

HEART TO HEART

Featuring

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INTRODUCING JIM AZEVEDO



Conference News

Welcome to 2014 and our 21st Conference. Just planning the Conference has me amped and I can't wait for August to roll on over. Leeann has included the programme with our line up of home grown talent and international speakers.

We have done our best to work on the best hotel room rates and since our last Conference at Waipuna, there has been a revamp of the venue so be prepared to be impressed.

This year we will open our Conference with a Thursday evening event, so all our out of town folk, do keep this in mind if you are interested in self publishing.

Conference registrations will be open early February and all details will be up on the website before the end of January.

I would like to thank Leeann, Giovanna and our Conference committee for the awesome work they have done so far.

Warmest Regards
Your Conference Convenor
Kamy

What's happening in RWNZ?

President **Leeann Morgan** brings us up to date with the news...

morgan.leeann@clear.net.nz

Hi everyone

Welcome to 2014! What an amazing year it is going to be.

In this months' Heart to Heart we have included the 2014 Conference programme – a big thank you to everyone who has worked hard to put together such a great programme. It is a pleasure working with you! There are still a couple of topics from our international speakers that we are waiting on, but the programme will give you a real appreciation of what you can look forward to.

We have added a Thursday night event into the programme and also added a guest appearance from Courtney Milan on the Friday afternoon. We had so many wonderful topics that our speakers wanted to share with you that it was hard to choose what to include. So we decided to make the most of everyone's time and give you even more choice. Our New Zealand speakers are amazing and the range of topics and expertise available for you to learn from and enjoy is immense.

Providing a yummy buffet dinner at our Friday night Cocktail evening was so successful last year that we're doing the same again this year. The Waipuna Hotel and Conference Centre have been incredible. With their help we have been able to keep this Conference very affordable and still provide a world class Conference for you to enjoy.

Kamy Chetty (Conference Coordinator) has more information about the Conference in the Conference News.

I would also like to thank Romance Writers of Australia. Nicky, Shannon, and their Conference team have been amazing. We are sharing the airfare of three of our international speakers. This enabled us to have a bigger international presence than we otherwise would have been able to afford.

Inside this month's H2H you will find Giovanna's summary of the feedback we received from the competition survey and information about the Pacific Hearts Award. Thank you to everyone who took the time to fill in our short survey. You're feedback was invaluable.

Enjoy another great Heart to Heart from Marjan and her team!

Kind regards
Leeann



"You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough."

— **Mae West**

Retrieved from
<http://www.goodreads.com/quotes>



OMG—Reviews

by Kris Pearson



Is it fun reading reviews of your own books? Almost always – provided you have a thick skin. Let me say very quickly that I don't go trawling through all the available reviews. You could easily go mad that way. But now and again, while checking how my books are ranking, of course I'll have a look.

The reviews can be so diverse. Sometimes you wouldn't believe two people were reading the same story. For instance, for "The Boat Builder's Bed" (which has around 1,000 reviews on Amazon.com and Amazon.uk combined, and an average rating of 4.5 stars) I found these:

'What a well-crafted story. Intelligent, beautifully written. I feel guilty that it was free but I won't hesitate to pay for the next one.' Bless you, dear reader!

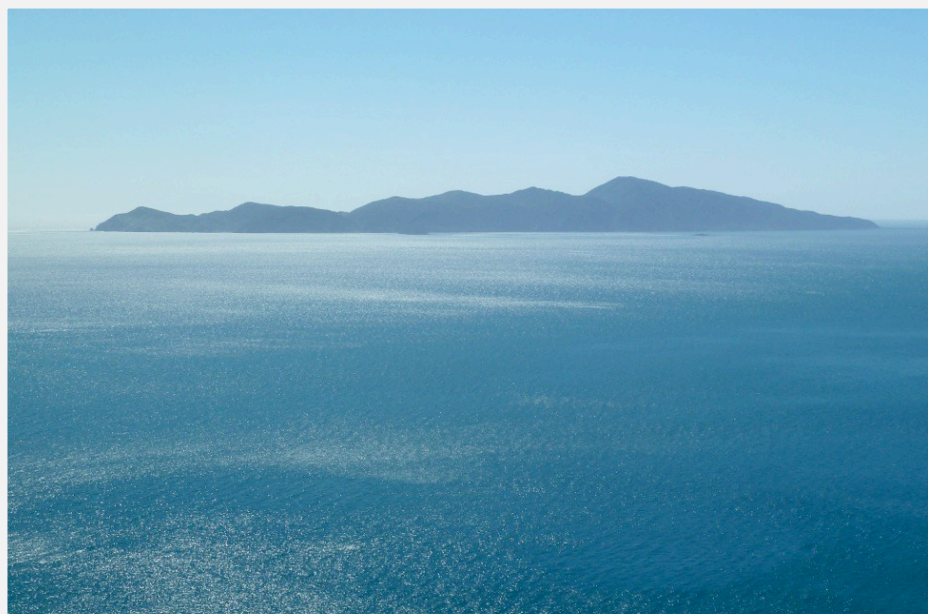
And...

'It is one of those bad romance novels. If you are really bored you can use it to fill time, but no literary value and nor too good of any plot.'

Sigh.

"Resisting Nick" has certainly drawn some differing comments too. Graham said 'What a pleasure it was reading about places I've visited.' But there's a solitary one-star on Amazon baldly stating 'This is not New Zealand. The author is meant to be from Wellington but got the facts wrong – the beach house is at least an hour away.'

Ummm... I've lived in Wellington for more than forty years and I know exactly where the beach house is and it's not an hour away! Anyway, it's my creation and I can have it anywhere I want it. I placed it on the cliff above Pukerua Bay where we have friends who own a house with exactly that view, although I took some liberties and created a piece of extra land. I didn't name it as Pukerua because readers unfamiliar with the Maori language would pronounce it 'puke' and not 'pookie'. Isn't it great though that someone got so immersed in the story they were worried about where the house really was? You can see the view in the photo.



KAPITI ISLAND

It's fun checking up on the reviewers in return. Clicking on 'see all my reviews' showed up a selection of other one-stars from that person – with subject lines like 'Couldn't finish it', and 'All round awful' and 'Implausible'. OK, they're not a happy chappie, and all we can do is leave them with their half-empty glass.

OMG—REVIEWS by Kris Pearson

continued from pg 3



I'm still waiting for someone to complain that Nick's classic old Ferrari should have been a two-seater because all Ferraris were. Nope - they made one with a back seat many years ago, and I wanted a back seat so he could drive both Tyler and Sammie home at the same time. As an aside, Ferrari have just introduced a new four-seater 4WD model that's surprising the motoring critics.

"Her Man with Iceberg Eyes" received this wonderful comment, along with four stars. 'Not in the mood for this. So far I have not found any egregious grammatical or spelling mistakes'. So far? Didn't they finish it before reviewing it? It's a bit unfair to fling up a review in case the ending is so good it alters the rating, although a lot of people do it anyway. Someone gave "The Wrong Sister" four stars and said 'Not finished yet but a good romance so far. Recommend you get it.' Darn – she might have given it five if she'd finished reading it first. "Seduction on the Cards" brought everything from, 'Wow, I am not really the romance reading type of person but this book was fantastic' through to 'Awful. I had to stop. Kerri the female lead was obnoxious, a thief, came across as a smutty user.' A thief? I'm still wondering what she stole. She's certainly a gambler and gets behind in her rent sometimes, but a thief and a smutty user has me grinning. Thank heavens for the five stars from a reviewer who said 'Can't get enough. This book is my second best. The love story is just amazing'. So what was her absolute best? I'd love to know what she's comparing it with.

Someone told me "Ravishing Rose" 'could have been more enjoyable set in the turn of the 20th century or earlier'. Why? No clues. Oh grrr.

All my reviews are from genuine readers. Did you know it's possible to purchase reviews? For money? Quite a lot of money in some cases. I'm not talking about book bloggers who are happy to review books in return for free copies. Nope – it's a business these days. And as long as you're willing to admit the source of the review, you can have your paid-for review there for the world to read.

Try Googling *paid book reviews*. Kirkus 'begins at \$425.' Yikes – where do they end? And Blue Ink Reviews quotes '\$395 and up'. They're all labelled 'an honest review', and I'm sure there'll be some sad books that get given equally sad reviews that never see the light of day. But it's just not the way I choose to get mine.

If people enjoy the stories, the reviews start happening naturally on Amazon, Goodreads, iBooks etc. Amazon requires only 20 words - easy enough to write. Some people produce so many reviews I suspect it's their way of bursting into print.

At Goodreads you can star-rate the book without saying anything at all – which is frustrating for authors. It's really good to have a reason for the rating, and we appreciate every reader who makes the effort to leave thoughtful comments, whether they're flattering or not.

And what have I learned from all these reviews? Well, the books are far too sexy and not nearly sexy enough. Hmmm... They're not long enough – although they're exactly the same as all the Harlequin short category books at 55,000 – 60,000 words. My readers often say they'd like more of the story, although I'm hopeful this is because they've engaged with the characters and enjoyed them. I write romance, not family sagas, so I feel if I've got my hero and heroine past their problems to a happy ending I've done my job. But I'm seriously considering a second "Boat Builder" because so many people have asked what happened to Rafe and Sophie after their naughty epilogue. "The Boat Builder Wed"? We'll see. Maybe.

PACIFIC HEARTS CONTEST 2014

by Kamy Chetty



I hope we all started the year with a bang, fingers tapping rapidly on that keyboard, saying: THIS IS THE YEAR. Well I really do hope this is your year.

But... do you want to know a secret? This won't be your year, unless you finish that book. This won't be your year, unless you send it out there and make sure someone reads it.

So... What are you going to do about it?

My advice is simple. **Enter the Pacific Hearts Contest.** You still have time to get that darn MS finished.

The Contest opens on the 1st of March and closes on the 31st of March.

The beauty of this contest is, it is judged by readers. Guess what? Readers don't care about the comma being in the right place. They care about the story. They care about the emotion. They care about more than grammar.

So again, I ask you, what are you going to do about it?

Again, I say, FINISH THE BOOK. Bronwyn McEvoy has agreed to manage this contest, huge thank you to her.

Details will be up on the website, soon.

So- if you are an unpublished writer, go ahead and enter. Become that Superstar. Make 2014, your year. Tick off that resolution and reach for the stars.

I know I am going to aim for the highest star I can find. Catch me if you can.

Principal Contests Co-ordinator

Kamy

<http://www.romancewriters.co.nz/contests/>

Introducing Jim Azevedo



We are pleased to announce that Jim Azevedo will be joining us for our 2014 Conference.

Jim is the marketing director at Smashwords, the largest distributor of self-published eBooks serving over 84,000 independent authors, publishers and literary agents.

Since 2008, Smashwords has helped authors around the world publish and distribute more than 278,000 titles to retailers such as Apple iBooks, Barnes & Noble, Sony, Kobo and Flipkart, as well as to subscription services Oyster and Scribd, and also to libraries throughout the United States.

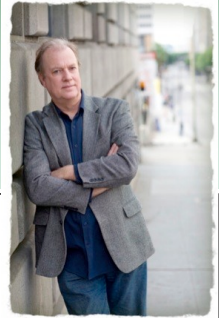
By night, Jim is the drummer for Rivals, a popular San Francisco Bay Area indie rock band.

Jim is the author of the forthcoming book, *How to Get your Band out of the Garage*.

As well as presenting workshops over the weekend, Jim will be hosting an additional event, "An Evening with Jim Azevedo" on Thursday where you can learn even more about the world of self-publishing.

THE 5 BIGGEST FICTION WRITING MISTAKES (& HOW TO FIX THEM)

by James Scott Bell



The best fiction writers write like they're in love—and edit like they're in charge.

First drafting should be a wild and wonderful ride, full of discovery, dreams and promises. But at some point you have to settle down and make the book really work. You need to approach your manuscript with sober objectivity and knowledge of the craft. Having reviewed hundreds of manuscripts over the years, I've identified the five mistakes that most regularly turn up. Start your revision by addressing these, and you'll immediately change your story for the better.

1. Happy People in Happy Land

Chief among the most common problems, in first chapters especially, are scenes presenting characters who are perfectly happy in their ordinary worlds. The writer thinks that by showing nice people doing nice things, readers will care about these pleasant folk when the characters are finally hit with a problem. But readers actually engage with plot via trouble, threat, change or challenge. I call the first hint of this the opening disturbance. It can be stunning, as in Jodi Picoult's *Lone Wolf*, which begins:

Seconds before our truck slams into the tree, I remember the first time I tried to save a life.

Or it can be something quieter, a single item that is off kilter, as in the opening of Sarah Pekkanen's *The Opposite of Me*:

As I pulled open the heavy glass door of Richards, Dunne & Krantz and walked down the long hallway toward the executive offices, I noticed a light was on up ahead.

Lights were never on this early.

Although *Happy People* most commonly appear in Chapter 1, that doesn't mean you can let your guard down once you've opened with a bang. As your novel progresses, look out for stops in Happy Land. While revising my novel *Don't Leave Me*, I noticed a scene in which my

protagonist, Chuck Samson, a teacher recovering from his wife's death, goes with his autistic brother to a colleague's apartment for dinner. The host, knowing that Chuck used to do magic when his wife was alive, asks him to do a trick. Chuck resists but is cajoled into it. In the original version he performed a disappearing knife trick successfully, and everyone was pleased until the cops arrived at the door at the end of the scene.

I decided this was too happy. In my published version, Chuck blows it:

... the knife slid off his lap and hit the floor with a clank.

"Oops," Stan said.

Chuck had not blown that trick in twenty years. He looked at his hands like they were foreign objects that had betrayed him.

Wendy laughed good naturedly. But when Chuck looked at her, she stopped laughing.

Trouble is your business. Make more of it.

2. A World Without Fear

The best novels, the ones that stay with you all the way to the end—and beyond—have the threat of death hanging over every scene.

Death? Really? Even, say, category romances?

Stay with me.

Death comes in three forms. Physical death is a staple of the thriller, of course. But there's also professional death, where the main character is engaged in a vocation and the particular matter at hand threatens that position: A cop assigned a case that may mean the end of his career. A married politician falling for a young staffer. A devoted mother losing the child she loves to drugs. Your job, if it's vocational death overhanging your novel, is to make whatever problem the protagonist is facing feel so important that failing to

THE 5 BIGGEST FICTION WRITING MISTAKES (& HOW TO FIX THEM) by James Scott Bell

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overcome it will mean a permanent setback to his main role in life.

There's also psychological death ("dying on the inside"), most often emphasized in character-driven fiction. This is where the romance genre comes in. It has to seem as if the lovers *must* end up together or their lives will forever be less than what they could have been.

Regardless of which form you use, you must put death on the line so fear may be felt throughout. Fear is a continuum—it can be simple worry or outright terror. You can put it everywhere. And you should. In the pulp classic *The Red Scarf* by Gil Brewer, the main character's schemes are closing in around him (as usually happens in noir). His wife is trying to have a normal dinner with him. But he's worried:

"Come on and eat, Roy. Supper's ready."

"All right." I went into the kitchen and sat down and stared at my plate. I didn't want to eat. There was this rotten black feeling all through me and I couldn't shake it.

"Eat something, Roy. What's the matter?"

"Nothing. I just don't feel so hot."

I wanted to go over and take this guy Radan and knock the hell out of him. Only I knew I wouldn't. You know when it's not ready. You know something's going to happen.

Something had to happen. It was like before a big storm, with the black clouds out there on the horizon. Everything goes calm and dead, and then ... Once the story is underway, scenes where fear isn't present in some form mean the stakes are not high enough or the characters aren't acting the way they should in the face of death.

3. Marshmallow Dialogue

Dialogue is the fastest way to improve a manuscript—or to sink it. When agents, editors or readers see crisp, tension-filled dialogue, they gain confidence in the writer's

ability. But dialogue that is sodden and undistinguished (marshmallow dialogue) has the opposite effect. Pro dialogue is compressed. Marshmallow dialogue is puffy. Pro dialogue has conflict. Marshmallow dialogue is overly sweet. Pro dialogue sounds different for each character. Marshmallow dialogue blends together.

Fortunately, the fixes are simple. First, make sure you can "hear" every character in a distinct voice. A great way to do this is to create a voice journal: a free-form document written in a character's voice, talking to you, the author, on a variety of topics. Develop these documents until each character sounds unique, and then apply what you've learned to your manuscript.

Second, compress your dialogue as much as possible, cutting fluffy words, whole lines or even entire exchanges. Here's an example:

"Mary, are you angry with me?" John asked.

"You're damn straight I'm mad at you," Mary said.

"But why? You've got absolutely no reason to be!"

"Oh but I do, I do. And you can see it in my face, can't you?"

The alternative:

"You angry with me?" John asked.

"Damn straight," Mary said.

"You got no reason to be!"

Mary felt her hands curling into fists.

Try this: Copy a lengthy dialogue exchange into a fresh document. Then cut and compress as much as you can. Compare it to the original. Nine times out of 10 you'll prefer all or part of the new version. Finally, be sure to include some sort of tension in every exchange. Remember fear? At the very least you can have some aspect of it (worry, anxiety, fright) going on inside one of the characters so that communication is partially impaired. Try



playing up the different agendas each character has in a scene. Let them use dialogue as a weapon to get what they want.

4. Predictability

Readers like to worry about characters in crisis. They want to tremble about what's around the next corner (whether it's emotional or physical). If a reader knows what's coming, and then it does in fact come, the worry factor is blown. Your novel no longer conveys a fictive dream but a dull ride down familiar streets. The fix is simple: Put something unexpected in every scene. Doing this one thing keeps the reader on edge.

So how do you come up with the unexpected? Try making lists. Pause and ask yourself what might happen next, and list the possibilities, centering on three primary areas: description, action and dialogue. For each one, don't choose the first thing that comes to mind (which usually amounts to clichés). Force yourself to list at least five alternatives.

Description: Dump generic details for ones unique to the character's perceptions. How might he see a room where someone died? What's one surprising thing about the wallpaper? The bed? The closet?

Action: Close your eyes and watch your scene unfold. Let the characters improvise. What are some outlandish things that could result? If something looks interesting, find a way to justify it.

Dialogue: Don't always use "on-the-nose" exchanges. How might characters say things that put other characters (and thus, readers) off balance? Consider Clarice Starling's first conversation with Hannibal Lecter in *The Silence of the Lambs*. Clarice begins:

"I think you've been destructive. For me it's the same thing."

"Evil's just destructive? Then storms are evil, if it's just that simple. And we have fire, and then there's hail. Underwriters lump it all under 'Acts of God.'"

"Deliberate—"

"I collect church collapses, recreationally. Did you see the recent one in Sicily?"

You can make these lists in your planning stages, just before writing a scene, and/or when you revise. Either way, the unexpected elements that result will perceptibly elevate the quality of your story.

5. Lost Love

As I said up front, writing a book is like falling in love. Outlining and planning are the wooing. Drafting the novel is your commitment to marriage (which would make the opening scenes the honeymoon). But at some point, you and your book will likely need some marriage counseling. Because when you lose the verve for your material, it shows. So how do you regain lost love? The surest way is by going deeper into your characters.

Start with backstory. Maybe you've already done an extensive bio for your main character. Try starting a new one. Keep the best of the old material, but put in plenty that's new. Focus on the year your character turned 16. Create an account of what happened at that crucial stage. What incident shaped her? What romances, heartaches, tragedies? Write those scenes in detail.

Do this for your antagonist, too, and your secondary characters. Soon enough you'll be excited to get back to your story. Also, try focusing on what your protagonist *yearns* for. We yearn because we feel a lack, a need, a hole in our souls. So yearning is about connection. This, in fact, is the power of mythology, some of the best storytelling of all time. Joseph Campbell taught that myths were a way of gaining connection to something transcendent, a life source, an essential mystery.

Readers, too, yearn for connection—with stories they can get lost in and be moved by. Fix these five areas in your work, and your books can be among them.

PACIFIC HEARTS CONTEST

by Kristina O'Grady



We are lucky. I'm not sure if all of you know how lucky we are, so let me tell you.

When I joined RWNZ three and a bit years ago I wasn't sure what I'd get out of my membership. I was a member of another writer's organization at the time and my experience there left me skeptical of what I would gain from RWNZ. To be honest, I didn't even think there'd be enough romance writers in New Zealand to warrant an organization.

So there I was, trying to write my first book and I had no idea what to do. The monthly H2H was a massive help with all its tips of the trade. I especially loved (and still do) the Woo Hoo page. It made me realize selling a novel was achievable, and people in New Zealand were even doing it... little old New Zealand!

When I went to my first Conference two years ago I was surprised published authors were actually real people, and nice people too. They didn't need to be worshipped from afar. I still find it unbelievable published authors, editors and agents are so willing to help unpublished authors. Even just chatting with them about everyday things is an experience I never dreamed possible.

Fast forward to early last year. I had a book (kind of) and RWNZ were running their first Pacific Heart contest. By this time I had decided I wanted to be amongst the published but I realized I needed feedback from professionals. I knew my manuscript wasn't ready to be submitted to publishers or agents, but I wasn't exactly sure how to get it to that state. I wasn't prepared to pay for an assessment mostly because I was scared my manuscript wouldn't be up to standard and feared I'd end up spending a lot of money. So instead I decided to bite the bullet, take a deep breath and send the first part of my manuscript into the RWNZ Pacific Hearts contest because the judges gave feedback on the entries.

Unexpectedly I made it into the Top 10! I was so excited...until I remembered my word count wasn't quite long enough and I only had three days to submit my full manuscript. It's amazing how much can be accomplished when there is a deadline looming!

In the end I didn't place well, or at least not as well as I would have liked, but I was able to use the comments I received from the judges to edit my entire manuscript. It was because of this that I felt confident enough to enter Harlequin's 'SoYouThinkYouCanWrite' (SYTYCW) 2013 contest,

where I made it into the Top 50! Not only that, I received an email a few weeks after the Top 10 were announced (I wasn't on that list) from the editor that read my manuscript saying she loved my story but it wouldn't fit into their Historical line, however she was wondering if she could forward my manuscript onto one of Harlequin's imprints for consideration.

Four and a half weeks after that email I received another, this time from the editor of the imprint, offering me a two book contract!

So this, ladies (and some gentlemen), is why we are so lucky. We have at our fingertips a world class contest that has the potential to send us all closer to publication. I would never have gotten my manuscript up to the level it is today without the help, support and encouragement of RWNZ or captured the attention of the editors without the comments I received from the Pacific Hearts contest.

So here's my advice. Enter every contest you can, not to win, but for the feedback (don't get me wrong, winning is great too!). The judges saw things in my story I never noticed, good and bad things, but mostly these comments made me confident enough to edit my manuscript and send it off to where it found a home.

Last year there were only 18 entries into the Pacific Hearts contest. Maybe if there were more I wouldn't have made it into the Top 10, but I know if I hadn't entered I wouldn't have entered SYTYCW. I would have put it off for another year.

Entries into the Pacific Hearts open March 1st and close March 31st at midnight. Even if you're not quite done (like me) enter anyway. You'll have a deadline, which does wonders for productivity and you never know, this time next year - you could have a similar story to tell.

Kristina O'Grady

www.kristinaogrady.com

kristina.ogrady@yahoo.com

P.S. I would really like to thank the judges of the Pacific Hearts 2013 Contest for your constructive comments you made to my entry, *Accidental Time Traveller*. These enabled me to make changes to my manuscript before I submitted it to SYTYCW where it caught the editor's attention. Thank you.

RWNZ Conference 2014
All the Conference news you want



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PROGRAMME FOR RWNZ CONFERENCE 2014

Thursday 14 August An Evening with Jim Azevedo

7.00	Enjoy a wonderful evening with Jim Azevedo, marketing director at Smashwords, the largest distributor of self-published ebooks serving over 84,000 independent authors, publishers and literary agents. Since 2008, Smashwords has helped authors around the world publish and distribute more than 278,000 titles to retailers such as Apple iBooks, Barnes & Noble, Sony, Kobo and Flipkart, as well as to subscription services Oyster and Scribd, and also to libraries throughout the United States. Q&A time from 8.30-9.00pm.
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Friday 15 August James Scott Bell and Courtney Milan

8.15	Registration desk open
9.00	Housekeeping and Welcome – Leeann Morgan , President RWNZ
9.10	The Power of Plot – James Scott Bell
	A great story is about how characters deal with death. That's right, even romance novels or comedies. You'll find out why this is so, and how to incorporate this powerful secret into everything you write. Plus, a look at the key strategies for bonding readers to your plot.
10.30	Morning Tea
10.50	The Power of Structure - James Scott Bell
	Novel structure is like a suspension bridge: if the parts aren't working together, the whole thing will collapse. But get structure right from the start, and half your work as a novelist or screenwriter is done. In this workshop you'll learn the key pillars of a strong novel, the secret of the disturbance, and the two doorways of no return.
12.10	Lunch
1.10	Characters that Jump off the Page – James Scott Bell
	A novel or screenplay has to be more than plot. Unless the audience is firmly bonded to a character, it doesn't matter how much action happens. In this workshop, you'll learn how to create dynamic characters, the inner and outer life that makes for truly memorable story people.

PROGRAMME FOR RWNZ CONFERENCE 2014

Continued from page 11

2.30	Afternoon Tea
2.55	Secrets of Scenes – James Scott Bell
	Scenes are the building blocks of fiction, and each block must be compelling in its own way. This workshop will cover the essentials of conflict and tension in scenes, and the often overlooked "fear factor." Plus, how to hook people at the beginning, and get them to turn pages at the end.
4.15	Building a Sticky Digital Readership - Courtney Milan
	Courtney Milan demystifies the complex system of online sales, and talks about specific ways that self-published/hybrid authors can grow a digital readership that "sticks" to them from book to book.
OR	Harlequin Authors Chat (for published Harlequin authors only)
6.30	Registration desk opens
7.00	RWNZ 'Casino Royale' Evening

Saturday 16 August	
Agent and editor pitches will run throughout the day. Please check notice-boards for venues.	
7.30	Cold-Read Workshop Harlequin
8.15	Registration desk open
8.45	Welcome, Housekeeping and Speaker Introductions Leeann Morgan , RWNZ President and CATHERINE ROBERTSON , MC
8.55	Managing a Series (or more than one) - Marie Force
10.35	Morning Tea

PROGRAMME FOR RWNZ CONFERENCE 2014

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11.00	BREAKOUT WORKSHOPS (11.00–12.15)
A	The Slow Writer's Guide to Making a Living - Courtney Milan
	You've heard it said that self-published authors should release a book every three months, if not sooner. For some, that may be out of reach. There's some truth to the claim that faster is better, but for those of us who just don't write that fast, there are options. Courtney Milan explains how self-published authors can make a living twelve months out of the year, even if they're not writing 4 books a year.
B	Erotic Romance and Opportunities in Erotic Romance - Lisa Whitefern
	No one can argue that the staggering success of Fifty Shades of Grey hasn't brought about a huge resurgence in the popularity of erotic romance. But what is the difference between erotica and erotic romance? What essential components do you need to include in order to have a popular publishable erotic romance? What variety does the genre offer in terms of stories, themes, and sub genres? What are the names of some great publishers looking for erotic romance? And how do you make your romance hot enough? Whether you want to write smoking hot vanilla, BD/SM, ménage, kink, gay, or just spice up your romance – Lisa Gardiner aka Lisa Whitefern will answer your questions on erotic romance.
C	Making your Sentences Rock – Yvonne Walus
	Create strong sentences. Warning: this is not a grammar class. The objective is to teach you many interesting ways of sentence construction. Avoid the boring “She went, she saw, she conquered”, avoid the treacherous “-ing” words (e.g., “Running down the stairs, she put down her slippers”), improve the pace and the style of your prose.
D	Jim Azevedo
	Details to come
12.20	Lunch

PROGRAMME FOR RWNZ CONFERENCE 2014

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1.20	BREAKOUT WORKSHOPS (1.20–2.35)
A	Navigating the Wild West of Publishing - Marie Force
	The world of self-publishing is changing all the time. Eighteen months ago, there was only one way to get to Kobo and Apple, and now authors can upload direct to both retailers. With every new avenue available to us, there are more hurdles to jump and details to manage. Marie Force has self-published 18 original novels, the most recent two hitting the <i>New York Times</i> ebook bestseller list as well as the ebook and print combined lists. Her New York Times bestselling McCarthys of Gansett Island Series, now with ten books available, has sold more than 1 million ebooks since <i>Maid for Love</i> , debuted in April 2011. Marie, who also owns the E-book Formatting Fairies, will help you navigate the changing the ins and outs of self-publishing and answer all your questions.
B	Demystifying Sexual Tension in 12 Steps - Kamy Chetty
	When talking about physical intimacy in any book, the most referenced author is Linda Howard and her mention of zoologist Desmond Morris and his book, <i>Intimate Behaviour: A Zoologist's Classic Study of Human Study</i> . You might wonder why we would compare human behavior to that of Apes, or you might say, it's about time someone got it right. As a writer, you can either write sizzling sex scenes, or you struggle for some reason or the other. This workshop will give you some tools to help you build sexual tension in your book, using the popular 12 steps to physical intimacy.
C	Paranormal Romance: Understand why and how paranormal romance attracts a loyal following - Tina Folsom
	Vampires, werewolves, shifters, and other preternatural creatures have been attracting readers ever since Bram Stoker's <i>Dracula</i> . But what is the appeal of these creatures? How can we as readers identify with them and understand the limitations and rules of their worlds? Sexuality and immortality play a big part, and a love that will never die is essential in an HEA of a paranormal romance. There will be time to discuss what readers find most thrilling about these heroes, whether a preternatural heroine is a hard sell, and what issues arise when it comes to world-building.
2.40	Afternoon Tea

PROGRAMME FOR RWNZ CONFERENCE 2014

Continued from page 14

3.05	The Agent/Author Relationship - Kevan Lyon
	In this workshop, Kevan Lyon will show you how to find the perfect agent match for you and your work, and discuss what to expect from your agent/author relationship.
4.25	RWNZ Annual General Meeting - all members welcome
4.55	Saturday raffle draw
7.30	Harlequin Awards Dinner After Dinner Speaker: Marie Force

Sunday 17 August	
7.30	COLD READ WORKSHOP Kevan Lyon, Marsal Lyon Literary Agency
8.45	Housekeeping
9.00	Romance and the Unrealistic, Predictable Happy Ending - Courtney Milan
10.20	Spotlight on Harlequin Australia - Sue Brockhoff and Lilia Kanna
10.40	Morning Tea
11.05	BREAKOUT WORKSHOPS (11.05–12.20)
A	The Hybrid Author/Agent Relationship: How it works and why it matters - Marie Force and Kevan Lyon
	Successful self-published authors are often asked whether they still need an agent. Marie Force says yes, definitely, but only if you have the RIGHT agent to help you meet your career goals. For more than five years, Marie has been in business with Kevan Lyon, a founding partner of the Marsal Lyon Literary Agency. Kevan has been a valuable partner in Marie's career as she went from what she calls the "most rejected author in the history of romance" to the New York Times, Wall Street Journal and USA Today bestseller lists in a just a few years time. Hear about how they make their unconventional relationship work—from one coast to the other—and representation options you should consider on your path to publication.

PROGRAMME FOR RWNZ CONFERENCE 2014

Continued from page 15

B	Writing Emotion - Karina Bliss
	Every character trait, every plot twist or descriptive passage is a building block to a romance writer's primary goal - eliciting emotion from the reader. Create a unique and real character and your story will have inherent emotion. Then all you have to do is mine it. So how do you do that? This workshop covers the practical tips and techniques I've picked up through being a craft junkie, a tortured writer of first drafts, a perfectionist reviser and someone whose books consistently get reviews like: <i>"The characters and the situations portrayed within it was realistic, flawed and wonderful all in equal measure. There are moments where your heart will break just a little, and there are moments where you will celebrate – all hallmarks of a Karina Bliss book."</i>
C	Coping with the hard stuff: How to keep going when \$h!t happens (and when it's okay to pull the plug) - Yvonne Lindsay and Trish Morey
	As the old Beatles song goes, life is what happens when you're busy making other plans. So how do you keep the momentum in your writing career when life throws you a curve ball or three? How do you find the strength to keep going in the face of adversity? With more than 60 contracted titles and 7.5 million sales between them, these seasoned best-selling authors will shed light on how to keep the focus on your writing plans - and why it's okay, sometimes, to just go with the flow.
D	Jim Azevedo
	Details to come
12.25	Lunch

PROGRAMME FOR RWNZ CONFERENCE 2014

Continued from page 16

1.30	BREAKOUT WORKSHOPS (1.30-2.45)
A	Branding for Self-Published Authors - Tina Folsom
	Learn the vital skill of branding yourself and your self-published work to create reader recognition and big ebook sales. Your brand has never been more important! In this workshop, you'll learn how to create an identifiable brand for your independently published ebooks. We'll cover what you need to consider before you write your next book, tips and techniques for creating the look to your brand, and how to get the best exposure to increase sales. This workshop will rely on case studies from bestselling self-published authors. Tina will discuss what she learned along the way to being a bestseller, the mistakes she made, and how her vision has changed along the way.
B	James Scott Bell
	Details still to come
C	Writing Historical Romances that Resonate with Modern Readers - Courtney Milan
	In this workshop, Courtney Milan will talk about the challenges historical authors face when writing for modern readers and how to craft romances that resonate for modern women--who have jobs, have sex, and have a measure of independence not afforded to women in earlier times--while still staying true to the historical time period.
D	Pitching to an agent or editor - Kevan Lyon
	Bring one to two line pitches for your book - Kevan will read and critique them and talk about how to best pitch your story.
2.50	Future Trends in Publishing – Jim Azevedo
3.25	Out-of-Towners and Earlybird Prize Draws
3.30	CLOSING
	Leeann Morgan, President RWNZ What Next: RWNZ President 2014/2015
3.45	Afternoon Tea and farewell

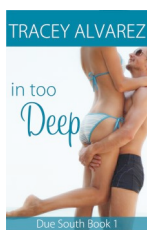
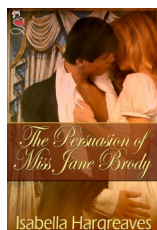
Woos, Hoos, and News

Celebrating our members' achievements.

To be included on this page, email your successes to Jean Drew on jeandrew@xtra.co.nz

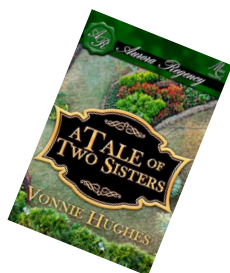


Hilary Davies' historical romance, **THE PERSUASION OF MISS JANE BRODIE**, set during the Regency, was released by Steam eReads on 28 November 2013.



Tracy Alvarez' contemporary romance **IN TOO DEEP**, independently published on January 20th, 2014, available on Amazon etc is the first in a series set on Stewart Island..

Book I of Vonnie Hughes' Regency novella Two Sisters, **A TALE OF TWO SISTERS**, released December 13 from Musa Publishing.



The second, **A SURFEIT OF SUITORS**, will release January 31.

Kris Pearson's e-book **THE BOAT BUILDER'S BED** has been translated into Spanish. Kris plans on getting at least four more translated into Spanish because it is the third most popular language in the world.



Jean Adams' **NO OTHER LOVE** from The Wild Rose Press released December 27.



S E Gilchrist's sci-fi romance **STAR PIRATE'S JUSTICE** is due from Escape Publishing, 1st Feb.

Kristina O'Grady has been offered a two book contract with Carina UK. This was a result of Harlequin's 'So You Think You Can Write' contest when Kristina reached the Top 50 with her novel **ACCIDENTAL TIME TRAVELLER**. Release date to be advised. [See her article on page 9]

RWNZ authors who are finalists in the Australian Romance Readers Awards are as follows:

Nalini Singh : Kylie Short : Anna Campbell : Annie West : Paula Roe

Good luck for the finals everyone

If I have left out any RWNZ members it's because I don't know who you all are. Please let me know in time for the next issue, and I'll include you then. Thanks

Jean

<http://www.jeandrew.co.nz>
jeandrew@xtra.co.nz

RWNZ News Around the Regions

Keeping in touch with each other.

Word Count: The intention of this column is more to notify than have a regional narrative. **Reports should not exceed a word count of 150 words.** If your region has done unusual or something very interesting that you want to share, then **we'd like to hear about it in a separate report**, which can be featured on its own. *Read the News Around the Regions on page 14.*



"You know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because reality is finally better than your dreams."

— **Dr. Seuss**— Retrieved from <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes>

Welcome to New Members

Rebekah Orr - Christchurch
Linda Van Der Linde - Auckland

EMAIL IN YOUR FAVOURITE 'ROMANCE QUOTES'

FOR THE H2H NEWSLETTER

Remember to also send in the Author and
Website Address for referencing to

marjan@marjan.co.nz

Some Web Links you may find worthwhile

If you have some Web Links to share
—please email to marjan@marjan.co.nz

Conference:Casino Royale 2014

[http://www.romancewriters.co.nz/2014-
Conference/](http://www.romancewriters.co.nz/2014-Conference/)

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

[http://www.romancewriters.co.nz/2014-
Conference/speaker-biographies/](http://www.romancewriters.co.nz/2014-Conference/speaker-biographies/)

HOW TO WRITE A ROMANCE NOVEL —ROMANCE WRITING

If you're trying your hand at romance writing, one of the most popular fiction genres, you've come to the right place. Here you'll find information on developing a dynamic, engaging heroine, her perfect lover, and the conflict that separates them.

[http://www.writersdigest.com/writing-articles/by-
-writing-genre/romance-by-writing-genre](http://www.writersdigest.com/writing-articles/by-writing-genre/romance-by-writing-genre)

CLASSIFIED ADS

We are happy to place short classified ads in H2H for services that could be useful to writers. The price for these will be \$20.

Note that the placing for these will be preceded by a disclaimer stating the RWNZ is only providing the placing, but does not in any way endorse the product/service.

Please contact me by the 10th of each month if you wish to advertise.

marjan@marjan.co.nz

Any news about writers, book launches, courses in your area??

Are there any courses, writer's presentations, book launches or similar coming up in your area? Please send us the information or links – we may be able to inspire other RWNZ groups to piggy back on to them and offer opportunities in other regions. Let us know : marjan@marjan.co.nz

INTERNATIONAL CONTESTS

by Tracey Alvarez

First Kiss (Romance Writers of Australia)

Deadline: February 14th, 2014

Eligibility: Unpublished RWA members.

Enter: One scene ONLY depicting the first kiss between your protagonists. Scene must be 1500 words maximum. A 1/2 page set up should also be included, which is judged.

Fee: \$22 per entry (incl GST) for entries within Australia. \$20 per entry for overseas entries.

More Info: <http://www.romanceaustralia.com/p/111/First-Kiss>

Fire & Ice Contest

Deadline: All entries must be received by the end of the day (midnight Central time) February 14, 2014.

Eligibility: The Fire & Ice Contest is open to all authors not published or contracted in novel-length fiction of 20,000 words or more, within five years of the contest deadline. The entry must have a projected minimum length of 50,000 words.

Enter: One (1) copy of up to the first 6,000 words of a manuscript.

Fee: US \$25-30

More Info: <http://www.chicagonorthrwa.org/fire-and-ice-contest/>

Southern Magic Linda Howard Award of Excellence

Deadline: Tuesday, February 25, 2014 - 10 p.m. Central

Eligibility: the author has not been contracted for publication five years prior to the entry deadline. Published authors must not be contracted (by RWA publishing standards) in the past five years. Authors contracted after February 25, 2009, are not eligible.

Enter: First 25 pages or less of each entry. The 25 pages includes prologue if applicable.

Fee: US\$25.50

More Info: <http://www.southernmagic.org/lindahowardcontest.html>

2014 Laurie Contest (Smoky Mountain Romance Writers)

Deadline: February 28, 2014

Eligibility: Writers who are not members of RWA are eligible to enter, as are previously published authors who have not had a published romance in the past three years. No entrant may be contracted in novel-length romantic fiction 40,000 words or more at the time of the contest deadline.

Enter: First seventeen pages (including short blurb – see example on website)

Fee: US\$30

More Info: <http://smrw.org/contest/>

Great Beginnings Contest (Utah Romance Writers)

Deadline: March 1st 2014

Eligibility: Contest is open to published and unpublished authors. Published authors may submit only unpublished, uncontracted manuscripts that will remain unpublished until the contest has concluded.

Enter: Enter the opening five (5) pages of romance novels of all sub-genres (projected length of at least 50,000 words).

Fee: US \$15

More Info: <http://www.utahrwa.com/gbcontest.html>

Fabulous Five Writing Contest (Wisconsin Romance Writers)

Deadline: March 1, 2014

Eligibility: This contest is open to all authors who have not been published and have not signed a contract to be published in full-length fiction (at least 65,000 words in length) by any non-subsidy/non-vanity publishing programs in the past five years. Such programs include but are not limited to small presses, electronic publishing, and audio books. Independent authors who have published via Smashwords or similar programs in which the author bears the publishing cost are free to enter our contest.

Enter: First 2,500 words of your manuscript.

Fee: US\$18-25

More Info: <http://wisrwa.org/contest.html#f5>

RWNZ News Around the Regions

Keeping in touch with each other.



Auckland

We ended the 2013 Auckland Chapter year with a lovely Xmas party. 34 attended. Photos taken by Ann Russell and myself are on the RWNZ website - thank you for uploading these Shar Barratt. And a big thank you to our hostess Maree Anderson for allowing us to invade her home. Our first meeting for the year will be at our usual venue - the Three Kings Tennis Pavilion - on 1st February, 12.30 p.m. Our guest speaker is Peta Mobberley (writing as Peta Garet) talking to us on PERSONALITY PLUS. Peta is well qualified to talk to us about developing characters' personalities as she has a Masters degree in Psychology. Remember to bring change for raffles and a gold coin donation plus a plate to share. Looking forward to seeing you all again. May 2014 be a year of writing success for all our members. Pamela Gervai, Convener

C2C (Central North Island Coast to Coast)

C2C members attended a wonderful farewell at the Hamilton Lake for one of our very longest time members—Lizzie Heywood. She is leaving New Zealand with her husband Errol to return to her homeland England. We wish Lizzie all the very best on her new journey and will keep in touch with her.

Our upcoming meeting will be held at Lyn Rasmussen's in Rotorua on the 22 February starting at 12.00 with a shared lunch. We will discuss what we'd like to achieve from our meetings in the year ahead. There may be a writing exercise too, and perhaps a short presentation from a local librarian. Lyn will let you know about these as soon as she can. Hope you can make it! Cheers, Lyn

Wellington/Kapiti

Our Christmas meeting was planned to be a barbecue at Leeann's but a suddenly-sick daughter meant a quick rearrangement. Joan very kindly volunteered to host us at short notice, and our enormous Christmas lunch was much enjoyed by everyone who attended. The envelope of 'aims for the year' was opened and the slips distributed. Success was varied!

The next meeting will be at Kris's home, 58 Ottawa Road, Ngaio, at 1pm on Saturday February 1st. Please bring anything new you'd like to read out, and a summary of what you plan to achieve in 2014. We'll seal the summaries into an envelope again and see how well you do by Christmas. Kris Pearson.

Hawke's Bay

The Hawke's Bay group met up mid-January for a coffee. Although there aren't a lot of us, we still managed to have a great chat about our writing. We discussed our current projects, our goals and our writing habits. We look forward to our next meeting. If you would like to join us, please contact Kristina at kristina.ograde@yahoo.com

Nelson

The Nelson Chapter starts 2014 on full throttle with both the launch of our Autumn Romance Short Story Competition on Valentine's Day 14 February and in the evening the same day three of us (Sally, LaVerne and Annika) will talk at the Motueka Library about writing Romance. The library's title of the event is 'Romance Rocks' and only women are invited to come and listen.

See the Autumn Romance Poster at the end of our H2H Newsletter.

At our first meeting this year (Saturday 1/2, 2pm at Annika's place) we might be able to welcome no less than four prospective members – two returning after a long break and two we haven't met yet. So a cracker of a start of the year.

REGIONAL CONVENORS

Auckland:

Pamela Gervai

email: pamela@petware.co.nz

Central North (C2C):

Lizzi Tremayne

Deryn Pittar

email: nztoothvet@bmevc.co.nz
deryn@xtra.co.nz

Hawkes Bay:

Kristina O'Grady

email: maple-leaf@hotmail.co.nz

Wellington:

Leeann Morgan

email: morgan.leeann@clear.net.nz

Nelson:

Annika Ohlson-Smith

email: allan-annika@xtra.co.nz

Blenheim:

Iona Jones

email: iona.jones@xtra.co.nz

Christchurch:

Jill Scott

email: scotts@snap.net.nz

Otago:

Sarah Addison Rowe

email: rowefamily3@xtra.co.nz

But wait . . . there's more . . .

Hello Everyone

I feel that 2014 has rather burst upon H2H – what a wonderful harvest of contributions – truly awesome (perhaps I mean Oh some). You have no idea how wonderful it is to be driven by the enthusiasm of people participating. Having said that the enthusiasm has been tempered somewhat by the corruption of the H2H document and I thank lucky stars for Jaculin's skill in dissecting the beast, article by article, to find the errant document. She has solved it now but of course loads of time gone in the process. Virginia Suckling and Jane Madison-Jones did a wonderful proof reading job, but any remaining errors/typos that are in this H2H will be there because of the corruption catastrophe. A big thanks also to the contributors and the encouragement they got from the regional convenors to submit.

Back to enthusiasm. I run a yearly concert series in Wellington, which is supported by a lot of keen musicians, enthusiastic audience and a venue that facilitates by donating the use of the venue. Same recipe really as for H2H: the contributions, musical or written, are there because the performer or writer wants to share with an audience that wants to listen or read. The venue and the H2H team share the facilitating function. Neat, but perhaps a bit too deep for the back page! What I can say is that the obvious willingness to share makes this a rather special organisation.

I hope you will all have been able to set goals, carve the time out to work on those and then hopefully achieve those, the satisfaction being the writing! Somebody said about writing that it is the simple action of connecting the seat of one's trousers to the seat of one's chair (and, I assume, picking up the pen). So there, I shall take my own advice and do the chair and trouser act.

I wish you all a happy, satisfying, finger cramping 2014, and keep the contributions coming!

Yours via the pen ~ Marjan

marjan@marjan.co.nz

Submissions

We love getting the contributions but can I request the following:

- ♥ All contributions should reach me no later than the **15th of the month**
- ♥ All should be in a Word document, Arial 11 font
- ♥ No indentations, or fancy headings

President Leeann Morgan
morgan.leeann@clear.co.nz

Vice-President Kamy Chetty
kamychetty@yahoo.com

Treasurer Kirsten Winter
kirsten@compleatadmin.co.nz

Immediate Past President Giovanna Lee
giovannaalee@yahoo.com

Secretary Carol Silva
carolsilva540@gmail.com

Founder Jean Drew
(RWNZ founded 1990)

Publicity Officer Sue Brebner
brebfox@slingshot.co.nz

Website Jo Fereday
Coordinator hillcrestgarden@hotmail.co.nz

Membership Kris Pearson
Secretary Kris.p@paradise.net.nz

Principal Contests Kamy Chetty
Coordinator

Judging Kamy Chetty
Enquiries kamychetty@yahoo.com

H2H Contents Marjan Van Waardenberg
marjan@marjan.co.nz

Jaci Petherick
jaculinpetherick@yahoo.com

H2H Proofreading Virginia Suckling
virginia.suckling@xtra.co.nz

Jane Madison-Jones
jane@wordstars.co.nz

Contact Details:

Romance Writers of New Zealand, Inc
PO Box 10264, Dominion Road, Auckland.

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While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, no responsibility will be taken by RWNZ or the editors for inaccurate information. To subscribe to the RWNZ online loop, which is dedicated to the support of its writers by and for members, send a blank email to

NZromance-subscribe@yahooogroups.com

or contact Suzanne Perazzini

suzanne.perazzini@orcon.net.nz

ABOUT US

We are a non-profit organisation founded in September 1990 by Jean Drew and ten other enthusiastic writers in Auckland, New Zealand, to provide support and professional development to Romance writers. Since then Romance Writers of New Zealand (RWNZ) has flourished and has now grown to around 300 members from throughout New Zealand, Australia, USA, UK and South Africa.

Whether a member's ambition is to become an internationally published author or purely to obtain the satisfaction of having written a good story, RWNZ offers a positive and supportive community that shares a love of Romance fiction.

We strive to share and broaden our collective knowledge of excellence so members can become the best writers they can be and create the best crafted books they can write. We do this through online loops and [workshops](#); an [annual Conference](#) that offers craft development and networking opportunities with agents and editors; [competitions](#) and regular regional meetings. To read the full range of [member benefits](#), [click here](#).

RWNZ has a range of members from internationally published, best-selling authors, aspiring writers through to those purely writing for their own pleasure. Our membership contains like-minded women and men of all ages who provide encouragement and knowledge from their own writing journeys. If you'd like to [join us](#), [click here](#) – new members are always welcome.

Mission Statement

Romance Writers of New Zealand Inc. is dedicated to promoting excellence in romance writing and the romance genre, helping writers become published and establish careers by providing networking, support, information and resources.



"I'm selfish, impatient and a little insecure. I make mistakes, I am out of control and at times hard to handle. But if you can't handle me at my worst, then you sure as hell don't deserve me at my best."

– [Marilyn Monroe](#)

<http://www.goodreads.com/quotes>



"You don't love someone because they're perfect, you love them in spite of the fact that they're not."

– [Jodi Picoult, My Sister's Keeper](#)

Retrieved from
<http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/love>



Nelson Romance Writers present:

An Autumn Romance Short Story Competition 2014

Open to: Unpublished and Self-published writers only, within New Zealand.

Launch:
Valentine's Day 14 February 2014
Deadline:
Thursday 17 April 2014

Judge:
Natalie Anderson Best Selling Romance Writer,
published by Harlequin Mills & Boon and
Entangled Publishing.

1st Prize: One year's membership of
Romance Writers New Zealand
(RWNZ)
Plus: The three top stories will win a
basket of romantic goodies.

Prizes generously sponsored by
Nelson authors & businesses: The
Bead Gallery, Karen Mead, Tempus
Jewellery, Rosy Glow, LaVerne Clark &
more to come.

For more information and entry form:
Email: Annika Ohlson-Smith,
allan-annika@xtra.co.nz
Or phone Annika on: 03 - 548 5561

Plus Natalie Anderson.

