and she draws on this experience to help her understand her character's challenges as they try to make a home in NZ.

Conference 2017: These Are A Few Of My Favourite Things

Gracie O'Neil



Meeting so many old friends

I love physically meeting up with everyone I keep in touch with online. I know I'm not the only one who thinks this is the best part of any conference. Yes, the speakers and workshops are wonderful, but to be able to sit down and talk with like-minded friends—old and

new—to hash fresh ideas through, and to enjoy a laugh in person is a real joy.

Realising that I don't have to be someone I'm not

Both Kristen Lamb and Christie Craig made this point. Kristen's Word Cloud idea seemed to marry up with Christie's advice about using what you are in real life to fuel your writing. I'm still sorting through these concepts, but something inside me is getting excited about them. So watch this space!

Being presented with the Jean Drew Volunteer of the Year Award

I was kept out of the loop on this one and completely gobsmacked at the result. Thank you so much. With all the people who volunteer for the organisation, I'm beyond blessed that you cast your vote for me.

Absorbing the enthusiasm

One of the most incredible things about any conference is being part of the passion of the group. Everyone I talked to was excited about their writing careers, interested in the changes to the business, and eager to discuss the ramifications. There's something about being part of a crowd like this—and somehow Romance Writers seems to be in a class of their own when it comes to being willing to share their ups and downs.

May the 2017-18 year bring us all to a wonderful new place in our writing careers.



Gracie O'Neil writes Romantic Suspense, sometimes with paranormal elements. She is a member of the C2C group, and for the last eleven years has lived in a bus with her husband and dog. Her new book, DEADLY REUNION will be coming out this month. Yay! You can find out more about Gracie at her website: <http://gracieoneil.com>

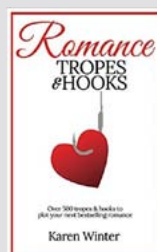
Woos & Hoos

What a fabulous lot to celebrate. Well done, everyone!



Gillian St. Kevern has made her historical paranormal **THE WING COMMANDER'S CURSE** available to anyone who signs up to her newsletter: <http://www.gillianstkevern.com/newsletter.html>

Gracie O'Neil's new Romantic Suspense series kicks off September 20th with **DEADLY REUNION**, Book 1 in the Covert Liaisons series.



Karen White w/a Karen Winter has the cover for her **ROMANCE TROPES AND HOOKS**, available on Amazon. <http://amzn.to/2tvijRb>

Jean Drew w/a Gina Blake has signed three contracts for an erotica trilogy with Wild Rose Press.

Melissa James' new release **BENEATH THE SKIN** is available now! She says "This is an exciting day for me - I don't think I've ever been in the country of first release before, and this is my first Melissa James release in 5 years. I'm going to try to find some pictures in the wild... This is Adam's Bane, finally being published!

If anyone finds a copy in stores somewhere, please send pictures. I'd love to see them."



From The Editor



Hello!

Welcome to the post Conference edition of *Heart to Heart*. With an awareness that it was impossible to attend everything at conference we have sought to provide a taste of confer-

ence happenings.

Firstly I want to acknowledge the wonderful work done by the Executive and the Conference Committee and volunteers. As a first timer to Conference, being a volunteer enabled me to meet folk and become a part of the event. I certainly recommend volunteering next year especially if you are attending Conference for the first time.

As the new *Heart to Heart* editor, the time at Conference also allowed me to put names to faces. It was also the perfect opportunity to introduce our new 'Theme Scene Challenge.' For this challenge attendees were encouraged to take a photo and/or a prepared statement and create a 300-word 'scene' for the magazine. Each month one or two of these will feature. Already I have received a half dozen scenes and look forward to many more coming in! If you want to be a part of this but don't have a photo or statement then just email me and I will send you through some material.

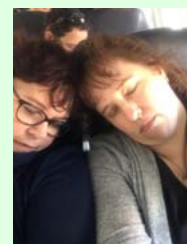
Obtaining articles for *Heart to Heart* is a challenge for any editor especially when you are new to the job and unaware of people's special talents and interests. Several of you have provided articles already and for that, I am truly grateful! Your input allows us to put out a quality product, it is my hope that in the weeks and months to come you will share your passion and talents with us all. **WE NEED YOU!**

On a Personal note I have only just begun to unpack all I learned at Conference. When they said Conference would be overwhelming they weren't kidding! By day two I was beginning to feel a little like a manically caffeinated meerkat as I: listened, talked, elicited future articles, tried to understand who was who, crashed and burned in cold reads, had a cry over cold reads, realised my cold read wasn't that bad, pitched successfully to the agent who gave me feedback in my cold read, tried to illicit even more articles (sensing the theme here?), sold raffle tickets, dressed up, fell in and out of information overload with increasing frequency, and generally tried to retain as much information as possible! Oh yes, and did I say we needed articles?

For a chronic extrovert not being able to attend everything at conference played right into my fomo (fear of missing out). Yet there was so much I gained from the awesome speakers; Christie Craig wow, that I felt hon-

oured to be in such wise company.

At the airport, I was aware that I had hit the wall when I found myself wanting to follow each sentence with "Does that make sense?" Sitting beside me on the plane a fellow attendee seemed to be in the same place we both declared an inability to create whole sentences. And retreated to our Kindles – she to lose herself in romantic vampires, and me to immerse myself in werewolf escapism.



Coming back to earth occurred with a thump as I ended up with a short unscheduled hospital visit which put schedules behind. But all good now I am rearing to go and excited about the year ahead.

Have a great and romance filled month!

Megan

Reflection On Christie Craig

Never give up. If you want it bad enough, it will happen.

I was at the RWNZ conference with Christie Craig (aka CC Hunter) and she was awesome. She deserved her standing ovation. At her feet in these photos is in the order of 1000+ rejection letter. She got her 6-figure deal when her family needed some good fortune. Her husband was ill with kidney failure and on dialysis, awaiting a kidney transplant.

If you ever get the chance to hear her speak, GO! She had us all in stitches of laughter, but many of us also cried when she told the story of her husband. She's living proof that if you dare to dream, and you pursue that dream like a dog with a bone, never letting go, you will get there. (BTW, she's a high school dropout that comes from an illiterate family. Proof that if you have a story to tell that you can still be a writer.)

Christie Craig (CC Hunter) is a magnet. She just draws people in with her stories and family antics that you just want to listen to more especially the "mattress story". Her journey to success is a true testament that you can be proud of what you choose to do and keep at it. A very entertaining and Informative workshop on Build a Character and Build a Book.

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Christie was the highlight for me of conference. Her ability to work with humour and pathos was extraordinary. Strong, stropky, emotional and deeply honest in the sharing of her journey, Christie was a gift. I found myself in the odd position of just wanting to curl up at her feet and absorb her knowledge. I know I will be unpacking her workshops for years to come. And if I ever get a chance to connect with her again I am there!



Christie Craig: Take Away's from Putting Humour in Your Writing

I loved how Christie talked about the physicality of love reminding us of the importance of bringing that physical response to our writing. In one session she reminded us that when we laugh:

- Hormones are released
- Our perspective is shifted
- That we experience social benefits

You Want How Much?! The Realities Of Booking A Conference Venue

Kendra Delugar



Having decided to locate the 2018 Conference in Auckland, we went hunting for hotels that were big enough to accommodate us all. Two of these were in the suburbs, and three were in the CBD – my preferred location – and boy did I get a short, sharp,

shock.

One of the CBD hotels sent me a very succinct email stating that they were outside our price range. And even the cheaper option of the other two would have added another \$100 to the cost of attending conference. A cost many of our members won't want to wear. The cheaper hotel did do an amazing job of trying to make the accom

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The Welcome Mat

We're rolling out the red carpet this month for another lovely group of new members. Welcome everyone! It's great to have you as part of RWNZ!

Suzanne Doig—Lower Hutt

Charlie Holland—Wellington

Moira Kay—Paraparaumu

Wendy Lloyd—Wellington

Leanne Pearson—Auckland

Kirstyn Rawley—Tokoroa

Nina Seja—Auckland

Anne Slight—Whangamata

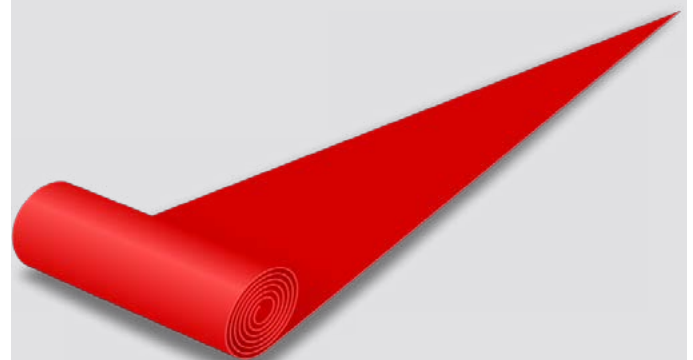
Sarah Williams—Australia

You should already have your username and password for the RWNZ site. If not, give Gracie a shout at membership@romancewriters.co.nz and she'll sort you out.

Don't forget to read the INFORMATION FOR NEW MEMBERS page on our website:

<https://www.romancewriters.co.nz/membership/information-new-members/>

Of course, you'll need to login before you can access the members' area, but you'll find information there about how to join up with our Members Only Facebook page and the NZRomance Yahoo loop—along with a whole lot of other fun stuff.



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modation affordable, but it was still well beyond anything we have paid before, even though they took a third off their room rates.

The cost of holding an event is going up. Especially in Auckland. If we want Auckland conferences, then we have to understand the implications of that. And if we want central city conferences then we need to find additional ways to keep our costs down.

The other option is to have every second or third conference *outside* our biggest and most expensive city. My personal hope is to see a South Island conference soon. The Southerners amongst us travel religiously every year. It seems like time they were able stay on their own island!

And while I'm being a little controversial, this year we ran into a new issue. Dietary requirements. Gluten free. Dairy free. Vegetarian. Vegan. And various allergies. Being vegetarian myself, I remember a time when the table of dietary requirements had ten plates on it, at the most. At this year's RWNZ conference we had *thirty five* people with dietary requests – that's over a quarter of the attendees! That is a lot to ask of any hotel, and all those special meals cannot be covered under the daily delegate rate (the standard cost of feeding us per person, per day). The special requirements cost us more. We can cover a big percentage of those by having gluten free and vegan options amongst the meals, as we did this year. But as dietary requests increase we'll have to pay extra for them; either singly as the requestee, or as a group.

I'm pleased to report that we have a fabulous hotel team at the Novotel, Ellerslie in 2018 who worked really hard to get our business. They gave us great rates for Auckland. But I think a broader understanding of how and why we choose our venues and locations, and the issues taken into consideration, might answer some of the questions you have before they even arise.

Keep putting those dollars in the conference jar each week! We have some really exciting speakers for 2018. Those people who were at this year's conference already know who is coming, and if you can't wait to learn more, I put a post on the RWNZ Members Only Facebook Page (and also one on the RWNZ Yahoo Loop). <https://www.facebook.com/groups/RWNZMembersOnly/members/>

I'll be providing full introductions for RWNZ 2018 in the coming months.

Reflections Of A First Time Participant & Presenter

Judy L Mohr



The RWNZ conference for 2017 is over, and the recovery process will no doubt take a long time. There was a lot of information to assimilate! But dare I say it, others were probably just as overwhelmed as I was, if not more so.

The conference was a whole series of firsts for me. It was my first RWNZ conference—in fact, it was my first major writing conference. It was the first time that I had met agents or editors from publishing houses. I didn't pitch, but I did take part in two cold reads (talk about a boost to the ego). It was also the first time I was a paid presenter—presenting during three of the breakout sessions. At times, the conference felt surreal.

During my preparations for the conference, I didn't take much note of what the other sessions were when I was busy presenting. I guess it's because I didn't want to be disappointed that I was missing out on something. Sometimes ignorance is bliss. However, for the sessions that I did attend, I have a mountain of notes to process. It wouldn't surprise me if I'm still deciphering my chicken scratch this time next year.

For me, the highlight of the weekend was a tossup between Christie Craig (I laughed so hard—and cried) and the moment when the ending sequence for one of my manuscripts suddenly fell into place. It was during the session about creating suspense. I have no idea what was said that triggered it, but the final showdown with the bad guy played out in my head. I furiously made notes, not wanting to forget it. It's amazing how that happens. I also had the revelation that the bad guy in another manuscript needed to die. (The exact means of his death is a mystery, but it's going to be a horrible, painful death. Assassins have so much fun.)

I'm already making plans to attend next year's conference. I discovered that one of the keynote speakers is an expert in forensics... I'm so there. I'm not exactly sure what that says about me—getting excited about torture and death, as opposed to the love and sex that was on others' minds. In the meantime, I will be endeavouring to foster the working relationships and friendships that were birthed during the 2017 conference.

Judy L Mohr is the author of [Hidden Traps: A Writer's Guide to Protecting Your Online Platform](#). She also writes fantasy and science fiction with strong thriller roots, and she is a freelance editor with [Black Wolf Editorial Services](#).

Tips, Tricks & Highlights From The 2017 RWNZ Conference

RWNZ Members

There was so much awesome information at conference! “So many workshops so little time,” was the cry. As such we have included below some of the take away comments and insights from some of the conference workshops. Unfortunately we could not get to all the workshops so apologies if your workshop is not covered.

WORKSHOP: Between Plotting and Pantsing: Book planning and structure on a level you can live with - Kylie Scott

“Your unique voice is what differentiates you as a writer – don’t lose it!”

“There is huge variance in plotting; between creating through pantsing and creating a complete structure before writing. The important thing is to find your own way.”

“A big learning curve for me! Discovering there is no ‘proper way’ to create gave me permission to create my way and took a weight of my shoulders.”

WORKSHOP: Getting Out of the Slush Pile / Creating Reader Engagement - Anne Gracie

From Anne Gracie’s Out of the Slush Pile Workshop, I learnt what a “really story” is and how you can make it more of one. Really funny, or really emotional, or really sad, or really thrilling, or really scary, or really fun, the list goes on. I am one who loves research. *“Being told that research takes second place to storytelling means I now have to draw a line in the sand! Editors buy a “really story” not necessarily one that is well researched.”* I am also a fan of Anne Gracie’s Chance Sisters Series too. Great workshop!

Annie Gracie gave a wonderful workshop about reader engagement, and one thing that resonated with me was the examples she gave on ways to ensure readers connect with your characters. She suggested finding the one thing that’s your character’s biggest point of vulnerability, and stamping on it. *“Making things as tough as possible for your character is a way to get readers to care about them and want them to succeed.”*

WORKSHOP: Dealing With Author Overwhelm in the Digital Age - SPA Girls

The Spa Girl talk gave permission to stop face fears and not let them control me.”

“Goal setting as a way of understanding what holds me back was so helpful.”

“During the RWNZ17 conference, I attended the SPA Girls workshop, which covered everything from the beast that is social media to finding our WHY. Why do we want to be an author? What drives us to write?”

SPA Girls stands for Self-Published Authors and I recommend everyone, whether you are in the self-publishing game or not, log onto their website at www.SpaGirlsPodcast.com where you will find links to their social media sites, a myriad of resources to help you get started, and inspiring podcasts to keep you forward focused.

The theme of the workshop was author overwhelm and the triggers that are the root cause of overwhelm, such as a situation or set of circumstances that interferes with our writing goals. The SPA Girls believe these triggers comprise of three main groups: internal, external and physical. *“For many of us, our day jobs and family responsibilities take priority and it can be overwhelming trying to fit our work/life balance around our writing.”*

SPA Girls believe the two keys to overcoming overwhelm are staying focused and good goal setting. Their goal suggestions are:

- Writing new words – a must for all authors
- Keep to three goals and set timelines of 30, 60, 90, days depending on your circumstances
- Don’t necessarily share these with others unless they are your trusted supporters
- Track your goals and review them frequently so they don’t slip away into oblivion

SPA Girls Tips:

- Don’t try to work on all your goals at once. Finish one then move on to the next.
- Chunk down your goals into workable components
- Set aside a specific time for writing

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- Finish your manuscript
- Do a time and motion study to see how much time you waste in a week. (This can be scary)
- Build 'thinking time' into your day

And, my favourite

- Accept your first draft might be shit. We all have to start somewhere.

At the end of the workshop, we were kindly gifted an edition of *Kick Author Overwhelm to the Curb* with a one-of-a-kind cover. The problem is, I've been so overwhelmed since returning from conference, I haven't had time to read it. But it's a 30 day goal. I just have to stop watching *Suits*...

Kick Author Overwhelm to the Curb is available from Amazon. Visit the SPA Girls website for a link.

A big thank you to SPA Girls for their time and guidance. As with all RWNZ17 keynotes and workshops, this aspiring author came away with a mixture of awe, self-doubt, and enthusiasm.

Maria King

WORKSHOP: Hidden Traps of a Writers Platform/ Scrivener - Judy Mohr

Internet safety is a huge issue for authors which is why I chose this workshop. I love the practical nature of the workshop that addressed: How to check your website is secure and how to deal with email addresses/admin/spam. I also liked how Judy demystified the process of changing our settings etc to protect yourself and your brand. I liked having the power to know what's possible and to not be nervous.

Loved the hands on in this workshop. At first, it was scary to see my profile on line and just what was available for people to see and access about me. I found it really helpful to then be shown that I need not be afraid just vigilant!

WORKSHOP: How to inject Emotional Punch Through Pacing - Cassandra Dean & Lucy Clark

Successful romance writers Cassandra Dean and Lucy Clark easily held my attention for an hour, even though my energy was flagging a little by then. Having two alternating presenters helped to keep us focussed, as did the visuals. The Sherlock Holmes video very effectively showed us how time can be manipulated, stretched or contracted, both in film and in writing. As Holme's (Benedict Cumberpatch) glass slipped from his fingers, a fast flashback covered an amazing amount of relevant ground before the glass hit the floor. Life does seem to slow down like that at times and this was an effective device, transporting the viewer into Holmes memory as he recalled previous events.

Lucy and Cassandra also talked about the importance of a 'slow reveal' allowing readers to enter the character's world and avoiding the temptation of an 'information dump.' *"Authors can be tempted to take the easy way to impart information through dialogue, resulting in rather unbelievable character behaviour."*

The back story needs to come out slowly and naturally. *"Pacing that is too fast in the early chapters can result in letting out most of the plot and risk a sagging middle."* The fear of a sagging middle was a pertinent reminder of the value of a slow reveal. Another tip guaranteed to tantalize readers was to pose a question early in the story and delay the answer. A great way to hook our readers and keep them turning the pages. It works every time on me.

According to Cassandra and Lucy (as I understood it), the keys to pacing are:

- Don't rush
- Include vital scenes only. Every scene must drive the story forward. If not, out it goes.
- Don't be tempted into information dumping.
- Mix it up. A fast gallop, using short sentences for description and lots of action is sometimes appropriate to match the pace of the story and the feelings of the characters. At other times, a slow meander is ideal to allow readers linger and enjoy the journey.

Lyndsay Campbell

Take Aways:

The power of literary 'Close Up's; the power of lingering in a scene and the effective use of the senses to help share this was one of the most powerful takeaways for me alongside:

- Think about the emotion you are trying to convey to the reader and the need to match your pace to that emotion.
- You were encouraged to slow a scene down when there was something really important. As authors, we have the right to elongate time to really convey everything that is happening.
- Don't forget to put action with your dialogue. What is your character doing while he/she is talking?
- Give readers time to enter your characters' world.
- Use your senses effectively taste, touch, sight, sound, intuition.
- When he takes her hand, how is she feeling? What is happening to her? Are her lips dry? What is her heartbeat doing?
- You are allowed to slow down and linger

I liked the idea of creating an emotional thesaurus, especially for a particular book. To have it where I could see it also helped me get a sense of how one characters response may differ from another and how their emotional

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states had layers.

"You can fix a bad page, you can't fix a blank page."

WORKSHOP: Beyond Plot - Yvonne Walus

What a surprise! I loved how Yvonne encouraged us to include what was important to us in our writing. Her challenge to write a book that changes people's lives has made me really think about those books that:

- Moved me
- Changed me
- Played a part in me finding a salvatory moment in times of trouble.

Her way of interweaving issues that were important within her stories in a way that was not over bearing allowed me to see how these *"complex issues gave depth to the characters and encouraged me as a writer to fall deeper in love with the characters I was creating."*

A way to focus my stories in things that really matter to me.

That *"it is important for your story to carry a message if you want your book to change someone's life."*

Awesome workshop! I have come away with a few ideas for my book. A message in a bottle!

I loved the idea with each book of creating a list of 'What am I passionate about' and 'What do I dislike' as a way of adding issues/shades and complexities to characters.

Writing a book that could change somebody's life was a line that stood out for me from this workshop. Reaching out and making a difference. A thorough mind map session helped me come away with a few plots of my own.

WORKSHOP: Keeping them in Suspense - Allison Carroll, Brynn Kelly, Frances Housden

"Your hero and heroine in suspense are really only as compelling as the threat or villain that they are up against. You need to develop your villain just as much as the hero/heroine. Give the villain something that hints at what they are coming from."

When writing romantic suspense, particularly action-driven suspense, remember the plot still needs to move forward the romantic relationship - dropping clues along the way to show their emotional journey while they're dealing with the external conflict.

"Suspense is not just fear. It's a state of waiting for something to happen."

"The black moment should be resolved by the protagonist overcoming their flaws."

WORKSHOP: How to Write a Blurb that Sells or a Query that gets a Request - Gracie O'Neil

Gracie's workshop was intimate and informative. I find writing blurbs very hard so this workshop was perfect for me. The presenter broke blurb writing into helpful stages and provided excellent handouts and spot prizes! A great workshop by one of our own.

"The step by step nature of blurb writing helped demystify the process for me." Great presenter with really helpful resources. Certainly helpful for me at the stage I am at with my writing.

'How to write a blurb that sells' was extremely valuable. Gracie is a talented communicator who dissolved some of our angst concerning the blurb writing activity! *"Gracie described a blurb as the 'Sizzle that sells your sausage'."*

Gracie talked about the Importance of following the 4 S rule

- Simple
- Short
- Snappy
- Stimulating

Gracie also generously offered to critique our blurbs! How nice is that?

WORKSHOP: That Tricky High Concept Pitch - Elaine Spencer

- No major trends at the moment in Romance. *"There is not one thing everyone is moving toward."*
- Important that you have a high concept pitch, that you know your genre space.
 - o Define what you write
 - o Educate yourself on your genre

What seemed of real interest to publishers at the moment was for the writer to:

- Understand the rules of your genre so you can push the boundaries!
- Know your tropes and put a spin on them.

The idea being that through the pushing of boundaries (without breaking) and in putting a spin on your tropes people were left thinking *"That is so good why didn't I think of that!"*

Alongside this was the need to have enough of a sense of the familiar that even in unfamiliar settings the reader would be thinking *"This is different, but it is familiar enough for me to feel engaged and a part of the story."*

WORKSHOP: Making A Scene - Kylie Scott

"Everything needs to be authentic."

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How to overcome aversion to words:

- 1) Stand in front of mirror- repeat it
- 2) Say to writing friend- repeat it
- 3) Read out to writer friends- overcome embarrassment bit by bit
- 4) Go with what you're comfortable with

WORKSHOP: When a Hobby Becomes a Job - Tee Ayer

My motivation for attending the RWNZ conference this year, was a bid to take control of my writing and start taking it seriously. So when I saw Tee Ayer's breakout workshop When a hobby becomes a job, it was a must attend.

I wasn't disappointed. Tee covered so many aspects of writing as a career that my mind was spinning by the end. Not in a negative way, but in the way that has you grappling with how you're going to use all of that information and put a plan into place.

Better still, *"she opened my eyes to the fact that there is a much bigger picture than simply writing a book. It's about having a dream. About setting goals. About implementing a plan that will get you to where you need to go."* Better still, it identified the need for accountability. *"For self-sacrifice, and the need to kick procrastination and excusitis into touch."*

For such a brief workshop, the messages came across loud and clear.

"Have a plan. Not just one, but a five year, a two year, a one year and quarterly goals. Stick to them. Use them to measure your progress."

To an extent it was common sense, but to have someone point them out, and to demonstrate that they work in such a positive way for her, this was a unique opportunity.

I came away with a new focus on how I'll write. On how I'll plan. And more importantly how I will manage home and family around my writing career.

Thank Tee, you're an inspiration

Em

WORKSHOP: Introducing Christian Romance (the biggest little genre you've never heard of) - Lola Goulton

Excellent talk! *"I learned of a completely new world of writing possibilities."*

The possibilities here were really exciting not just in growth in Christian Romance but in the possibility of adding my faith to my writing.

We all know the tension that exists between a hero and heroine but to add another layer of faith whereby the love of God was a part of the story really ups the anti! I mean here we get not only talk about who saves who in a normal romance sense, we also get to add salvation in a spiritual sense.

WORKSHOP: Georgette Heyer: How She Wrote her Regency Novels - Jennifer Kloester

"A thoroughly enjoyable talk for lovers of Georgette Heyer and helpful information to aid research into regency times."

Encouraged me to go back and find that early historical romance I put away all those years ago. Loved it.

From The President

I've only just got home from the RWNZ conference. I'm also on book deadline. I am feeling tired, happy, and stressed, so it is a short report this month.

I hope the members who attended the conference in Rotorua enjoyed themselves, especially the first timers. I know I learned lots, networked hard, and took advantage of the opportunities to chat with speakers, editors, and agents. The Wellington team did a great job with the programme; the workshops and the presenters were wonderful. There will be a conference survey so you can all send us your feedback—I've already talked with the hotel about the microphone situation!

Seriously, thank you to the whole conference committee and to the volunteers who made the conference run smoothly; excellent job!

I took several things away from the conference this year, as I usually do. The main one being that we have a bunch of very talented authors! The feedback from the editor and agents who came was that the standard of our authors is very high. This note, that Elaine Spencer sent to me, sums it up nicely...

"This conference has been on my bucket list for a long time and I'm so thrilled to have had the opportunity to come and get to know so many of the talented writers from your organization. I'm looking forward to their material showing up in my inbox. If the cold reads I did were any indication, there is a lot of talent just waiting to be uncovered. Seriously, I was BLOWN OUT OF THE WATER during my session. The material was really just so good. I know you were in there for a bit, but, I was not just lauding my compliments "to be nice" during the session. The material was undeniably some of the most top-notch stuff I've ever seen come in during a confer-

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ence at a session like that.”

Wow—high praise indeed, and I’m sure we will be hearing announcements soon.

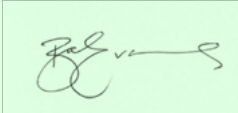
If you weren’t at the conference then you may not have heard who the lineup is for 2018! When Love Comes To Town is the conference theme and it will be held 10 – 12 August 2018 in the Novotel Ellerslie in Auckland. Kendra Delugar, the conference convener, will reveal who our headline speakers are soon, or see her post on the RWNZ Members Only Facebook Page.

Speaking of getting work in front of editors... don’t forget the Great Beginnings contest is open this month for published and unpublished authors. Being a member of RWNZ lets you have a chance to get your work in front of agents and editors and I encourage you all to do so when the opportunity arises.

I’d also like to introduce the new 2017/2018 Executive. The new members are Kate O’Keefe (Secretary), Bonnie Mosen (Publicity Officer) and Andrenne Low (Membership from 1 November) and they take up their positions on 1 September. Of course, myself, Catherine Robertson (Vice-President) and Tania Roberts (Treasurer) are staying on. We will have a meeting around mid-September to come up with our 2-3 actions points we will deliver this year and outline our plan to you all in October.

Happy writing!

Bronwen Evans



President



“Being a writer is a very peculiar sort of a job: it’s always you versus a blank sheet of paper (or a blank screen) and quite often the blank piece of paper wins.”

- Neil Gaiman

Reflections On Kristen Lamb

Anne Kemp



When it comes to my author marketing, I know some days I have struggled to find the fun... something we can all relate to? I don’t always enjoy social media, or digging in to write a blog post for my website. Luckily, that is where our Friday speaker at this year’s conference, Kristen Lamb, came to

my rescue!

I got the shot in the arm I needed during her Friday workshop. Other attendees I spoke with also found her workshop to be dynamic and memorable. I’ve been a convert to Kristen’s method since I was introduced to her a few years back. Someone recommended her book to me when I was getting started with my first publisher and agent because they knew it would help build my own author platform. And they were right! Anytime I put her tips into action, I see results. Kristen gets how an author thinks because she’s one of us.

I was very excited to hear her thoughts on blogging and how I can make it work better for me; she didn’t disappoint. Kristen shared knowledge with the room about algorithms, calls to action, and the amount of posts you need to hit your sweet spot, as well as tagging advice... score! My hand hurt from all the note taking, but I was thrilled.

Another spot where roadblocks pop up is around blogging and social media topics. Kristen spoke about getting in your own way (which I know I can do) with over thinking: like what blog to write or what to post on my social media. It is something that should flow- we are writers, aren’t we? Yet many of us, myself included, hit a wall when we sit down to type. When I got out of my own way that day and tried the exercise Kristen had us do with our “Word Clouds” I was amazed at the amount of topics I have swirling around me that I can post about. I’ve become a little obsessed with my cloud and can’t stop adding to it, but hey, it’s got my creative juices going!

Kristen also gave more clarity around the distinction between Marketing and Advertising vs. Branding. *“It makes so much sense,”* shared Gudrun Frerichs of the Wellington Chapter. *“I’m sure we all have tons of examples of spending hard-earned author dollars for paid advertising and marketing courses.”*

From taglines to hyperlinks, to theming your posts for days of the week, to repurposing old content, Kristen had

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notes for us on everything. There was no doubt that she knew her stuff, as one conference goer shared, and she was very enthusiastic about what she taught.

A few of my fellow members said that the humour she injected into the day helped keep their attention. The examples she gave helped us understand the points she was making around “why” we need to take care of our brands.

Kristen Lamb's workshop is one that I'm glad I was able to attend - now, I've got to get back to my word cloud...

Anne Kemp is the author behind the Abby George Series. Originally from Frederick, Maryland, she prides herself on being a gypsy at heart. She is an award-winning blogger, and penned the column “Anne In Progress for the Frederic News-Post. Anne is also the Executive Producer behind “Kelly,” a documentary which premiered at Slamdance in Park City, Utah and also won at Atlanta DocuFest. She currently resides in Wellington, New Zealand with her husband and their dogs, Tama and George Clooney. You can find out more about Anne on her website: <http://www.annekemp.com>

The Bookshelf

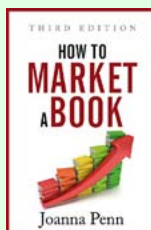


How To Write Erotica: An Excellent Guide To Smut Publishing

Zaria Rose

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B074J7PWJT/>

Welcome to the world of erotica writing - it's exciting, wet, and quite profitable. In this book I will guide you from start to finish on how to write a story, publish it on multiple websites, and actually succeed to become a long term erotica writer. Should you even only spend some time investing in writing- it will pay you back indefinitely!



How To Market A Book (3rd Edition)

Joanna Penn

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B071NPVK28/>

How to Market a Book is for authors who want to sell more books, but it's also for those writers who want to think like

an entrepreneur and build a long-term income. It's for traditionally published authors who want to take control of their future, and for self-published authors who want to jump-start a career.



Understanding Conflict (And What It Really Means)

Janice Hardy

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B074FYY5SX/>

With in-depth analysis and easy-to-understand examples, Understanding Conflict (And What It Really Means) looks at how to develop and create conflict in your novel. It also explores the things that affect conflict (such as tension), and the misconceptions that confuse and frustrate so many writers.



Productivity For Indie Authors (A Book About Doing Less & Making More)

David Lee Martin

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B071S83XYP/>

This book contains the tried and tested keys that took me from a struggling and overwhelmed indie author, to a six-figure publishing business that virtually runs on auto-pilot. Most productivity books center on teaching how to do more. This is a book all about doing less!



BadRedhead Media 30-Day Book Marketing Challenge: How to energize your book sales in a month

Rachel Thompson

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01N7L97JY/>

Over the course of one month, Rachel provides you daily challenges containing a wealth of information, and easy to follow assignments to help energize your book sales. If you haven't released your book yet, this book will help you set the stage necessary to build the strongest foundation possible for success.



At Conference participants were encouraged to take up the Theme-Scene Challenge. Laid out before them were a series of images and one liners aimed at encouraging the creative juices to flow! The challenge was to use the items provided to create a 300 word scene to stir the senses. Then once inspired to send the created scene to Heart to Heart. Over the next few months we will share your scenes in our publication. People really seemed to get on board with the challenge with scenes already beginning to come in. Please continue to send them to heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz.

If you didn't get to conference and still want to participate in the challenge email me and I will send you some resources.

Theme Scene 300 Word Challenge #01

Another Case Dealt With

By Imogene Nix



Another case dealt with and Sarina noted the latest facts concerning the latest domestic violence case they'd intervened on. The pen in her hand scratched in the quiet of the squad car. Neill remained inside assuring the woman they had

enough information to charge her husband.

A smile crept over her face. "We got him." The familiar sense of satisfaction warming her wasn't so much because she enjoyed tearing families apart—a regular occurrence in her experience as a police officer in this poor section of town. It was knowing he'd be made accountable.

In the periphery, she caught sight of a man descending the steps. Rounding the car, she noted the furrowed brow. The tall lanky man lowered himself into the car and she had to admit to adoring him, at least internally.

She slid her hand over his, offering her support. Understanding his confusion.

"I don't know how you manage this day after day." He sp-

oke quietly and she strained to hear, accepting the thread of anxiety which made her bite her lip.

"We helped her. The kid will recover." And he would, now that he had medical assistance.

"But the family—"

"Wasn't a family, Neill. He abused the mother and kids. He damaged them. You saw the little girl hiding in her room. You saw the old bruises on her arms and neck. You think they didn't suffer because of his actions?"

He shook his head. "But the family will never be the same."

She needed to remember he'd been a traffic cop before he'd transferred over in the last few days. He hadn't seen the deaths and maiming she had. After five years working this ghetto, heaven knew she'd seen just about everything.

"No, that's true. But those kids will have a future now. They have a chance and won't grow up in a house where violence is an everyday occurrence."

He sighed and rested his head against the rest, eyes closing as if seeking a moment's peace. "I don't know why I suggested this transfer."

"Because you're my cousin, and you want to make a difference."



Imogene is published in a range of romance genres including Paranormal, Science Fiction and Contemporary. She is mainly published in the UK and USA due to the nature of her tales. Imogene has successfully been contracted for twenty-five titles. She has also completed several others. Imogene is a member of a range of professional organisations worldwide, and believes in the mantra of mentoring and paying it forward.

She loves to drink coffee, wine & eat chocolate and is parenting 2 spoiled dogs and a ferocious cat along with her husband and 2 human daughters. Find out more about Imogene and her books at: <http://www.imogenenix.net>

Twitter Pitching: How To Pitch To Agents & Editors In A Digital World

Amy Paulussen



Are you ready to launch? This article, based on Amy's workshop for the Canterbury May Writing Workshop series in association with the NZSA, will show what you need to know to pitch to international agents and editors in a digital world.

Once upon a time, publishers were a world away. New Zealand writers printed off their manuscripts, loaded up big brown envelopes and spent their grocery money on postage. Once upon a time, no one needed to Google 'what is a SASE?' because we all knew exactly what that meant... and there was no such thing as Google anyway.

Nowadays, we email... everything. But it's hard to get out of the habit of thinking geographically. Writers with nearly-ready novels often ask me how to approach New Zealand publishers. They want to see their book in Whitcoulls and local libraries and all those lovely independent bookstores. Well, who doesn't? But the hard reality is that most New Zealand publishers, even the biggies, don't distribute overseas. A success-story in New Zealand sells around 2000 copies.

The Bad News

You can't live off 2000 copies. And that sales record will do you more harm than good if you go on to approach an international publisher. 2000 copies, to them, is a flop. You're better off having no sales-record than a bad one.

And it might seem more likely that you'll land a book deal in a smaller pool, but your odds aren't necessarily any better with a local outfit. The market here is tiny. Rugby biographies and cookbooks are where it's at, I'm afraid.

The Good News

New Zealand stories are not solely interesting to New Zealanders. In fact, looking at my friends' book shelves, it's clear New Zealanders would rather read about anywhere and everywhere else. Who doesn't love the transporive power of reading? I live in Christchurch, but in my reading, I'm in Amsterdam, the Yukon, Nigeria, Poland... So why would we assume that people in other countries don't want to read about us? Tourists come here in droves. They've got this idea we're clean and green and exotic. In our writing, at least, we needn't disappoint!

Where to begin?

It's a big wide world, you say. Where do I start if not here?

Australia?

Well... maybe, but you're still thinking geographically. In an ordinary day, I can speak to friends and family in New Mexico, Manchester, Chicago, Paris... In an ordinary week, I can casually chit-chat with editors and agents in London and New York.

Distance is simply no longer an obstacle to publishing. You don't have to post a great hefty envelope at great expense. No more SASEs. Today, it's all digital and instant and email. The people you need to reach are more available than ever.

So, how do you find these people?

How do you get in with the big bad world of publishing?

Twitter.

I know, I know, it's basically a dirty word, but honestly, it's where the writers are. It's where the literary agents and editors of publishing companies hang out. They cheer on their sports teams and post photos of their cats, they rage at politicians and TV characters' deaths, they congratulate their authors and share reviews. They're just people, some of whom don't get out much, but they're great company when you're by yourself writing for hours on end.

And some of them tweet their manuscript wish lists.

And some of them run pitch competitions.

And loads of them look at the pitches in those competitions.

Agents and editors want to find new books, new authors. They're on the prowl. And we writers, goodness knows we want them. Just ask a romance writer: the tricky part is how we get together.

Go on, sign up for Twitter. And then, while you're still feeling unsure, check out the #mswl hashtag.

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That stands for Manuscript Wishlist. If #mswl doesn't win you over, I can't help you.

There are a couple of websites too... (you don't need to be on Twitter to access these)

- mswishlist.com
- manuscriptwishlist.com

You can search these by genre and find agents and editors aplenty who are looking for books similar to yours. If the posts seem dated, check out the agent/editor's website.

A few pointers on Twitter...

- Use your writer-name. Whichever name you'll put on the cover of your books.
- Describe yourself as a writer. Go on. Do it. Bring on the imposter syndrome. Get used to it.
- Use the same photo as for other social media accounts, preferably of your face. Interested agents/editors will look you up. Make it easy for them to find you—and know that it is you.
- Retweet and promote other writers. Share a mix of your own and others' content – blogs, articles, reviews, where to buy books, etc.
- Keep self-promotion to a minimum. Some is okay, but too much will get you un-followed. Fast.
- Have normal conversations. Like a normal person. Ahem. Fake it.
- Decide how much of your life you want to share on Twitter. You can present yourself as a writer-only and post solely about writing and reading. Or you can share more personal stuff. Keep in mind that all of this is publicly available. Don't be put off by that: the point is to be public, be available. You're trying to reach out and connect with other writers, editors and agents. So be yourself, but not too wildly offensive.
- Emulate those you like.

For more on using Twitter: <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2014/07/the-ultimate-guide-to-twitter-for-writers/>

Still reluctant to join Twitter? http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-anthony-jones/no-excuses-why-and-how-wr_b_9195128.html

Try to enjoy it, to give the world a taste of who you are. When an agent (or publisher) takes you on, they need to like your book. But they also need to get on with you as a person. There's an element of chemistry in any working relationship. Find the magical balance between professional and personable.

If you don't yet have a book to promote, even better. There's no danger of self-promotion if you've nothing to sell and you'll build a following, slowly but surely. When you eventually do have a book to sell, your audience will be there waiting for you.

Pitch Comp Hashtags – Twitter sites to get you started.

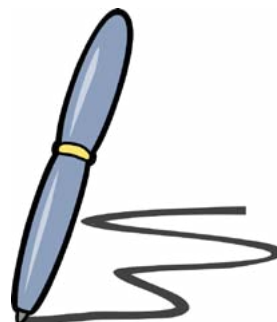
#adpit – adult fiction
#pitchslam
#pitmad – novels only
#sffpit – sci-fi/fantasy
#pbpitch – picture books
#agentmatch
#pit2pub
#pitchmadness
#pitchmas
#pitmatch
#pitdark
#sonofapitch
#writepit
#kidpit - children's
#faithpitch – Christian
#dvpit – diverse voices

Not sure who to follow on Twitter? Start with your favourite writers. Look who they follow. Find their agents and editors. Look up publishing companies. Find agents and editors on their company websites and on Manuscript Wishlist. Follow, follow, follow! Be friendly to all sorts, not just those possible future agents and editors.

If an agent or editor 'favourites' your pitch, that means they'd like you to submit to them. Well done! You're in! Got questions? Want to connect? Find me on Twitter @AmyPaulussen!

*Amy Paulussen writes contemporary and historical fiction. She had poems published in *Leaving the Redzone* and *Manifesto*, and writes short stories on occasion, but novels are her favourite thing. She is the current chair of the Canterbury branch of the NZ Society of Authors. She also relief teaches at a couple of secondary schools and tutors for *The School for Young Writers*.*

“I write to give myself strength. I write to be the characters that I am not. I write to explore all the things I'm afraid of.”



- Joss Whedon

Regional Round-Up Reports

Auckland

Convenor: Pamela Gervai
(pamelagervai.com)

At our August meeting 33 of us had two illuminative speakers inform us about what an editor looks out for and how to manage your own writing craft. Our speakers were Emma Bryson (on Twitter @missoilcan) and Maisey Yates New York Times and USA Today Bestselling author. Thank you so much to you both. Maisey and Jackie Ashenden then heard pitches from some of those who are going to Conference.

Our next meeting in September features Dawn Grant as our speaker. Her topic is FIGHTING LIKE A GIRL. It was while writing her action/adventure series for senior primary children, featuring 14 year old Jason Shaw, that she began self-defense training. Dawn says the aim of the talk is not to teach self-defense which is a vast subject on its own, but how to write a fight scene from a girl's/young boy's perspective where technique wins out against brawn. As usual the venue is the Three Kings Tennis Pavilion from 12.30 until 3.00. Please bring a gold coin donation, change for the raffles, and a plate to share.

Hawkes Bay

Convenor: Kendra Delugar
(kendraonthemove@hotmail.com)

Our August meeting took place at Bron's. After our normal catch-up, and the gathering of raffle items, we practised our pitches for conference - and it was a fascinating exercise.

We meet on the first Saturday of the month at 1pm, and new members are always welcome. We'll be skipping the September meeting as everyone seems to be either on deadline, away, or still recovering from conference. Our next meeting will be held on the 7th of October.

Wellington/Kapiti Coast

Convenor: Kris Pearson (kris.p@paradise.net.nz)

Ten of us, including new member Gail, who bought delicious home-made cheese scones, had a great meeting at Sandra's again. Bonnie has been confirmed as Publicity Officer for the 2018 conference in Auckland, Gudrun has her second book out, Jane launched a new one on meeting day, and Kris's Chinese translations are progressing well (if hilariously.) After a round table catch-up on what we'd been doing in the intervening weeks, we had a cold reads session. EVERYONE brought the first two pages of their current ms, and we read them out anonymously and gave our feedback. We enjoyed it so much we'll be doing the same next month with blurbs, af

ter a conference de-brief. We'll meet at Anna's 118 The Parade, Paekakariki, 1pm, Saturday September 2nd.

Nelson

Convenor: Annika Ohlson-Smith
(nelsonromancewriters@xtra.co.nz)

At our August meeting we applauded two of our members – Donna Capil and Heather Holmes. Donna for having won 1st prize in the RWNZ Chapter competition, and Heather for having published her first novel. Donna joined our group after winning 2nd prize in our competition some years ago. She's come very far since then. We have so enjoyed to critique Heather's novel 'What's In A Name' and see it grow. The laughs we've had! We're sure her book will be a great 'healer'. Heather has self-published the book to be able to donate all the income to the Nelson Cancer Society. She's had too many friends diagnosed with cancer the last few years.

Not far to the Deadline for our short story competition 'A Holiday Romance', so we spent some time to decide the wording on the judging sheet. After that, a mini-workshop in writing dialogue. We also decided to participate in the Christmas Tree Festival again.

Christchurch

Convenor: Jane Madison-Jones
(maddie-jane@xtra.co.nz)

Our August meeting was the weekend before conference. A group of us met at the South Library over coffee and practised pitching. I think we all found it extremely helpful and it got us in the right headspace for Rotorua. The group has been growing fast and those of us that attended conference met a few more Christchurch writers we hope will join us at future meetings. Let's try to have a full turnout at our next meeting: 10am, 10 September at South Library. Go Christchurch girls! You rock!

Otago

Convenor: Samantha Charlton
(samanthacharlton@hotmail.com)

The Otago/Southland chapter met up at our usual haunt - Rhubarb Cafe in Roslyn, Dunedin - for a catch-up about our current writing projects. During our meeting (among other topics) we also discussed cover design and the importance of getting an author website up and running. Our next meeting is scheduled for Saturday 9 September in Wanaka, so our Central Otago members will have a change to catch up!

Coast to Coast Convenor: Vivienne Matthews (vivienmatthewswriter@gmail.com)
Blenheim Area - Contact: Iona Jones (ionajones@xtra.co.nz)