

Heart to Heart

ROMANCE WRITERS
OF NEW ZEALAND

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September 2016

Conference 2016

My favourite—and most surprising—things

Leeanna Morgan

Here are the top four things I enjoyed about conference this year, and what surprised me the most.

1. Meeting so many awesome writers!

It was wonderful catching up with friends I meet each year and talking with writers I've never met before. It doesn't matter where we are in our writing careers or what genre we write in, we're all striving to publish great books our readers will enjoy.

2. Listening to Michael Hauge and discovering I've over-complicated the plot of the book I'm writing.

I loved every minute of his workshops. I bought the live-streaming videos to keep me on track in the coming months!

3. Talking to writers about self-publishing.

We have so many talented writers in RWNZ and so many unpublished manuscripts—my mind was buzzing with possibilities.

If you're interested in self-publishing, download the writers' resources on my website, <http://www.leeannamorgan.com/for-writers.html>. The free PDF, written by Diana Fraser, is an extended version of the workshop I presented.

There were lots of great questions, ideas, and experiences shared at the workshop. I'm looking forward to seeing more indie-authors at conference next year.

4. Being presented with the Koru Award in the long romance category.

All of Me (FREE from all digital retailers) was such a pleasure to write. What meant even more was accepting the award as an indie-author. The world of publishing is such an incredible place. Digital platforms have made books more accessible to everyone, creating unlimited market potential. It's a wonderful time to be an author.

What surprised me the most ...

The biggest surprise was the amount of interest in marketing. There are so many options available for authors—knowing what works for your books and your readers is important if you want to increase your visibility and sales.

We'll have to provide some marketing workshops in Wellington next year!



The new membership form is up on the website.

The registration year runs from 1st September to 31st August .

New Members fee is \$74 (+ bank charges). Renewing Members pay \$59 (+ bank charges).

You can pay by credit card into the RWNZ PayPal account
or (if you live in New Zealand) by Internet Banking.

After 1st November, unpaid subscriptions are cancelled and you'll need to pay the \$15 rejoining fee. *Nooo!* Don't do that!! You'll miss out on good stuff!

Go to <http://www.romancewriters.co.nz/membership/>

From the Editor

Welcome to the first *Heart to Heart* produced by your new team. We're sorry to lose Sapi and Lorna. Thank you both so much for your hard work and support. May your words continue to flow as you pursue your own hopes and dreams.

A huge welcome to Ruth Clough who will, from October, take on the role of Layout Guru. Thank you, Ruth!

There are a lot of thank yous for this edition. Thank you to the Outgoing Exec for your guidance over the last twelve months, to the Conference Committee for a fabulous conference in Auckland, and to all of you who have made our organisation able to function by your selfless commitment in volunteering your skills and services. Where would we be without you. Up the creek, that's where!

The next twelve months promise to be a lot of fun. In *Heart to Heart* we're going to deal with the following topics: Emotion, Conflict, Sensuality, Passion, What makes a hero? What makes a heroine? Dialogue. Happy for how long? How Black is your Moment? and What is your why? We're also going to have a look at marketing, and business planning for writers.

If you have anything you'd like to share with us on these topics—or any other—please let us know.

Until next month!

Gracie



Meet Your Exec

They're surprisingly normal (really!)

Name: Karen Browning (aka Maggie Le Page)

Position: Treasurer

RWNZ Bio: I've been a member of RWNZ since 2008. I was RWNZ Secretary in 2008, and co-wrote *Heart to Heart* in 2011. I'm an ex-contest addict! (It was a great way to get feedback on my then unpubbed work—and also to develop that tough writer hide we all need.)

What was your best learning at RWNZ conference 2016? Michael Hauge was a clear winner for me this year. I was totally impressed at the way he taught by example; listening to people's story structure ideas and giving instant feedback. And I loveloved his identity-into-essence description - it's useful not only for character development, but also to me as a person. Lightbulb moment!

Who would you love to go on a date with? Jesse Williams, who plays Jackson Avery in *Grey's Anatomy*. Call me shallow but . . . those EYES! I'd just sit and look into those startling blue eyes all damn night!



Name: Rachel Collins

Position: Publicity

RWNZ Bio: I joined RWNZ more than ten years ago when I moved to New Zealand. Since then I've served on the Exec as Membership Secretary, worked on the Conference Committee, and been part of the *Heart to Heart* team. I spend my days managing site operations and logistics for a large Canterbury institution and my nights writing contemporary romance, usually with plenty of dark and brooding bad boys.

What was your best learning at RWNZ conference 2016? It had to be revelation after revelation at Michael Hauge's workshop. I learned so much especially identity/essence and the transformation journey. I want to write a screenplay!

Who would you love to go on a date with? As the President has taken off with Hugh Jackman I'll go for Robert Downey Jr. Like a good wine he has seriously improved with age.



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From The President

As we start to crawl out from the winter months of rain, hail and snow—and more rain—the new Executive is excited to be diving into RWNZ affairs with a view to helping all members increase their writing knowledge, support and networking more than ever before.

The six of us, Catherine, Kendra, Karen, Gracie, Rachel and I stood on a common platform—members first.

What did we mean by that? Well, we believe that to help RWNZ writers advance their careers we need to deliver more than an annual conference. Did you know that only one third of members attend conference each year? Conference is an expense for each of us, an investment in our careers (not just money but time too), and we understand that not everyone can, or wants to, attend every year.

So what else can RWNZ offer those who cannot attend?

That's something we want to ask you! Your new executive has many ideas, which we will share with you over the next twelve months. But we would also like to hear from you—what is it you want or need help with? We have members in all stages of their careers—those just starting out, those who are almost there, and then those who have published. As an organization we need to ensure we deliver benefits across everyone's career levels.

Soon a comprehensive RWNZ survey will be sent out (so ensure the membership secretary, Gracie, has your up-to-date email). This is your opportunity to discuss with us what you want out of your organization.

This survey is important for many reasons, but mostly because it will form the basis of the first RWNZ Strategic Plan. The strategic plan is a guide to help future executive committees understand what you want from your organisation, and the workplans to deliver it.


As an added incentive, one lucky member who completes the survey will be drawn to WIN a FREE Saturday and Sunday 2017 conference registration.

So, now's your chance to have your say. We hope to send out the survey Friday 2nd September, so look out for it in your email inbox.

I'm also very happy for any member to email me privately to discuss anything to do with RWNZ.

I look forward to working on your behalf with my fabulous team! Here's to a great 2016/2017 writing year! I hope you've all set your writing goals. Mine is to keep writing for Random House Loveswept, but to try and sell a second series to another house, and perhaps do some more self-publishing. What are yours?

Read. Feel. Fall in Love.



Bronwen Evans
RWNZ President



First National Writers Forum Welcomes all writers

Catherine Robertson

The first ever National Writers Forum will be held at the University of Auckland 17-18 September.

Its programme includes panel sessions and master classes on craft, funding and support, pitching, the editing process – and advice successful writers wished they'd been given a lot earlier in their careers. Writers of all genres and at all career levels are welcome, from those

just starting out to established authors.

Headline guest authors include Nalini Singh, UK author Chris Cleave, and Ockham New Zealand Book Award winner Stephen Daisley.

Other featured New Zealand authors include Ben Sanders, Greg McGee and Catherine Robertson appearing together to discuss and instruct on plot, structure and pace. Fantasy writer Helen Lowe will lead a masterclass on building worlds, and Anna Mackenzie, a celebrated writer of speculative and historic novels, will run a workshop called 'Turning Fact into Fiction'.

Also joining the line-up are Toby Morris and comic artist Sarah Laing, whose masterclass, 'The Personal is Political', will be inspiring for all writers, as well as for comic artists and graphic novelists.



NATIONAL WRITERS FORUM

17-18 SEPTEMBER 2016

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Your Brain is Wired for Story

And why it matters

Randy Ingermanson

I recently heard a talk by Lisa Cron about how humans are “wired for story.” It was a terrific talk, and midway through it, I hopped onto Amazon and bought Lisa’s book, **WIRED FOR STORY**.

Does it matter if humans are “wired for story?” Sure it does. If you understand why humans desperately need story, you’ll be a better writer.

Story gives us a chemical buzz. Story lets us try out somebody else’s life without any risk. Story is our preferred way to learn things.

I met Lisa after her talk and we got into one of those intense conversations that lasts an hour but feels like five minutes. We think alike on a lot of things, but she knows way more about the neuroscience of story than I do.

I’ve now finished reading **WIRED FOR STORY**, and I found plenty of gold there. Here are a few of the nuggets I learned, which you can apply to your fiction writing:

Your Brain Likes the Big Picture

Imagine you’re driving down a busy street.

Your eyes and ears are taking in enormous amounts of data each second. The layout of all the cars around you, their shifting patterns, the traffic lights. The sky, the sun, the weather. Cars honking, road noise, the idiot guy on the radio. Your speedometer, fuel gauge, temperature gauge. If it’s raining, millions of water drops are streaming at you, and your windshield wipers are flitting across your field of vision every second.

A kid is riding his bike out into the street right in front of your car.

With no effort at all, your brain filters out all the unimportant stuff.

You spot the kid and you jam on the brakes.

How did that happen?

Your brain is wired to care about the important stuff. The big picture.

In real life, your brain takes in about 11 million bits of data per second and passes on to your conscious mind about 40 bits per second.

Some writers worry about how to paint a picture that their reader can see, complete with mountains of detail.

Because that’s “real life.”

Don’t.

In your story, your reader is expecting that you have filtered out all the useless information. Your reader expects that anything she reads is important to the story.

Your job as an author is to highlight the kid on the bike. To filter out the other cars, the traffic lights, the weather, the road noise, the radio jerk, the dashboard.

All those minor things will get a sentence or two, just to set the context. The kid gets half a page.

Story isn’t about the details.

Story is about what matters.

Focus on what matters, and your story will feel more real than if you try to focus on “everything.” Which feels to the reader like focusing on “nothing.”

Your Brain Thinks Concretely, Not Abstractly

Picture this scenario: You’re in great danger and you have to fight your adversary or else face grave consequences.

Can you see that in your mind’s eye?

Probably not. “Danger” could be anything—a mugger, a tornado, a submarine falling out of a third-floor window.

“Danger” is abstract. You can’t picture “danger.” You can picture a mugger, because that’s concrete. So is a tornado. So is a submarine.

Likewise, “fight” is abstract. So is “adversary.” So is “grave consequences.”

I’ve asked your brain to do something it can’t possibly do—picture the abstract.

Your brain can only picture concrete things.

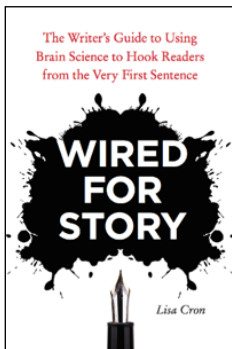
So let’s try again. Picture this scenario:

You’re in a wilderness area and you’re attacked by a wild beast. You have a weapon and you must use it to neutralize your enemy.

How was that? Could you visualize it?

You could, possibly, but only if you filled in a lot of gaps.

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Wired for Story *continued from page 4*

Is that “wilderness” a desert, a jungle, or an arctic ice floe?

Is that “wild beast” a tiger, a T-rex, or a tarantula?

Is that “weapon” a stick, a machete, or an Uzi?

Does “neutralize” mean to cripple, to kill, or to scare away?

Again, the scenario I’ve asked you to visualize is abstract, when your brain wanted something concrete.

One more try. Picture this scenario:

You’re walking through a steaming Indian jungle at noon and a Bengal tiger comes charging toward you. You’ve got a loaded rifle, and you have half a second to kill the tiger.

Can you see that in your mind’s eye?

Of course you can. Because everything is now concrete. The jungle. The tiger. The rifle. The ticking clock. The only way of salvation.

Your brain is wired to imagine concrete things. Your brain is not wired to imagine abstract things.

When writing fiction, use concrete nouns and verbs. Leave the abstract stuff to your Philosophy 101 professor.

Your Brain Believes in Cause and Effect

You are locked in a cage with Ricky Headmasher, the world heavyweight champion in mixed martial arts. The rules today are that they won’t open the cage until one of you is unconscious. Or both of you.

Ricky starts falling, right after you land a lucky kick to his head, but not before he has punched you in the eye, which happened right after you lunged at him in a feint, after which he ducked and threw a wicked left at your head, which you then tried to twist away from but failed. The cage opens after Ricky hits the canvas and you stomp on his face, just before Ricky’s eyes roll back and his muscles turn to spaghetti.

A rousing bit of action, no?

What? No? Seriously? You didn’t quite follow that?

You probably could follow it if you tried hard enough. You’re smart enough to make a list of things that happened and then sort them to see which came first.

But you’d hate that.

Your brain is wired to expect cause and effect. The cause comes first, then the effect. That effect then becomes the cause for some other effect. And so on.

Your brain is not wired to see a mishmash of effects and causes all out of order.

Your brain is not wired to see “Ricky starts falling just after you land a lucky kick to his head.” Because in that sentence, the effect is written first, and then the cause.

Your brain wants to see you land that kick and then see Ricky start his epic fall.

When you’re writing fiction, your reader expects to see causes and effects. In that order. Your reader hates to see effects that have no causes. Your reader is puzzled to see causes that don’t lead to effects.

Make your reader happy. Work with her brain the way it’s wired.

Focus your reader on the big picture. Show her concrete images. Show her cause and effect.

These are three ideas out of a dozen that you’ll find in **WIRED FOR STORY**, by Lisa Cron.

If you want to learn the rest, with a whole lot more detail, check out her book. You can get it on Amazon. You can also get it on Barnes & Noble.

This article is reprinted by permission of the author.

Award-winning novelist Randy Ingermanson, “the Snowflake Guy,” publishes the free monthly *Advanced Fiction Writing E-zine*, with more than 6,700 readers. If you want to learn the craft and marketing of fiction, AND make your writing more valuable to editors, AND have FUN doing it, visit www.AdvancedFictionWriting.com



First National Writers Forum *continued from page 3*

Michael Wolfe, executive director of Authors Alliance and a copyright attorney, is travelling from San Francisco to participate in a panel on essential knowledge for writers—copyright and contracts.

In a session called ‘Live Live Editing’, delegates can enter the draw for their own work to be edited live by a panel of sharp literary minds. ‘The Perfect Pitch’ session will feature a range of editors and publishers.

There’s also a *Make the Perfect Pitch* competition. Winners will get a one-on-one session with industry experts, including Harriet Allan (Penguin Random House), Kevin Chapman (Upstart Press), Duncan Greive (The Spinoff), and Melanie Laville-Smith (Allen & Unwin).

Tickets are on sale now.

Go to nationalwritersforum.org.nz/tickets and iTicket for further information and to purchase.

Name: Bronwen Evans

Position: President



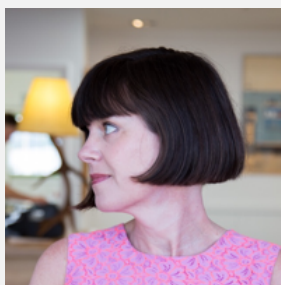
RWNZ Bio: I've been writing romance from when I first joined RWNZ in 2006. I finished my first book in 2009 with the help of RWNZ friends (fellow authors) which was then sold to Kensington in a 2 book deal in 2010. I have now completed 13 books, 4 of which are self-published and 9 published with Kensington NY and PenguinRandom House NY. I have hit the USA Today list 3 times, and I have won the RomCom Readers Crown 3 times. I have served on the RWNZ Executive before as Treasurer, and on the RWNZ Conference Committee. I also worked for a year on the RWNZ newsletter. I'm really looking forward to working with all the members and helping RWNZ.

What was your best learning at RWNZ conference 2016? That investing in understanding the psychology of people is worth while. Michael Hauge's focus on a person's wound, fears and how they live in 'false' identities before being forced to face the fears and move towards their true Essence is what can make a romance or story deeper. Understanding our characters is key.

Who would you love to go on a date with? Everyone who knows me already knows this answer—Hugh Jackman of course!

Name: Catherine Robertson

Position: Vice President



RWNZ Bio: I was introduced to RWNZ in 2008 by Bronwen Evans, and I wrote an article about the 2008 conference for the Dominion Post weekend edition. I joined as a member in 2009, and was MC at the 2012 and 2013 conferences.

What was your best learning at RWNZ conference 2016? I had a flying visit this year, but as always, I am struck by what a buzz RWNZ conferences are. Our members have such willingness to share their knowledge, and there's always an incredible atmosphere of humour, energy and goodwill.

Who would you love to go on a date with? I would have said Terry Pratchett but he's dead. I'd settle for author Neil Gaiman even though we are both married, and not to each other.

Name: Kendra Delugar

Position: Secretary



RWNZ Bio: I've been a member of RWNZ for 10 years (while living in New Zealand and Australia), and was a competition junkie at one stage, finalling regularly here and once in the USA.

What was your best learning at RWNZ conference 2016? I liked listening to Michael Hauge explain his concept of identity and essence, not only in how it applies to character, but thinking further about how that applies to each of us, as writers and people. It's a challenging concept—letting go of your armour.

Who would you love to go on a date with? This isn't a date in the traditional sense, but I'd kill to talk with Stephen Hawking. I hear you have to send your questions to him ahead of time though, so it wouldn't be the most spontaneous of dates!

Name: Gracie Stanners (w/a Gracie O'Neil)

Position: Membership



RWNZ Bio: I first got involved with RWNZ in 2004 after my GP gave me eighteen months to live. Attending that first conference both changed my life and saved it. My previous position on the Exec was as Vice President, so Membership Secretary is going to be a nice learning curve. I've also been part of the editorial team for *Heart to Heart*. Writing-wise, my work has won the RWNZ Short Story Competition, the Clendon Readers Choice Award, and the North Texas RWA Great Expectations Contest (Mainstream with Romantic Elements).

What was your best learning at RWNZ conference 2016? Michael Hauge's Identity to Essence workshop. The biggest *aha* moment made me realize why I was struggling with the ending of the third book in my trilogy. Now I just need time to sit down and nut out how I'm going to fix it.

Who would you love to go on a date with? Someone I don't have to impress, or dress up for. Someone I can laugh with. Who isn't going to take me places where I have take part in inane conversations about things that don't matter. Someone who makes me happy. Someone I don't have to guard my tongue with. Someone who looks past what I look like and sees who I am. I guess I'm lucky, because I married him!! :-)

DO YOU NANO??

Yes, it's only September but November is coming, so ... who's planning to take part in National Novel Writing Month? Who's taken part in NaNoWriMo before? What was it like? Would you recommend it? What did you enjoy? What did you hate? What did you learn? Share your experiences in 100 words or less and send them to *Heart to Heart*. Don't be shy. You're a writer. Of course you can do it! :-)

Woos and Hoos!

Jean Drew



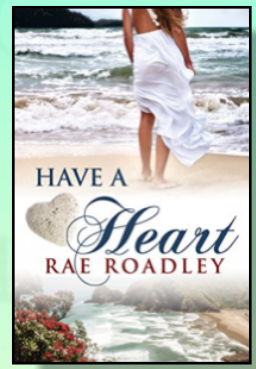
Samantha Charlton's (w/ Jayne Castel) latest novel, [DAWN OF WOLVES](#), is a Kindle Scout winner! Book #3 in The Kingdom of Mercia series, this historical romance set in 7th Century Anglo-Saxon England has just been published by Kindle Press.

Toni Kenyon's latest rockstar romance [HIDING IN PUBLIC](#) (Sam and Dusty's story) is now available.



Mary Brock Jones' romantic science fiction [TORN](#) comes out as an ebook on Amazon, 3 September (US time).

Rae Roadley's self-published [HAVE A HEART](#) was published August 11.



Vonnie Hughes had a traditional Regency n o v e l l a [ENTANGLEMENT](#) published around 12 August.

Congratulations to [Yvonne Lindsay](#) who has just accepted a five-book contract offer from Harlequin Desire.

And for Entertainment ...

Post conference submission?

<http://bookendslitagency.blogspot.co.nz/2010/03/submitted-partial.html>

Developing your story idea into a list of key scenes (Part 1)

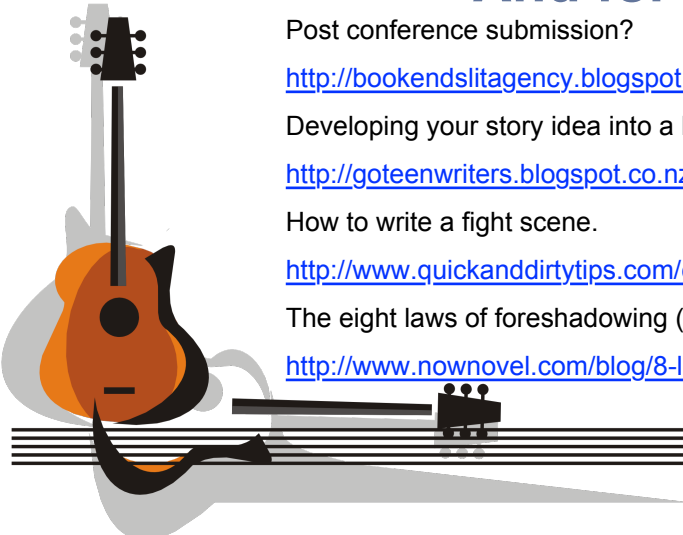
<http://goteenwriters.blogspot.co.nz/2014/07/how-to-develop-your-story-idea-into.html>

How to write a fight scene.

<http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/education/grammar/how-to-write-a-fight-scene>

The eight laws of foreshadowing (with infographic!)

<http://www.nownovel.com/blog/8-laws-foreshadowing/>



Regional Roundup Reports

Auckland Convenor: Pamela Gervai pamelagervai.com

On August 6th, Jackie Coates/Ashenden gave us an inspiring talk on Keeping the Joy in our writing career. It was a lovely, positive meeting for the thirty of us who attended. Thank you so much Jackie.
www.jackieashenden.com

On September 3rd, Ada Soto will be talking on Slash it: Fanfiction, M/M romance, and Rewriting the Rules: A look at the history of same gender romance in transformative works and its effect on the modern male/male romance genre.

Ada Maria Soto is a California raised Mexican-America expat who has been in New Zealand for over a decade. She has degrees in theatre, film, and television. She is a 2016 Koru awards winner, the author of three original novels, and over 450 works of transformative fiction. Her website is www.adamariasoto.com

As usual, our meeting will be at the Three Kings Tennis Pavilion from 12.30 until 3.00 p.m. Please bring a gold coin donation, a plate to share, and change for the raffles.

Central North Coast to Coast (Convenors: Sheryl Buchanan sheryl@rangeroadpress.co.nz and Sandra Toornstra

The C2C meeting for September will be at Deryn Pittar's home in Papamoa on the 3rd. Deborah Challinor will be speaking about researching historical novels and writing strong female characters. Before the workshop we will have a shared lunch, and during the afternoon there will be time to discuss and celebrate writing.

Hawkes Bay (Convenor: Kendra Delugar kendraonthemove@hotmail.com)

Our August meeting was cancelled due to the weather bomb that exploded across Hawkes Bay, lashing us with wind, rain and snow, and leaving us without power for most of the day.

We meet on the first Saturday of the month at 1pm, and new members (or visiting members) are always welcome. The September meeting will be at Bron's where we'll have a round-up of what happened at conference for those who weren't there.

Wellington/Kapiti (Convenors: Kris Pearson kris.p@paradise.net.nz and Leeann Morgan

Our August meeting took place at Gudrun's lovely home in Petone, and she served our tea and coffee in beautiful antique china. We felt very honoured. We gathered up items for the conference raffle basket and discussed Cold Reads possibilities. Conference-planning news for 2017 in Wellington was aired, and possible speakers were debated.

Bonnie's newly launched book on career seeking is selling well. Diana is researching in Italy, and Leeann will retire

from her library management job by the time you read this. Then she'll be twice as productive. (A frightening thought!)

Next meeting will be at 1pm on Saturday September 3rd at Ellie's home in Paraparaumu. Reminder will be emailed to local members.

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

Our August meeting was busy as usual. Decisions were made that the theme of our Christmas Tree will be 'The Fairy Tale of Love' for this year's festival in the Nelson Cathedral, that we donate 3 copies of our anthology 'Ripples' to the prize baskets of the Romance Short Story Competition we'll launch next year, and that we will subscribe to the Freelance Magazine 'WritersHelpingWriters' as a group. We also did some planning for an eventual workshop coming our way at the end of February.

Then our speaker Mary Connor arrived with a colleague in tow from SASH (Sexual Abuse Support & Healing) and we had a most interesting session listening and talking about sexual abuse of women and children and how it affects not only them, but also those who help them in their healing. Lots of questions, discussions and talk of own experiences from the field arose while having a cuppa & apple cake.

Our next meeting is Saturday 10 September, when Dr Kyle Neeley, specialist in natural pain relief, is our speaker.

Christchurch (Convenor: Jane Madison-Jones maddiejane@xtra.co.nz)

We didn't have a meeting this month because it clashed with conference. :-)

Blenheim (Convenor: Iona Jones iona.jones@xtra.co.nz)

Otago (Convenor: Samantha Charlton samanthacharlton@hotmail.com)

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Heart to Heart will be published on the first of each month except January.

The deadline for every issue is the 20th of the month prior (e.g. 20th of August for September issue). Please have all articles, news, reports, and advertising to Gracie at gracieoneil@xtra.co.nz on or before the deadline!