

HEART ♥ TO ♥ HEART

Meet the editor:

CINDY HWANG

BERKLEY PUBLISHING

A graduate of Smith College and the Radcliffe Publishing Course, **Cindy Hwang** is currently executive editor at the Berkley Publishing Group, a division of Penguin. She acquires romances, women's fiction, mysteries, young adult novels as well as general fiction and non-fiction. Some of her authors include Lori Foster, Christine Feehan, Jacquie D'Alessandro, Barbara Bretton, Emma Holly, Erin McCarthy, Eileen Wilks, Pamela Clare, Lora Leigh, Angela Knight, MaryJanice Davidson, Karen White and **Nalini Singh** who interviewed Cindy for *H2H* in preparation for Cindy's attendance at RWNZ's annual conference this month.

[NS] First of all, we're all so excited that you're going to be coming to New Zealand. Is there anything in particular that you'd like to do or see while you're down here?

[CH] This is my first trip to New Zealand, so I'm pretty excited just about everything. I definitely want to take the ferry and visit the South Island.

[NS] As executive editor, your day must be stupendously busy. Do you think you could give us a breakdown of some of the things you do day to day?

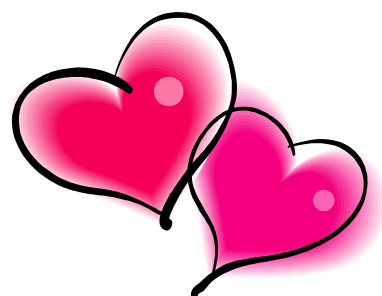
[CH] Much of my day is spent on answering emails – both from the outside (authors, agents, etc) and from the inside (different departments). There's always somebody with a question or an issue that needs to be addressed. Then, there are always lots of meetings – I have 'cover conference' (where editors discuss possible cover ideas with the art dept) nearly every week, sometimes twice a week. Editorial meetings are also weekly. Other meetings may be monthly. It's not often that I actually get the chance to read or edit during office hours.

[NS] In terms of sub-genres of romance, what's "hot" at the moment? Personally speaking, are there any particular types of books that you'd like to see/are actively looking to acquire?

Berkley Books

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Heart to Heart (H2H) is the official publication of Romance Writers of New Zealand (RWNZ) and is published eleven times a year.

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To join RWNZ's critique partner register, run jointly with RW Australia, email the coordinator Rachel Robinson on rachelrobinson@dodo.com.au

EDITOR'S DESK

This month, I had the interesting challenge of having a lot of information to fit in to *Heart to Heart*. (As a newsletter editor by day, it's way better to have too much than too little copy. Oh, those days when someone pulls a story at the last minute..!)

So, I hope you'll enjoy the variety of articles we've got this month. Even if you're not going to conference, the 'meet the editor' interviews with **Cindy Hwang (Berkeley)** and **Angela James (Samhain)** offer excellent insights into what these publishers are looking to buy. Our thanks to Nalini Singh and Gracie Stanners for completing these illuminating interviews.

Nathalie Anderson has one of the most unforgettable 'calls' from a publisher most of us have ever heard (having just given birth to twins she worked on revisions in the hospital!) Now, she turns her attentions to the career-developing prospects afforded by competitions for published authors.

Gracie Stanners and Kris Pearson (two of our three loop 'mothers') celebrate the RWNZ loop's 10th birthday.

And I found an article just for me by writer coach Katie Coffey called Just Write the F***ing Book. Apologies for the bluntness of the language, maybe you, like me, need a kick up the backside to get some writing done.

Hope your month is productive and I look forward to seeing many of you at conference.

Kate

From the President

Welcome

By the time you receive this newsletter, the 15th Annual Conference will be only a short time away. It is not too late to register although the early bird rate is now not available, but what you pay is still not a huge amount for the information you will receive over the weekend, the people you will meet and the fun you will have.

Conference update

Most workshops have a good quota of people in them, but if you are intending to come to conference and haven't booked, I would suggest you get in now so that you can get your preferred workshop.

There has been one change to the programme: Jenny Hutton's workshop for published authors on Saturday afternoon has been cancelled. So many people want to pitch to Jenny that we felt it better to utilise her time for this and not try and compress the pitch appointments into a shorter time. For those of you who are pitching to any of the editors, you will be notified of these appointments when you collect your tickets at conference registration.

For those of you attending RWNZ's A Romantic Interlude, I would like to remind you to bring:

1. Three chapters and synopsis of your current book in case you win the Harlequin Raffle. See last month's H2H for details.
2. One page of any of your current work in progress for the Early Bird workshop on Saturday morning. Don't put your name on the page.
3. An extra bag. There are always plenty of giveaways and one suitcase will never be enough.



From the President cont.

4. Your book to pitch. This can be in the form of written information you read out, cards with notes on them or however you want to remember what you are going to say to the editor of your choice.
5. Business cards.
6. Money for the raffles; \$2.00 coins and/or \$5.00 notes.
7. Plenty of energy. Boy, do you need this! Newcomers will not believe how tired you can be by the end of Sunday. All that talking, listening, and networking wears you out. But it's fun.
8. Your cocktail party garb – remember CAT-e-gory. Ears, tails, whatever pertaining to cats.
9. Your glam clothes for the awards dinner. Midnight and Moonlight is the theme; to me this translates into black and silver.
10. Comfortable shoes. You do a lot of walking and sore feet are not something that you want to worry about.
11. Those of you who have selected Gracie Stanners' workshop on Writing with a Global Voice need to bring a synopsis of your current WIP (anywhere from 1-15 pages) and the first five pages of that WIP.

Also if you are attending Margie Lawson's Friday workshop you need to bring:

1. Three to five chapters
2. Five highlighters: pink, blue, orange, green, and yellow
3. A red pen

Goodie bags: We have a mountain of stuff for these, but if anyone has something they want to add please do not hesitate to get in touch. Bookmarks are always welcome, and a good way to promote your book(s).

Raffle prizes: We still welcome donations of raffle prizes, so please get in touch with Rachel Collins rachel_collins@xtra.co.nz

Conference notes available to purchase: For those of you who aren't going to be with us this year, you are going to miss a wonderful conference. There will be one consolation – you will be able to buy the full conference notes. An advertisement for these will be in a future H2H.

Romance Writers of America Conference in San Francisco

For those of you winging your way to the SF conference, take with you my jealousy :) I was originally going to be attending, but due to time constraints and business activities, this was shelved. I sincerely hope you learn heaps, meet some interesting people and come back full of ideas for your own writing.

If you are attending the breakfast to be hosted by Debbie Macomber, enjoy that as well. She is a fantastically kind person who is totally devoted to writers and writing. We look forward to hearing all about the conference when you get back and have time to take breath.

Romance Writers of Australia Conference

There are several kiwis heading over to Australia for their conference a week after ours. I will report on this in my column next month.

Bus Shelter Project

In last month's newsletter we mentioned a special writing project. If you are interested in being part of this bus shelter project, start writing. At this stage no deadline has been set, but Chapter Bookshop does want to get onto it, so I suggest you have any submissions to me by the end of July. Send submissions to rwnzpresident@xtra.co.nz. There is no limit on the number of entries you can submit.

Competitions

This edition of H2H includes an entry form for the Strictly Single competition which closes in September. So polish up those entries and get them in!

Well, that's about all for me this month. I look forward to seeing many of you at conference.

Until then, happy writing

Pat Snellgrove, RWNZ President (rwnzpresident@xtra.co.nz)

Meet the editor: Cindy Hwang *cont.*

[CH] I'm really looking for great voices rather than specific subgenres. I'm really open to all subgenres, from historical to contemporary to paranormal. I like to keep my list pretty diverse.

[NS] Conversely, are there any sub-genres or types of books that would be a harder sell?

[CH] Berkley really is open to any romance sub-genre – it really depends on how the individual story is told.

[NS] What would your advice be to writers of these "harder sell" books?

[CH] I think the most important thing really is to write the book that you want to write, regardless of what the market says "what's hot."

[NS] On a related note - how open is Berkley to stories set outside the U.S.? For example, what are the chances of a contemporary set in Australia or New Zealand getting published?

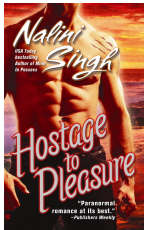
[CH] I think Berkley is pretty open to different settings – it really depends on the story being told rather than the setting.

[NS] Now, a question specific to the conference - a lot of RWNZ members are going to be pitching to you over the conference weekend - are there any tips you could give them? What do/don't you like to see in a pitch?

[CH] I know pitches make a lot of people nervous, but try not to read. It's always more useful for me if you can just talk about your book and have a conversation with me.

[NS] And to close - do you get much time to read strictly for pleasure? Who are your personal favourite authors?

[CH] Unfortunately, I don't have as much time to read for pleasure as I would like. I'm actually looking forward to getting some reading in on the plane ride to New Zealand!



RWNZ member Nalini Singh is the author of the *USA Today* bestselling *Psy/Changeling* series, and considers herself incredibly lucky to have Cindy as her editor.

Her next release is *Hostage to Pleasure*, out in September. Please visit www.nalinisingh.com to read an excerpt and check out behind the scenes info on the series.

THE NAKED WRITER *CONT. FROM PAGE 20*

Well, it was just magic. The snow was falling; the kids were amazed, having never seen snow before. Oh, it was beautiful. However I sat stiff as a board, hands clenched on the steering wheel, panicking because I'd never driven in snow before. Then, the unthinkable happened. The car just conked out. There we were, me, my four little kiddies, my old but mint Hillman Minx that had no heating, and what on earth was I going to do? Well, in true M&B style, I didn't have to wait long. I was rescued. By a man.

He towed me – well, the Minx – to a nearby gas station, where they fixed my car up and a few hundred bucks later, sent me on my thankful way.

My regret was I never thought, in my panicked state, to take down my rescuer's details and thank him properly. But it goes to show the next time you read a book where the heroine breaks down, it happens. Boy, does it happen! It's just that in real life, the rescuer is old enough to be your grandfather....

And finally, the **Whitcoulls Top 100** book list is out.

What's of interest to romance writers? Gabaldon's *Cross Stitch* at six, *Pride and Prejudice* at seven, *Sushi for Beginners* 17, *Rachel's Holiday* at 23, *Bridget Jones* at 31, more Marian Keyes with *Watermelon* at 36, *The Other Side of the Story* at 38, and *Anybody Out There* at 42. Then there's *Chocolat* at 45, *Gone with the Wind* at 47, *Wuthering Heights* at 56, *Jane Eyre* at 68, more Marian Keyes with *Last Chance Saloon* at 70, and *Lucy Sullivan Is Getting Married* at 75. Of interest, Gabaldon's *A Breath of Snow and Ashes* debuted on the list at 76.

Nearly 100,000 votes were received. There were a total of eight novels by Marian Keyes, seven by Bryce Courtenay. Last year that most marvellous fantasy novel, *Lord of the Rings*, was number one but this year it slipped to second place.

What was the most popular novel as voted by Whitcoulls patrons? It was in fact, an even more fantastical story; it was...ta da...*The Da Vinci Code*. Third was *The Lovely Bones*, followed by *The Power of One* and *Angels and Demons*.



MEMBER SUCCESSES



COMPILED BY KATE GORDON

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO TYREE BIDGOOD FOR TAKING ON THIS COLUMN

PLEASE SEND YOUR SUCCESSES TO TYREE BY THE 15TH OF EACH MONTH TO rocker.t@xtra.co.nz

Yvonne Lindsay is contributing the 'Desire Daily Read' on eharlequin.com at the moment. *The Billionaire's Proxy* went live on 21 July and remains on the website until 17 August. Yvonne describes it as a "stranded boss / PA-type" romance. The URL is <http://www.eharlequin.com/article.html?articleId=1361> and this will take you directly to Chapter One: <http://www.eharlequin.com/articlepage.html?articleId=1361&chapter=1>

Also, **Yvonne's** June US release (July down-under), *Jealousy & A Jeweled Proposition*, was on the Waldenbooks / Borders bestseller list at #4 for two weeks. This is the last book of the Diamonds Down-Under series.

Maxine Sullivan's July release, *The CEO Takes a Wife*, hit #5 on the Waldenbooks bestseller list when it was released in the States in July. The US cover is shown on the left, the Australia/NZ cover on the right.



Karina Bliss has been signed for a Superromance mini-series to celebrate Harlequin's sixtieth anniversary. Fellow authors in the four-book mini-series are: Tara Taylor Quinn, Kathleen O'Brien and Janice Kay Johnson. The books will be released monthly with the first, (Tara's) off the block in September 2009.

Lisa Gardiner aka Lisa Whitefern sold a paranormal historical Halloween novella, *Waking the Witch*, to Freya's Bower. Well done, Lisa!

Clare Scott's humorous novel for children, *Egghead*, will be released in August by Walker Books Australia. This is Clare's second book in the brand-new Lightning Strikes series aimed at boys 8-14 years.

The final placings in the **2008 RWNZ Great Beginnings Contest** were announced in July, following judging by Kimberley Young, Mills & Boon, London). Congratulations to the top three place-getters from us all!

First: **Nikki Beynon** (full ms requested!)

Second: **Susanna Rogers**

Third: **Sharon Arkell**

Best of luck to Nikki with that request!

Barbara and Peter Clendon announced the finalists, highly commended and commended entrants in the **2008 Clendon Award**.

Finalists

Sandra Hyde - Special Edition

Rowena May O'Sullivan - Fantasy
Paranormal

Chris Weston - Superromance

Maree Anderson - Paranormal Chic Lit

Kylie Short - SFF Fantasy

Kendra Delugar - Superromance

Highly Commended

Diana Holmes - M&B Sexy Presents

Nicola Beynon - Single title

Mary Robbins - Modern

Maree Anderson - Paranormal

Lisa Anderson - Superromance

Susan MacKay - Romantic Suspense

Allison Withers - Historical

Commended

Maree Anderson - Paranormal

Shirley Wine - Special Edition

Shirley Wine - Special Edition

Kris Pearson - Sexy Sensation

Barbara and Peter's note on the RWNZ loop also acknowledged **Kylie Short** as the Readers' Choice winner for 2008.

"The sheer amount of energy contained in this year's entries was impressive and made reading the 2008 Clendon Award entries both a delight and a privilege. Well done to all entrants. These results are not yet confirmed. The first six placings will be decided by Leslie Wainger in New York, and we are still in the process of checking, and rechecking the 400+ three page evaluations. The winner, and final placings, will be announced at the 2008 RWNZ Conference. The 2008 entries were of a particularly high standard. Sincere congratulations to all entrants and a special 'Well done' to the finalists, Highly Commended and Commended entries. Enjoy your writing as much as we all enjoy reading it."

Barbara and Peter Clendon, and the staff and readers at Barbara's Books

COMPETITIONS FOR PUBLISHED AUTHORS: WHICH & WHY

BY NATALIE ANDERSON



It's the R we actually dream of... not a nightmare but a wonderful fantasy: having one of your books winning one of the top romance prizes!

I believe in recognising and celebrating excellence. In a genre that the mainstream media tends to ignore, it is up to us to champion the talent within our field. Because let's face it, every year there are hundreds, yes hundreds, of *superb* romance books published.

So I think those three big 'R's - the RITA, the R*BY (Oz/NZ) and the RNA Romance Prize (UK) - are wonderful for highlighting the cream of romance novels.

But as a newbie published author - my goodness, they're scary. And there's a host of other competitions too - how do you know which are the best ones to enter? Should you enter every one with every book? Is it worth the cost - both in time and money? Do you sign the books??? It's like the publicity thing - to blog or not to blog; to compete or not to compete. It's one of the many decisions you face as an author - and not one I'd thought about before getting published. So I had absolutely no idea. Didn't know of half the competitions out there until some of my colleagues were celebrating finalling - oh, of course, I knew about the big ones and totally threw my hat in the ring (missed, but it was fun trying). But not these other ones - I didn't know how you even went about entering them!!! (Note: this is where being proactive and actually reading the fine print in your romance writer newsletters is probably a good idea!!!)

So I decided to find out - the ins and outs, the nit, the grit and the great about these competitions. Happily I know some friendly, vastly more experienced, and infinitely wiser authors who let me pester them with all my stupid questions. With great patience they clued me in. And I figured there might be some other newly published authors out there wondering about this same thing, and some of you on the brink of publication might be interested too - so you can be prepared! (Unlike me). Anyway, here's what I learned:

The primary purpose of the competitions for unpublished writers is to get their manuscript in front of an editor. Other reasons include getting good stuff to put in your

covering letter to an editor, getting feedback and they also provide the motivation to finish the damn book!

But a published author has an editor already, has finished books - so what are the benefits? Actually there are several - to gain readership, get promotion and build credentials and (perhaps) build confidence.

Aside from the biggies, there are a range of other competitions for published writers (see the accompanying table).

Nicola Marsh says, "apart from the 3 Rs, the other 'big' 3 are the HOLT, Booksellers' Best and National Readers Choice Awards."

She's been on a competition bender the last couple of years and has been a finalist in several. For her it's about building readership and name recognition within the industry.

Melanie Milburne notes that if you want to build sales or you're a newbie starting it's a great way to get your work out there to readers.

And what if you're a category writer who wants to break into single title? A few competition finals (and hopefully, wins!) is how you get your name published in those winner's lists that agents, and booksellers and all sorts of important industry folk read.

Or say you want to build a name for yourself on the conference circuit as a speaker? When filling out your bio in your proposal you could put: *Ann Author, has written 10 books for Leading Publisher.*

But doesn't this sound better: *Ann Author has written 10 books, won the R, R and R and been a finalist in numerous other competitions.*

Hmmm, so far so good... but there are some other factors to consider:

COMPETITIONS FOR PUBLISHED AUTHORS CONT.

Who are the judges?

Some competitions are judged by other writers, some by readers and some by other industry professionals – booksellers, librarians and the like. Depending on your reasons for entering, then you might prefer to final in one sort over another – so this is going to impact on your choices for entering. Also take a look at the finalists for the last few years – are they the sort of books you write? There's no point in sending your racy number to a chapter comp that seems to like them sweet. And there's more than one incredibly successful category line that seems under represented in many competition finals.

Subjectivity

Writing is art after all – and what some find beautiful, others do not. I know of one author who entered two books in the RITA one year – she was a finalist with one of them and came in the bottom quarter with the other. And I know of another who got a 9 and a 2 on the same score sheet.

Of course your book isn't going to thrill every reader – we know this from reviews. And we train ourselves to 'enjoy the good, ignore the bad'. There are many brilliant books that never make it to the finals of the RITAs – but that's what makes those finalists so exceptional – that they *did* thrill all of those judges – that cross section of people who may ordinarily enjoy diametrically opposite kinds of tales. Wouldn't it be great to write one of those?!

Feedback

The great thing about competitions for unpublished writers is the feedback you get – even if you don't final you get comments that (hopefully) are constructive. Not so with published competitions. If you get any feedback at all, it's a single sheet with the scores from the judges That's it.

As [Julie Cohen](#) (who finalled in the RNA Romance Prize this year) says, "I threw my Rita scores away the moment I received them because I did not want to torture myself wondering why."

But if you final or win a competition – that's feedback in itself.

Here's [Kate Hardy](#)'s experience: "I was shortlisted for the RNA Romance Prize in 2006 with *WHERE THE HEART IS* and that did wonders for my confidence as a writer. It encouraged me to lift my game in writing - and that paid off, because in 2008 I won the RNA award with *BREAKFAST AT GIOVANNI'S*. It's too early to say what effect winning will have on my career (because it was only a couple of months ago!), but it's definitely been a real highlight of my career. The chair of judge's speech explaining why they chose my book has helped me see what my strengths are as a writer; now, I intend to build on that."

The flipside of confidence building of course, is confidence destruction. Only you can know if you can handle getting 'loser' scores. Here I guess it comes down to 'managing your expectations'.

Every time I sit down to write, I want the book to be sensational – to make people laugh, to make people cry, for it to be un-put-down-able, for the characters to live in the readers minds for eons... in short, to be exceptional – a winner – every book, every time. I'd be a pretty crap writer if I didn't want that. But once it's out there, well, I remind myself not everyone is going to love it and that's just the way it is. (I don't like it, but you have to learn to live with it). Regarding reviews and competition scores, if it's not great, I take the 'it could have been worse' attitude. Aim for the best, expect the worst – then you get nice surprises!

Cost vs. Benefit

Entering competitions requires two things: time and money. Fees can be anything from \$10-\$40 US per book in each competition. Plus the postage – all the way from NZ to USA isn't the cheapest. You also have to have the actual books – sure you get your author copies, but by the time you've set a few aside for kids, reader competitions and conferences prizes, your numbers are dwindling. Yes, you can buy more at a reduced rate but again, that's more dollars. All tax deductible – but dollars nonetheless. Yikes. And then there's the time – time which could be spent writing. As Melanie Milburne says, "I am not one for entering anything but the big ones mainly due to the time it takes to get things organised and entered and posted off... I just don't have the time on the schedule I'm on."

[Jan Colley](#) also points out, "...as a newly pubbed, you are so busy trying to continue to sell (wondering if your first sale is a fluke!) that you're loath to spend time on contests. For me, I was fairly new to writing and didn't have a pile of unpubbed books sitting around to wow my new editor, I was starting from scratch. I don't have a career plan past that I really want to get three on the shelves next year so all my time goes on trying to dream up something that will fly."

I was in the same boat as Jan, and really, the last eighteen months have been head down, words out.

Another potentially off-putting factor is the size of the competitions. With the amalgamation of the traditional category into contemporary in the RITA, the competition is even hotter. What are the chances, you ask? About as good as getting plucked from the slush pile and published perhaps? Well I know that's *definitely* possible.

COMPETITIONS FOR PUBLISHED AUTHORS CONT.

And being a relative newcomer isn't any reason *not* to enter either – look at my fellow Modern Heat/Sexy Sensation authors Heidi Rice and Kelly Hunter – finalling in the RITA with only their second and third releases respectively! And Anne Oliver won a R*BY last year with her debut novel and is a finalist again this year! And if the size does seem threatening, then there are those smaller chapter competitions to try too.

I think competition success does enhance your career – and the bigger the competition, the bigger the rewards – although I don't think there's any way to really quantify it. But even if you get nowhere, your book has gone out to a few new readers – and some might just love it enough for you to become an auto-buy author for them forever more!

However, it's also worth considering that there are several huge names, phenomenal selling category authors who don't enter any competitions at all – not even the biggies.

Ultimately I guess the degree to which you go in for competitions depends on your own personal career plan and budget. Of course, this whole exercise has made me

realise I actually might *need* a career plan! Okay, so maybe I've been naïve (I prefer to think I've been too busy to have thought about it much before now) – but I don't think I'm the only one out there.

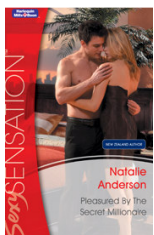
For as long the aim of the unpublished writer is to 'get published'. It's easy to forget about 'then what'... so maybe, if you're working towards publication, spend a little time thinking about 'then what' and start dreaming!

Oh and if you're wondering, I asked and it was a yes to signing them ☺

By the time this article is published, this year's RITA winners will have been announced. There's a fantastic representation of down-under authors in the finals this year and I'm hoping more than one of them will have scooped up one of those statues!

And now we're waiting excitedly for the R*BY – so while we wait, let's raise a glass to all those fabulous finalists! And soon enough it'll be time to start filling in forms for next year!

COMPETITION:	Find more info here:
RITA	http://www.rwanational.org/
R*BY	http://www.romanceaustralia.com/ (open to Oz/NZ writers only)
RNA	http://www.rna-uk.org (Must be a member of RNA – in the UK)
HOLT	http://www.virginiaromancewriters.com
Bookseller's Best	http://www.gdrwa.org/
National Readers Choice	http://www.okrwa.com/nrca.htm



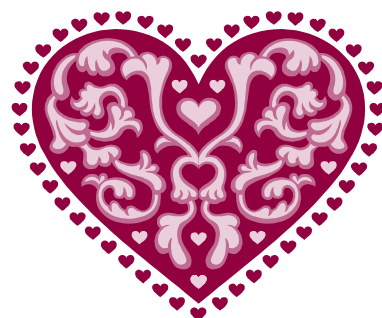
Natalie is currently working on her eighth title for the Modern Heat/Sexy Sensation line. Her fourth release, *PLEASURED BY THE SECRET MILLIONAIRE* is on the shelves in Australia and New Zealand this month. Head to her website <http://www.natalie-anderson.com> for news, excerpts and more.

Welcome to our newest members!

Chick Stanbrook – Whitby

Pam Smith – Orewa

Fifi Colston – Wellington





Meet the editor:

Angela James

Samhain

Angela James, executive editor with Samhain Publishing Ltd, will be at RWNZ's A Romantic Interlude conference with publisher Christina Brashear. Gracie Stanners talks with Angie to find out more about this e-publisher.

Samhain's tagline is: 'It's all about the story.' What kind of stories are you looking for now?

"It's all about the story" means we're looking for a good story—we won't try to force an author to write in one genre, we love books that break the mold and those ubiquitous "rules". E-publishing is the perfect place to try things that traditional publishers aren't able to take a chance on.

In December 2007 we restructured Samhain and stopped accepting mainstream submissions, and refocused our efforts on all genres of romance, erotica, GBLT (Gay, Bisexual, Lesbian, or Transgender), and science fiction/fantasy/urban fantasy with romantic elements.

Samhain is quite a young publishing house. What do you see as the advantages to authors if they contract to a new publisher?

This is a funny question for me, because I think there are many disadvantages to authors contracting with a new publisher just getting off the ground; most new publishers won't have distribution, readership, and still have to work through the kinks and growing pains.

However, though Samhain is still fairly young, we've already got a foothold in the e-publishing community with the readers and authors, as well as business relationships with key places like Ingrams, Borders and others. We do still experience the growing pains—finding out what works and what doesn't—but I think in some ways we're on par with, if not surpassing, some of the publishers who've been in business five or ten years.

You've said elsewhere that one of the great positives about Samhain as a company--and e-publishing in general--is that authors can move around in genres. Could you elaborate on that?

E-publishing and its readers seem to be more accepting of authors writing in different genres than traditional publishers are able to be. For instance, an author might wish to write a

steamy erotic romance, but also a more sweet romantic comedy. That works in e-publishing. A specific instance I can think of is an author who writes sexy historical and contemporaries for traditional publishers, but was unable to sell her inspirational romance because of her previous (and current) books on the market. We're more open with genres.

When you're reading a book for pleasure what are the things that really grab you by the throat and pull you into the story?

I've often said that I'm a character reader, so I have to like or at least understand the motivations of a character. If I dislike a character, think they're brainless, whiny or unrealistic, I rarely will like the book, no matter how good the plot.

Also, I love an authorial voice that doesn't intrude by telling the reader, but rather lets the reader experience and learn about the characters and the plot as the book progresses. I love writing that flows, has rhythm—not stilted and jerky. And I also adore good, natural-sounding dialogue.

When you pick up a manuscript (wearing your executive editor hat) how far through do you get before you make the decision it's for you? What are the factors in your decision? Are they the same as those you look for in a 'pleasure-read'? What are your immediate turn-offs?

Coincidentally, I just did a blog post about this on my personal blog. Sometimes I can tell in the first page, but I'll give most the benefit of the doubt and go at least 3 pages before closing the document. If I'm not sure, but it hasn't hooked me by the first chapter, I don't keep going. But I don't contract a book unless I've read the whole thing. I've read many submissions that I thought were so promising in the first three chapters (people get good at polishing those chapters) that fall apart half or two-thirds of the way through the book—or even in the last chapter. I never assume just because the book is reading well, that I'm going to sign it—not until I get to the end.

Meet the editor: Angela James *cont.*

Things that factor into my decision to sign a book include polished writing—not a lot of passive writing, telling, stilted dialogue or info dumps. A solid plot/story with likeable, well-developed characters. If the submission makes me want to keep reading, just like any book I'd read for pleasure, then I know I want to buy it. With as many rounds of edits as a book has to go through, I really need to love it to want to look at it that many times!

The two things that turn me off the most are huge areas of information dump, especially right at the beginning of the story. If you spend the first two or three pages telling me about your character, their history, their grandfather's history, all their problems, issues and foibles, then I'm already bored. I find that many authors don't start their book in the right place—or I should say, they start it in the place they need to, for themselves, setting up the background, but they don't go back and edit that out and start the book at an interesting point, and then weave in that background—if it's even necessary—throughout the book.

The second thing is multiple grammar and spelling errors. I don't expect a clean book, but I don't want to spend my time wading through a book that has an error in the first sentence and continues like that. It's hard to read past multiple errors without letting them affect my reading experience.

You're taking pitches at the upcoming RWNZ conference. When someone comes to you with a pitch, what are you actually looking for in that ten minutes?

Pitch sessions are hard, because I've heard some amazing pitches, but the book didn't live up to it. In other words, you might give the best pitch in the world but the writing might not follow—and really, it's the writing that counts. So I'm not looking for assurance that your book is brilliant, but more that you know your book—to give me an idea that you've actually developed plot/characters/story in your book—and that it's appropriate for my company (for example, if you're pitching me a women's fiction book, I'm going to say no). Other than that, I like to give people a chance to ask questions of me during the pitch session, to help them get to know the company.

How can a writer guarantee that, when you've read her work, you'll offer her a contract?

They can't. Okay, I suppose that wasn't the answer anyone wanted, but the truth is, there is no guarantee. I often say I'm looking for urban fantasy, space operas (especially western-type space operas like the short-lived show *Firefly*), cat shifters, etc. So authors might send me one of those and then be shocked when I don't sign it. But just because I'm looking for a specific genre, good characters, interesting story, it might not mean your book is right for me. Maybe I just signed a book with a similar concept, maybe your writing didn't quite work for me—just as it happens in pleasure reading, it happens in submissions as well.

So a writer can't guarantee I'll sign, but by working on their craft, polishing, and sending the best, cleanest final version possible, they can take a giant step towards getting that manuscript published.

When Samhain signs an author, what are your expectations in the long-term?

We're not overly demanding. Mostly we expect our authors to be as invested in the editorial, marketing and promotion process as we are. It's frustrating to me to sign a book and have an author do minimal work in edits, be difficult to contact, and do zero promotion. I don't expect an author to spend gobs of money or time on promotion, but I like to see an interest in building their name and their career—which I think would naturally include promoting their releases.

It's nice when authors want to build a backlist with us, because each subsequent release does see a rise in sales as well as a bump in backlist sales, but we also understand that some authors are only going to write one or two books for us, for any number of reasons.

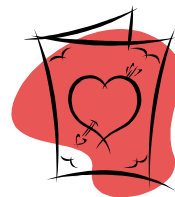
But overall, I expect an author who writes for us to behave professionally both towards me, their editor, the company, etc as well as their readers. Every author is a small business and behaving badly towards co-workers, business partners and consumers can sink a business.

Does Samhain offer royalties and advances?

We do offer an advance of \$100 for books that have not been previously released. Obviously, this is a small amount and it's more in good faith. Print (10% of cover price) and e-book royalties (e-book royalties are 30-40%, depending on the vendor) are paid out differently. Authors get monthly e-book statements by the 15th of every month, and will receive monthly and quarterly payments, again depending on the vendor. Print is paid biannually, and we do hold a reserve against returns, as traditional publishers do.

How do you ensure sales volume for your authors so that total earn-out is comparable with standard print runs from paper-based publishers?

For the most part, e-publishing doesn't see the same sales volumes that traditional publishers do. We do have books that have sold numbers equal to some traditional publishers' books, but for the most part, sales numbers are lower. However, royalty rates are higher—30-40% on e-books and 10% on print—so there is some equalization there.



Meet the editor: Angela James *cont.*

I think that authors can earn good money in e-publishing, but it depends on building backlist, writing in popular genres, and good marketing/promotion. And it should be noted that in e-publishing, we don't have to worry about "earn out", which is why we can take chances on different genres, story concepts, etc. Also, I think it's important to keep in mind that even traditionally published books don't always earn out their runs.

At Samhain, we do have an aggressive marketing plan and budget, and for print we work with the sales team at Ingrams, who markets our books to booksellers for us. We're not sitting back and waiting for readers to find us, or expecting authors to do all the promotion. We do marketing and promotion in print magazines such as Romantic Times and Romance Sells, as well as many internet venues, and not just the usual suspects. We're always looking for unique ways to market the company and our authors, to reach new audiences.

Background on Samhain Publishing Ltd

Pronounced *sab-vin* by the Scots, *sow-in* (sow like cow) by the Irish and *sam-hine* in English, Samhain is the Irish word for November, and November 2005 saw the opening of Samhain Publishing, Ltd. Founded with a goal of bringing to compulsive readers books that allow them to discover new worlds and be taken on adventures through the creative minds of today's brightest authors, including RWNZ member Emily Veinglory. www.samhainpublishing.com

**Still no aspiration to write and publish your own book? :-)
But, if you were going to, what genre would you choose?**

No, no aspiration to write or publish my own book. I find blogging and interview questions challenging enough. I just started a series of articles on e-publishing for www.erotica-readers.com and writing those on deadline has been difficult for me! People tell me that they think I could write a book and I laugh. I'd need a story idea, plot, outline and character development first. I don't have any of those things!

But if someone held a gun to my head and said I had to write a book, I'd probably try writing a contemporary first. Something sexy maybe. I don't know, you see how far away I am from even contemplating a book? I can't even come up with a genre!

SPREAD THE WORDS

Never mind Sex in the City - here's Romance on the Curves!

For only \$25.00 (GST incl) you can snaffle an absolutely original limited-edition T-shirt that's available nowhere else. Not only will it identify you as a romance writer, but you'll bring a smile to the many folk trying to decipher computer jargon.

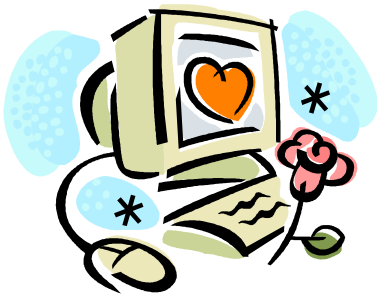
RWNZ's mobile "cheat sheet" makes previously confusing terminology relevant to romance, and provides national and international exposure for RWNZ at the same time. The T shirts (black, with silver writing and the blue/green RWNZ logo) will be available to buy at our August conference.

To order, please email Bronwen Evans on bronwene@slingshot.co.nz. Send a cheque to Bronwen Evans 85 Chelmsford Street, Ngaio, Wellington 6035, Or deposit directly into the RWNZ ASB Bank account 12 - 3070 - 0 0099767 - 003, using your name and word t-shirt for reference. Available in sizes: Small 48cm across from under armpit to other armpit, Medium 52cm, Large 56cm, XL 60cm, 2XL 64cm and 3XL 68cm. \$25.00 for the shirt. \$5.00 postage and packaging



COMPUTER TERMINOLOGY FOR WRITERS

doc	Determined to Organise Chaos
txt	Terrific X-genre Title
gif	Getting Incredibly Focused
jpeg	Justified Pre-menstrual Editing Glitch
html	Heroine Taking Medicinal Liquor
www	Whymi Wyting Wubbish?
http	Have To Turn Professional
wps	Work Produced Superb
rtf	Ready To Fly
smtp	Snail Mail To Publisher
dot	Dreaming of Oprah TV
pdf	Publisher's Delays Frustrate
xls	Xpect Lost in Slushpile



HAPPY TENTH BIRTHDAY, LOOP

BY KRIS PEARSON & GRACIE STANNERS

The RWNZ loop celebrates its tenth birthday this year.

If you're a "loopie" you'll know what a great resource it is.

If you're not, come and join us - we'll tell you how at the end of this item. We have members throughout New Zealand and Australia, in the USA, the far north of Scotland, Switzerland, and heaven knows where else. They range from multi-published authors to absolute beginners. And every member brings something new and different to the loop with them.

The loop is where you get the gossip as soon as it happens. You'll find announcements of contest finalists and winners, news of sales while the author is still dancing with elation, links to interesting blogs and writing, items about publishing houses, editors, non-RWNZ contests, and so on.

But wait, there's more!

The loop is also a great source of friendship and consolation. After all, who's going to understand your raging fury about a stinky rejection letter better than other writers?

We all enjoy sharing triumphs, and privately thinking "if she can do it, so can I."

Sometimes members find that they have unexpected things in common. We had a wonderful discussion recently about raising children who have behavioural problems. From the comments posted it was plainly of intense interest and value to several of our mums and caregivers who were able to share experiences and to help each other with useful resources.

If you have a question, ask it. We get into some of our most interesting and hilarious exchanges this way - and you'll get useful answers. In the last few months we've covered the interiors of private jets, suitable climbing plants to allow a hero to shimmy up a wall, the mating habits of pigs, sizes of paper in the USA ... you get the idea?

Everything's up for grabs, and we're very happy to share. If we can't immediately tell you the answer to an aviation question, then a pilot brother might get roped in. If you want information about wine, we have a number of members in the industry. A gardening question so your 1880's heroine can be seduced behind a period-appropriate herbaceous border? Not a problem. Sometimes you'll be receiving and sometimes you'll be giving - and both feel good.

The loop is a great way to meet people. Maybe you'll never meet the other loopies in person, but they'll still feel like friends. However, if you attend the annual conferences,

suddenly you'll be able to put a face to Jane, or Shirley, or Lynne. When you find something in *Heart to Heart* about Yvonne or Jan or Norah, you'll already feel you know them. And if there are no other members living close to you then the loop is a great way to be part of a writing community.

Okay. On to the slightly more technical side. There are three ways to view your loop messages.

(1) You can go into Yahoo and the RWNZ site to view and reply online. This means you don't have your inbox clogged up with emails. It also means you don't get the news hot off the press, and - if you're not careful - several days go by between visits. There can be a lot of loopie action in a few days!

(2) The most common way is to simply get them sent to you as individual emails as soon as they're posted to the loop. You then keep up with what's happening in more-or-less real time. The downside is you get a lot of emails popping up like meerkats in the desert, and it can be distracting. Or annoying. That's when the delete key is your friend.

(3) So, another way is to opt for the Daily Digest. This means you get larger bulletins of up to twenty-five messages at a time. If it's a really chatty day - finalists announced for competitions and the resulting flurry of congrats from around the world - you may get two digests. The digest keeps your Inbox tidier and means fewer messages to delete.

So, how do you join?

Probably the easiest way is to send an email to NZromance-owner@yahoogroups.com asking to join. Because it's a list for RWNZ members, the moderators check that you're actually a current member (yes, we really do! It's amazing the number of people who try to access lists in order to spam everyone).

If you're a member, then we send you an invitation telling you how to access the loop. As it's hosted on Yahoo, you also need a Yahoo username and password so you can get into the Yahoo site. Those are things you have to do for yourself.

But follow the instructions given at www.yahoo.com and all should be well. All will be even "weller" if you write your username and password in a book so you can find them when you forget them! And those senior moments happen to us all.

Don't be shy.

Come and join us.

Just Write the F***ing Book

The Hardass Message for Procrastinators

by Katey Coffing, Ph.D.

Writers have varied needs, which means that as their coach, I must fill many roles.

Some writers want gentle nudges to keep them going, others like commiseration and companionship; some seek help with the nuts and bolts of the craft, and some want a slave driver to stand over them with a whip until they finish their books.

My job is to do what's best and most helpful for each client, so the following message is addressed to a particular segment of the writer population: procrastinators who need the hardass whipcracker.

You know who you are. And you've been warned, folks. :-) Proceed at your own risk. (I suspect most of you are still reading!)

Ahem. Your job is to WTFB. Write the F***ing Book.

Will that be easy?

No. Writing a book isn't a simple task.

But do it anyway.

You procrastinate because of fear. Whether it's fear of failure, or of success, or of anything else, the kind of fear doesn't much matter. Because fear is a normal part of the process of writing for almost every author, and for almost every book. It's a near-certainty that fear will be there, on some level, no matter what. Even on the days when beautiful words are flowing effortlessly onto your pages.

Fear is perfectly normal.

Being scared doesn't have to matter, because the mere existence of fear doesn't indicate anything about your book, your talent, or your future.

Really. It doesn't mean a thing. If you're alive and you're human, you're going to be scared at times. It's normal.

So don't let fear stop you.



Goalmeister Katey Coffing, Ph.D. is a certified life coach who specializes in guiding women writers to success. She helps her clients complete and polish their manuscripts, create kick-ass queries and synopses, and get The Call from agents and publishers. Discover more at Women-Ink.com.

In recent years, a multi-published and incredibly talented friend of mine has been waffling about whether to continue writing. Her prose is so good that she makes other brilliant writers drool. The Goddess of Prolific and Swoon-Worthy Words has rung her doorbell on many an occasion. Yet at times, I've had to drag my friend by her lovely locks to the scary Writing Chair, shackle her to it, and go open the door for her Goddess-otherwise, my friend would be feigning deafness and cowering under the duvet. It's the darnedest, most contrary thing I've ever seen.

And yet it's completely understandable to anyone who's spent time in That Chair.

I myself was "blocked" for many years-which, for me, is just shorthand for "I was too scared to write."

Let me tell you, the pain of NOT writing, the guilt and shame of wasting creative dreams, is MUCH worse than the pain of actually writing.

And yet some people choose to take on the greater pain.

Why is that? Consider that old saying: the devil you know is better than the one you don't. (Or at least that's what the D.Y.K. - the devil you know - insists, often and loudly, right in your ear.)

Devils? Call them what you will: D.Y.K., Inner Lizard, Bitchy Inner Critic, AntiMuse. But whatever you name yours, whatever you call your particular fear, ignore its whispering. Or duct tape its mouth and lock it in a soundproofed closet. It will only lead you back into the pain of Not Writing.

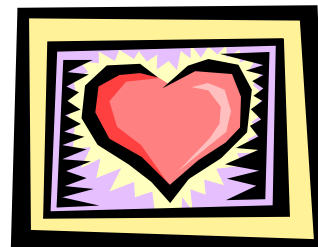
So feel the fear. Go ahead. Wallow in it.

And then sit down and WTFB.

Do it or don't. Because either you want to be a writer, and you're willing to do what it takes to make that happen, or you're not.

You decide.

ROMANCE WRITING MARKETS & PUBLISHING INDUSTRY NEWS



**SOURCES INCLUDE PATRIKA SALMON. CINDI MYERS MARKET
NEWSLETTER & PUBLISHERS WEEKLY**

Grassroots Publishing

<http://grassrootsmag.com>

LOVE STORIES MAGAZINE (Revised 5-2-08)

The overall theme should involve short stories of love and romance. These stories may be contemporary, historic, inspirational, paranormal, or any other theme as long as love and romance are the main thrust of the story. Story length should range from 3,000 to 5,000 words. Stories should have some sexuality but not be overtly graphic or pornographic in nature. Suggestive phrases should be used in the place of reference to body parts and inappropriate language.

All stories must be checked for spelling and grammar. License with grammar may be taken if it carries the story or character forward. Stories are to be submitted as Microsoft Word attachments, SINGLE SPACED USING TIMES NEW ROMAN 12 POINT TYPE. Please include STORY TITLE and ALL contact information - NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE AND E-MAIL - on the first page of the story. Include a cover page containing a detailed synopsis of the story within the MS Word document. The first line of each paragraph must be indented two spaces from the left. All dialogue should be enclosed within double quotes. Please allow up to 10-12 weeks for us to review your manuscript.

Submissions should be sent to the following address:

submit@grassrootsmag.com

or

All hardcopy submissions should include a SASE.

Grass Roots Publishing Co., Inc

C/O Hochman Associates Co., Inc

New Love Stories Magazine - Editor

908 Oaktree Ave. - Suite H

South Plainfield, New Jersey 07080

Novelists Inc, a terrific organization of authors published in popular fiction, has a new blog which features the postings of published authors, editors and other industry professionals. Check it out for savvy advice, industry insights, and free books.

<http://www.ninc.com/blog>

Juno Books (<http://www.juno-books.com/>) which publishes "fantasy with a focus on the female" is temporarily closed to submissions. Watch their website for updates.

The **Authors Guild** has advised members to carefully review a letter from Simon & Schuster that looks to add an amendment to their contracts that will set the standard royalty for e-books at 15% of the catalogue

retail price for e-books. The Authors Guild alert makes three points about the proposal: members should discuss the amendment with their attorney or agent; warns that, depending on a member's particular contract with S&S, the amendment may grant S&S rights that otherwise would be retained by the author; and notes that members should be aware that the amendment may affect their ability to obtain a reversion of rights.

The U.K. book trade weekly **Publishing News** has shut down. The July 25 issue was its last. The 29-year-old magazine attributed the closure to advertisers' shifting their spending to online and direct sales.

PV founder and chairman Fred Newman said, "This has been a sad and difficult decision to make, but the nature of the book trade, which today offers a multiplicity of ways for publishers to sell books both to booksellers and to consumers, has changed dramatically. For the biggest book publishers, the trade press is now only one of many options for the promotion and sale of their titles." Closing of the magazine will result in the elimination of eight positions.

Borders has added a new audiobook download service, which it is calling **Borders Audiobook Downloads**, to its remade Borders.com website. The service launched in July with 15,000 titles, including fiction and nonfiction bestsellers, classics, self-help and children's books. Borders will add hundreds of new titles each week. At launch, more than 5,000 of the listed titles are available in MP3 format, making the titles compatible with all MP3 players, including iPods.

In its continuing efforts to prove how successful the **Kindle** is without divulging any meaningful numbers, Amazon said Thursday that on a title-by-title basis, of the 130,000 titles available on Kindle and in physical form, Kindle sales now make up over 12% of sales for those titles. At BEA, Amazon said the Kindle accounted for 6% of sales for titles available both as e-books and print books.

Lisa Grubka has joined **Foundry Literary + Media** as an agent. Grubka arrives from **William Morris**, where she spent the last six years representing both fiction and non-fiction. Grubka's worked with such authors as Alton Brown, Kerry Reichs and Julia Allison. Before William Morris she was at Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

RWNZ Contest News

For all contest queries, please contact Ellie Huse,
RWNZ Principal Contests Coordinator - elliehuse@yahoo.com

STRICTLY SINGLE CONTEST 2008

The entry form is enclosed in this issue of Heart to Heart.

Closing date: Entries must be postmarked no later than 26 September 2008

Final Judge: Keyren Gerlach, HQN Books & LUNA BOOKS

Agent Judge: Susannah Taylor, Richard Henshaw Group

Please note a change to the coordinator's email address: rocker.t@xtra.co.nz

Technical tip:

Competition formatting

This month we're going to deal with competition formatting (thanks for the suggestion Kate!). Note: detailed instructions are for Microsoft Word users but the formatting goes for everyone.

Standard Competition Format:

- Set your margins to 3cm on all sides. For Word 2007 you can do this via the Page Layout tab, or under the Paragraph heading on the ribbon under the Home tab. If you're using Word 2003, go to File> Page Setup> Margins.
- Double space your document. W2007 go to Paragraph/Page Layout as per above. W2003, select all (Ctrl A) and choose Line Spacing on the Formatting toolbar.
- Set your font to Courier, size 12.

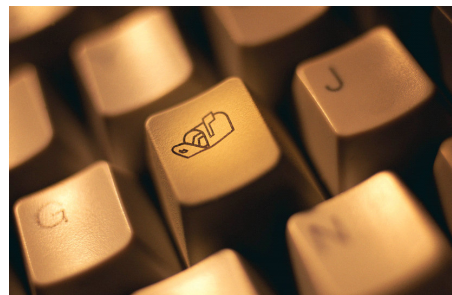
ARC Format:

- Set as for Standard Competition Format.
- Change the orientation of your page from Portrait to Landscape. W2007: Page Layout tab. W2003: File>Page Setup>Margins. Choose Orientation.
- Format your text into two columns. W2007: Page Layout tab>Columns. W2003: select the entire document, then click the Columns button on the Standard toolbar.
- Now reset your margins on the left, right and bottom of your page to 1.5cm. Set the top margin to 2.5cm. All you need to do now is to reset your spacing to single and turn on full justification so that your text fills both columns. Justification should be on the Standard Toolbar/Ribbon for both W2007/2003 users.
- Note: Remember that 25 pages of standard format does not equal 25 pages of ARC format! The conversion of 25 standard format, double-spaced pages should give you 8 pages in ARC format.

If people would like to see more tips on using Word 2007 – or any other version of Word – do email me and I'll include some tips in another column. Also feel free to let me know if you want to see tips for other word processing programs.

Cheers

Jackie [jackiec@paradise.net.nz]



Other Contest News

September & October contests submitted by Lisa Elkind-Gardiner, aka Lisa Whitefern

Finally A Bride Contest

Oklahoma Romance Writers

Deadline: September 1st, 2008

http://www.okrwa.com/fab_index.htm

Eligibility: Unpublished, un-contracted authors whose ms have finalled (but not won) in a RWA sponsored contest or whose ms placed in the top 25% of the Golden Heart. Do not have to be member of RWA to enter.

First place-getter in each category will receive a lovely engraved knife and cake server, suitable for cutting the cake in celebration of THE CALL. Fee \$25US electronic submissions only.

SOUTHERN HEAT CONTEST 2008

East Texas RWA Chapter

Deadline: September 15th 2008

Eligibility: You must be unpublished within the last 5 years in the category in which you are entered. Published authors may enter in a category in which they are unpublished and not under contract.

Mainstream/Single Title final judge –MIRA Books

Historical – final judge Silhouette

Long Contemporary –Silhouette

Short Contemporary –Silhouette

Paranormal –The Wild Rose Press

Erotica –The Wild Rose Press

Inspirational- The Wild Rose Press

Fee \$30US electronic entries allowed.

Launching A Star Contest 2008

Spacecoast Authors of Romance

Deadline: September 8, 2008

<http://www.authorsofromance.com/contest.htm>

Eligibility: Unpublished authors. Send first chapter up to 25 pages

Single Title- final judges - Dorchester Publishing and Three Seas Literary Agency

General Paranormal –final judges- TOR and Larsen-Pomada Agency

Fantasy/Futuristic - Samhain and Spectrum Agency

Historical - HQN and the Larsen-Pomada Agency

Series Contemporary - Harlequin -Prospect Agency

Erotica - Berkley/Jove Brown Literary Agency

Young Adult - Harper Collins and The Knight Agency

Fee \$30US electronic entries allowed.

(This is a cool contest. I finalled in it last year and they give you a lovely sparkly certificate to frame.)

Pitch Perfect: synopsis and query letter contest

Mid-Wilamette Valley RW

Deadline: September 30, 2008

<http://www.midwillamettevalleyrwa.com/contest.htm>

Non-RWA authors are encouraged to submit their work. Enter your query and synopsis.

Eligibility: All unpublished and published authors are welcome to enter into the following categories:

Contemporary – final judge TBA

Futuristic/Fantasy/Paranormal - Dorchester Publishing

Romantic Suspense - Bradford Literary Agency

Romantic Elements/Chick Lit - Crichton & Associates

Historical - Berkeley Publishing

Young Adult - Three Seas Literary Agency

Inspirational - Harvest House Publishing

Erotic Romance - Ellora's Cave

Overall winner wins the registration fee for the 2009

Romance Writers of America National Conference in Washington DC.

Electronic entries allowed.

Fee-\$20US

Beacon Award

First Coast Romance Writers

Deadline: October 1, 2008

http://www.firstcoastromancewriters.com/contest_un.htm

First 30 pages of manuscript

Final round judges for the Beacon 2007 Unpublished Division include:

Futuristic/Paranormal/Fantasy - Kensington

Inspirational - Harlequin Steeple Hill

Historical/Regency - Avon

Erotic Romance - Red Sage

Long Contemporary/Single Title Contemporary - Pocket Books

Short Contemporary - Harlequin Blaze

Romantic Suspense - Medallion Press

Chick Lit/Women's Fiction/Mainstream - Harlequin

Fee-\$25 US electronic entries allowed

Kathryn Hayes Love and Laughter Contest

New York City Romance Writers

Deadline: October 1, 2008

<http://www.rwanyc.com/LLContest.html>

Enter a humorous scene between the hero and heroine (10 pages maximum), story/background summary (2 pages maximum, will not be judged).

Grand Prize: \$75

Fee \$30US electronic entries allowed



*What we hope ever to do with ease, we must learn
first to do with diligence.*

— Samuel Johnson

AUGUST NEW RELEASES

HARLEQUIN MILLS & BOON

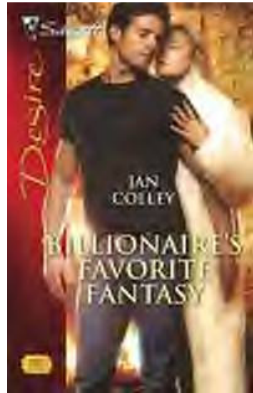
DESIRE SINGLES

Billionaire's Favourite Fantasy (Jan Colley)

They had shared the most amazing night of passion.

And billionaire tycoon Lewis Goode could not erase Madeline Holland from his mind. Lucky for him, a corporate acquisition had just made him her new boss. But Lewis knew Madeline would quit rather than have people think she slept her way to the top.

So he'd have to use every negotiating trick he knew to keep her in his boardroom... and in his bedroom.



ROMANTIC SUSPENSE

Killer Temptation (Nina Bruhns)

This assignment in Fiji was supposed to be Zoë Conrad's ticket to adventure. But stumbling over a body was more than she'd bargained for. The dead man turned out to be alive—and she found herself giving in to his slow, sensual seduction. Was he really capable of the crimes he was accused of? Was she falling—and falling hard—for a murderer?

SPECIAL EDITION

The Last Man She'd Marry (Helen R. Myers)

It wasn't so much that Jonas was the *last* man she'd marry. It was that divorce attorney Alyx Carmel wasn't likely to marry *anyone*; after all, relationships didn't exactly end well in her line of work. But Jonas wasn't willing to give up on Alyx just yet...

SEXY SENSATION

Pleased By The Secret Millionaire (Natalie Anderson)

Gorgeous millionaire Rhys Maitland is tired of women throwing themselves at him because of his power and wealth. When he meets beauty Sienna Rendel, Rhys decides to hide the truth, and insists on being with her for one night only... Sienna's quite happy with Rhys's offer of fast, furious lovemaking!

She doesn't know she's being pleased by a secret millionaire, but when she and Rhys realise one night isn't enough, they'll have to strip themselves bare—in every sense!

MEDICAL

Virgin Midwife, Playboy Doctor (Margaret McDonagh)

Oliver Fawcner is new to Penhally Bay. This seriously sexy doctor, with a playboy reputation, has caused quite a stir with the female population! But Oliver is only interested in getting to know beautiful midwife Chloe MacKinnon.

Chloe has always put work before her social life, hiding from a traumatic past that has left her very inexperienced with men. But this gorgeous new doctor has won her trust and awakened something inside her... Chloe knows that Oliver is only passing through Penhally—dare she risk her heart with this playboy doctor?

SEXY

Ruthless Boss, Hired Wife (Kate Hewitt)

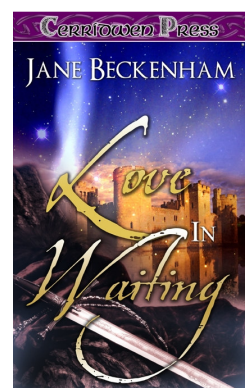
Powerful, wealthy and gorgeous, Cormac Douglas always gets what he wants. Now the playboy billionaire needs a temporary wife to secure a prestigious contract, and biddable secretary Lizzie Chandler is the perfect candidate. Lizzie is outraged, but Cormac's ruthless persuasion leaves her breathless and wanting more. He sets her quiet, lonely life ablaze with his experienced touch—and virginal Lizzie is soon giving in to his every desire...

Cerridwen Press

Love In Waiting (Jane Beckenham)

Adventure and love have always come from books for Jayne Seatoun until she wins a competition to visit England. But breaking and entering one of England's famous tourist attractions wasn't on the agenda, nor was traveling back over four hundred years and being caught up in the politics of King Henry the Eighth's Court as she searches for a way home.

Instead she ends up running for her life. Tired of battle and bloodshed Lord Callum Broderick's loyalty is divided. Does he save his sister, his lover or his neck from the executioner's block? Love, honor and loyalty are codes Callum lives by...until he has to choose.



RWNZ NEWS AROUND THE REGIONS

Regional convenor contacts

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WELLINGTON – Ellie Huse
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Don't see your region listed here? If you're interested in helping to start a local RWNZ group in your area, please contact RWNZ president Pat Snellgrove via email rwnzpresident@xtra.co.nz or our membership secretary Rachel Collins on rachel_collins@xtra.co.nz

AUCKLAND

What can I say about the last Auckland meeting except that it was memorable in many ways! If you recall, that particular Saturday, the All Blacks were due to beat South Africa in the Welly test. There also happened to be an Antarctic blast covering our fair nation and Auckland did not escape. In spite of the freeze, a small but hearty band turned up at Three Kings, where it soon became apparent disaster had struck. There was no electricity in the Tennis Pavilion. Cold, and immeasurably distraught at the possibility of no hot cuppa, I jogged across in the blistering wind and the biting rain to the nearby library to contact the Council, who organised someone to come out. But that was going to take hours. What were we going to do in the meantime? Well, romance writers are smart! We decided to buy a coffee from the Drunken Whale pub across the car park, head back to the Arctic room, pull up a pew, sip our coffee and have a general pow-wow. Before we knew it, the clock said three o'clock, and it was time to brace the conditions outside and head on home. Suffice to say, the planned discussion on Web Resources never eventuated, so for the August meeting – that's what we're doing. The discussion on web resources. So get your thinking caps back on, and make a mental note of those on line classes, groups, websites and courses for Saturday's meeting where we will, cross fingers, finally get to share the knowledge.

Sits Vacant: It didn't escape my attention that I've been going on about how awful it would be to have an Auckland meeting without a cup of tea, and that's exactly what happened. Saved only by having to part with our own cash for a cappo at the pub across the car park. Yes, we're still after a volunteer to do the deed – bring the box of supplies - the teas, coffees, the milk, the tea-towels, washing the dishes. Naturally you need to be able to attend meetings. My details: Ph 624-2492, or email joanne.graves@gmail.com See you all, as usual, the first Saturday of the month – 5 August - Three Kings Tennis Pavilion, Mt Albert Road, Three Kings, 12.30pm for a one o'clock-ish start. Bring a plate for the shared nibbles if you're organised enough, and a few bucks for the raffle to help pay the rent. Our discussion will be on Web Resources, and all going well, there'll be hot water for that cuppa!

Joanne Graves

HAWKE'S BAY

Next meeting is after the RWNZ conference. Contact Ginny about the Hawke's Bay group on ginny.suckling@xtra.co.nz.

CHRISTCHURCH

A small, enthusiastic group of us are going to Conference. We are looking forward to catching up with everyone and will be bringing a Canterbury Raffle Basket brimming with Canterbury goodies and a certificate for a Christchurch group critique of the winner's synopsis and first chapter of choice. We're passionate, respectful and kind critics and brain-stormers so you have nothing to fear from winning!!

Kathryn Taylor has got some of us working hard – she is presenting a much appreciated repeat of her course on Romance Writing over eight Wednesday evenings. In July we talked furiously through two meetings - the usual Thursday evening one and a new Saturday lunch meeting at The Dux Restaurant at the Arts Centre.

Our August meeting will follow the Conference, Thursday 21st, 7.30pm at Memories Café, cnr Papanui and Harewood Rds, Christchurch. For information contact Sue Knight at sueknight@ihug.co.nz
Sue Knight

RWNZ NEWS AROUND THE REGIONS

WELLINGTON

July 5th was chilly, but our monthly meeting at Ellie's place was hot and hilarious. We welcomed Mig back from her trip to China, where she just missed being in the earthquake's epicentre. And we were pleased to welcome prospective new member Chickie (who brought chockie!). Gracie travelled all the way down from Waihi with the swish new RWNZ T-shirts, so we had a try-on. President Pat came over from Carterton.

We talked about sentence structure, writing the kind of books that we'd like to read, and characters unexpectedly taking on lives of their own that we hadn't planned for them. Yes - it seems a lot of them do this!

Joan currently has a display in the Levin library about her father's very early flying achievements, and the possibility of making a documentary is being explored. Hopefully we'll find out more when we meet again at 1 o'clock on Saturday August 2nd. Please note the change of venue: Joan's home at 11 Lambert Way, Paraparaumu.

Kris Pearson

NELSON

A superbly attended meeting for July, with everyone bringing along a story or excerpt of their work, or of a favourite author, to read aloud. The emphasis was on writing which triggers an emotional response in the reader.

The August meeting will involve each of us creating a story from the same first sentence. It will be something intriguing and, very possibly, something to do with this word: Chocolate! 248H Annesbrook Drive, Nelson @ 2pm, Saturday, 9th August.

Cherie Skinner

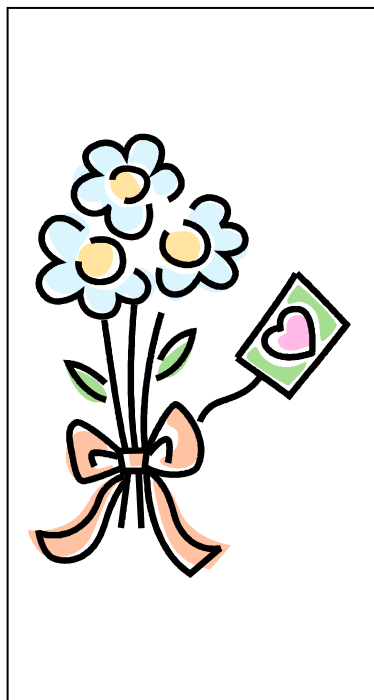
WAIKATO, BAY OF PLENTY & KING COUNTRY

We had our June weekend meeting at Jenny Yates' home for the entire weekend. Those who weren't there missed a treat. Our July meeting will have been in Waihi at Shirley Wine's home, with Barbara Clendon as the speaker. There will be no meeting in August, due to Conference, so the following meeting will be in September at Catherine Johnson's home in Waiuku, with a workshop by Yvonne Lindsay – 'Writing on Demand'.

Liz Heywood

Getting to know our regional convenors

Sue Knight



Hi, I'm Sue and I've been dabbling in fiction writing for 20 years and seriously dabbling for about 5 years. Until recently I've been a bit of a secret lurker but agreed to co-ordinate the Christchurch group this year. So glad I did – they're a great bunch.

RWNZ offers a superb support system - H2H, the loop, conference, competitions, local member meetings and the critique partner scheme. I don't think I would still be writing without it, so it's good to be able to give a little something back.

My writing focus has changed this year from Sweets to Single Title and my aim for 2008 is to complete a whole manuscript. In other words: to stop dabbling and get business-like. I'm also working on a novel for older children.

Over the years, my paid writing has included training programmes, handbooks, policies, articles and a non-fiction book called *Accessible Canterbury*.

THE NAKED WRITER

BARING ALL IN THE WORLD OF ROMANCE AND WRITING

I have huge admiration for [Jane Porter](#).

I've read her single titles and really enjoyed them. Her latest, *Mrs Perfect*, came out in May but I am yet to read that one. She spends time doing promotional work, and with her boyfriend living in Hawaii while she lives in Washington State, well, when does she get time to write? Her honesty on her website is heartening to those of us, whether pubbed or unpubbed, struggling with the writing process. In her blog she wrote a post that was both scary (writing can be hard work) and encouraging (even Jane Porter gets the blues). Her website is just lovely to look at too – all pink and yummy...

Here's what Jane wrote on her blog on June 18: "I'm going to draw on that place of strength and confidence because right now the writing is demanding. I'm at the keyboard from 8am until 10pm every day now, and sometimes later. The writing isn't impossible. It's just slow. I am spending hours on a single page and I have to remind myself to be patient... The other night I had a brief conversation with a friend and she was a bit put out that I'm not more available right now and as I hung up I found myself thinking, she doesn't understand that even for me, especially for me, writing's hard. I know I write books for a living but I battle. I struggle with the story, the characters, the plot, the pacing, the emotion, all of it. I work and work to make sure the story flows and that dialogue is real and that what's happening is as honest and true as possible and that doesn't come with one draft, or two, or three. In my case it's an endless relentless write and rewrite and rewrite until I've got it the way it needs to be."

I was flicking through my old RWRs (Romance Writers Reports, the monthly magazine from RWAmerica) and reading an article called *Writing Around Your Day Job* by [Lee Tobin McLain](#). While writing full-time seems like the dream when you first start out, I don't think it's all it's cracked up to be. Besides, it seems that those who have less time to write, e.g. writing around family or a job, can produce tons when they set their minds to it. This author makes suggestions to get as much time as possible to write on your book, e.g. cut corners on housework.

I am an expert at cutting corners!

It comes naturally to me but occasionally I have "moments". Like recently, when it seemed it would

be a good idea to clean the living room and kitchen windows. I had not cleaned them in months. Well, years actually. What a surprise! It was a treat. Not only did the room seem to shine more, as sunlight was finally able to get through the glass. As I gazed out through the windows upon the landscape, I thought back to when I was twelve and had my eyes tested, learning that I was short-sighted, and tried on my new glasses. You realise you've been living in a hazy fog for years and suddenly everything is shaper, brighter, greener, and you can read the blackboard. Now, as I gazed out upon the landscape I felt the same thing. Everything was clear, crisp, delicious. Unfortunately, it also showed up the fact the lawn hadn't been mowed in months, the leaves hadn't been raked adequately and were turning to treacherous mush on the dying grass, the weeds in the summer vege garden were thriving over the dying tomato plants, and there were sodden boxes strewn around the yard from the recent storm last year. Suffice to say, I did what I did best. I made sure the back door was locked and remembered there was a reason I never cleaned windows...

Recently I drove from Auckland to Palmerston North. That drive never fails to make me realise just how lucky we are here in New Zealand. I hadn't driven down the Desert Road in winter for a few years, and it was just glorious. There was snow on the mountain, snow alongside the road, Waiorou had snow on the roofs, which was probably a royal pain for the locals, but it was magical to look at. Many cars stopped along the Desert Road, kiddiewinkles and grown ups alike, out there having some fun.

It reminded me of an incident that happened around thirteen years ago. Now, every so often I'll read a category romance where the heroine has broken down in her car. Nakettes, don't scorn this overdone plot device because this happened to me, those thirteen years ago. I remember it as if it were yesterday. I was heading home from Palmy North, back to Auckland, and for this particular journey, I hadn't checked the weather forecast. By the time I reached Waiorou, it was snowing and the Desert Road was closed. Luckily, the National Park route was still okay so I went that way.

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