

HEART TO HEART

NALINI SINGH

Interviewed by Kylie Short & Gracie Stanners



First call to publication in 2002 with Silhouette desire with Desert Warrior, Fijian-born, New Zealand-bred best-selling author, Nalini Singh continues to rock the paranormal romance world with her success.

With her work hitting the USA Today bestseller list, the New York Times short list, and with multiple awards for her books, Nalini's joins the ranks of other highly successful paranormal romance authors such as Sherriyn Kenyon, Angela Knight and Christine Feehan.

Nalini has been writing as long as she can remember and can't imagine doing anything else. This is great news for her fans and the

romance genre in general!

She spent 3 yrs working in Japan and has returned to live in NZ. She's worked as a lawyer, a librarian, candy factory general hand, a bank temp and an English teacher.

Nalini takes time out from her hectic schedule to share her thoughts into the world of romance.

What were some of the significant milestones in your writing life prior to publication?

Completing and submitting my first manuscript the summer after I finished high school was a biggie. It was rejected, but it taught me I could write a book from beginning to end, tell a whole story, and that really boosted my confidence.

Finding out about, then walking into my very first RWNZ conference was a huge deal, too. It was so wonderful to speak about writing with other people who not only understood, but were working toward the same goal.

Another memory that's really important to me is the year I won the short story contest. It was the first time I'd really had that kind of recognition for my romance writing and I still remember how excited and happy it made me. As an aside, that short story was called "Angel", so it seems I've always been meant to write about angels!

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EDITORS' DESK

Well, there are less than 30 days to go until conference! It's scary to wonder where the year has gone, but it's great to think we will all be meeting up to talk, live and breathe romance once again.

As this is our last newsletter before A Romantic Retreat, we have once again profiled some of the wonderful women who will be presenting over the weekend. Bestselling romance novelists Nalini Singh and Robyn Donald have been kind enough to talk to H2H, as has Michelle Holman, Sharon Archer and Gracie Stanners. We also have an article by Modern Heat author Natalie Anderson.

Kris Pearson has put together a wonderful report on what to expect at the conference, which should get everyone very excited, and Kylie Short has kindly compiled notes on how to get from the airport to Waipuna for out of town members.

And lastly, turn to page 10 to find out who the finalists are in the Clendon Award!

Until conference!

Soraya & Suzanne

CONTEST

Romance Writers of Australia: Single (Title) and Loving It!

New for the STALI this year: we're accepting emailed entries! No more messing about with extra overseas postage. Enter the first 18 pages of your single title manuscript in ARC format, no synopsis required. This year's final judge is Rose Hilliard of St Martin's Press, who acquires in a variety of ST genres. So get polishing!

RWNZ & RWAustralia Critique Partner Scheme

To join RWNZ's critique partner register, run jointly with RWAustralia, go to <http://www.romancewriters.co.nz/members/critique-partner-register.php>. Fill out the online application form and send to applycritpartners@romanceaustralia.com. Alternatively, email applycritpartners@romanceaustralia.com and ask for an application form.

PRESIDENT PAT

A Romantic Retreat

If you haven't booked for RWNZ's annual conference there is still time to do it. The early-bird rate has gone but it will still be a fabulous conference and one you shouldn't miss. If you can't manage to get to the whole conference, then try and get to the Friday all day workshop. We have some fabulous speakers and you will come away from this day buzzing and ready to get writing that book that has been sitting on the back burner for too long. Also, if you enjoy this one day, next year you might want to come to the whole conference. Go online to www.romancewriters.co.nz to find more details.

Goodie Bags

If you have anything that you would like to donate to the conference goodie bags everything is more than welcome. Chocolate especially! Contact me at rwnzpresident@xtra.co.nz for where to send the donations.

Clendon Finalists

A list of the Clendon finalists is elsewhere in this newsletter. I would like to congratulate these finalists and everyone who entered this fantastic competition. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Barbara and Peter Clendon for continuing to sponsor and run this competition. Last but not least thank you to all those willing volunteers who lent a hand with judging, coordinating etc.

Book Covers

If you haven't sent me your current book covers then this is your last chance to do so. If you have a book that has been published between August 2008 and mid August 2009 get those covers to me at rwnzpresident@xtra.co.nz.

Mary Jo Putney's Published Author Workshop

If you wish to attend this workshop could you please do the following:

1. Contact Diana Holmes at dianaholmes@clear.net.nz and let her know.
2. Start thinking of questions that you want to ask Mary Jo and forward them to me.

Presidential Farewell

As this is my last column as President I would like to thank the Executive members who have helped me during the last two years and Past President Joanne Graves for guiding me along the way. When I was first asked to become President I must admit to a lot of nerves about stepping up to this job. But everyone on the Executive and you the members have made it a great experience.

To the Conference Committee. Thank you for all your support, for your hard work and for the wonderful times we had bouncing ideas off each other.

See you all at conference. It's going to be a great three days.

Pat Snellgrove
President.

You classify your single title books as paranormal romance. Can you talk more about this description and what it entails?

Actually, while the Psy/Changeling books are classified as paranormal romance (pnr), the Guild Hunter books have urban fantasy romance on the spine. The difference is a subtle one, but all the readers I've heard from to date have agreed with the different classifications.

With pnr, it's all about telling a romantic story set within a world that is beyond the norm. However, in spite of the intriguing worlds, the focus has to be on the romance, and a HEA (happy ever after) is a must.

With urban fantasy, the focus tends to be on the protagonist's adventures or journey, with the romance playing a secondary role, often with the HEA not resolved in one book. However, Angels' Blood, while having the elements of an urban fantasy, also has an extremely strong romance, which is why my editor felt it straddled the line between the two. With this series, I'm going to be doing something different and carrying on the story of the main couple into the second book, Archangel's Kiss.

Do you think a writer's style changes over time and what have you learnt as you've evolved as a writer? What's worked best for you?

I think it's inevitable that a writer's style changes with time - because each word we write helps us develop as writers. And that I think is the best way to grow as a writer - to write as much as you can.

Sometimes we use traditional fantasy or world cultures and mythology to assist with world building. What processes do you go through when developing your characters, their lives and putting your own unique slant to the world they live in?

I'm quite an organic world-builder, in that I often let the character show me everything around them. I don't sit down and build a world. I start writing, and discover the world through the characters' eyes. I'm always conscious that the world has to be "whole" - everything has to have a purpose, a function. I often ask "why" and that's a crucial question when it comes to world-building. With characters, it's all about building well-rounded individuals. No one is one-dimensional, and I try to show the different facets of my characters through their actions.

In Angel's Blood, the world that Elena and Raphael inhabit is full of wonderful possibilities. What was the "aha" moment that made it come alive for you so you could bring it to the page?

Honestly? In my mind, I just saw an angel in a high rise one day and that was it - I was hooked! I mean, an angel, an archangel, looking out over New York?! I was compelled by the image, by the need to find out what was going on.

I'm fascinated by the hints in Angel's Blood about Elena's dark past—in terms of her childhood experiences with vampires. What are your plans to explore those experiences, and what it means to be 'a born hunter' in future books?

Archangel's Kiss (Feb 2010) will answer almost all the questions about Elena's past. It's quite an emotionally intense book, and you'll get to see new aspects of several different characters, including Jason and Illium.

Our RWNZ conference is coming up in August and you're one of our author guests. What can we expect from your workshops Writing the Paranormal and World Building?

The world-building workshop will be focused on exactly that. We'll be talking about the concept as it applies across the board--to contemporaries and historicals, as well as paranormals, because it's a skill you can use no matter what your sub-genre.

The pnr workshop will cover a wider range. I'm still in the midst of writing it, but some of the things we're going to look at are the elements that make a strong paranormal, what you can do to make your proposal stand out, as well as discussing the state of the market.

What's next for you? A new book in one of your series? A novella in an anthology?

Because of the way deadlines fell this year, I'm actually working on book #8 of the Psy/Changeling series while books 6 & 7 have yet to release! Branded By Fire (#6) comes out July, and Blaze of Memory (#7) releases November. I have to be careful answering reader questions, because I could inadvertently give away huge spoilers!

I've also got Angels' Judgment releasing in the Must Love Hellhounds anthology in September. The other authors are Charlaine Harris, Ilona Andrews and Meljean Brook - I am so excited to be in this anthology!

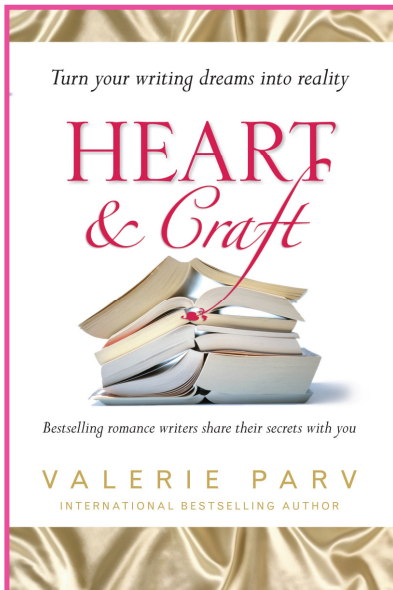
Archangel's Kiss has been turned in and I'm waiting to hear back from my editor on that. I'll probably begin work on the third book later this year.

Nalini, thanks for sharing your time with us!

Thanks for the great interview, Kylie.

You can visit Nalini at www.nalinisingh.com

HEART & CRAFT by VALERIE PARV (Allen & Unwin) RRP \$29.99 **Reviewed by Soraya Nicholas**



If you have ever wanted to get inside the heads of your favourite romance authors, or struggled with understanding what terms like “emotional punch” or “voice” actually mean, then this is the book for you! I don't recommend a book lightly, but this latest craft book might be one of the best I've read.

It is full of wonderful, candid information by authors such as Valerie Parv, Robyn Donald, Daphne Clair and Helen Bianchin, and touches upon many terms we've all heard in rejection letters.

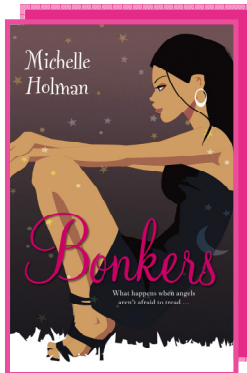
Read this for the honest words and experiences detailed, and also for the craft information. Personally, showing rather than telling and adding deep internal conflict and emotion is something I struggle with. This book makes those terms and pitfalls clear, in an easy to understand way. It also looks at the process of writing and the romance genre from different viewpoints – medical to sexy, historical to sweet.

Ten out of ten from me!

Allen & Unwin has very generously gifted RWNZ two review copies of Heart & Craft to give away at our conference.

MICHELLE HOLMAN

Interviewed by Soraya Nicholas



Michelle is presenting a Marketing/Publicity focused workshop at A Romantic Retreat in August. We thought this was a great time to introduce her properly . . . welcome Michelle!

Tell us a little about yourself . . .

I'd like to be able to say I'm the secret lovechild of somebody famous but the truth is a little more boring. I live in the Waikato on a lifestyle block with my husband, two children and various livestock. I'm a lapsed nurse i.e. no longer practising clinically but managing youth health projects. You never stop being a nurse – you just lapse.

Your first novel, Bonkers, was immensely popular, but I think I'm correct in guessing that many people will recognise the cover and not have known that it was written by a New Zealand author! It looks very "international". Are you published both here and overseas?

Yes, you're right, a lot of people thought Bonkers wasn't written by a kiwi. It's being released in Germany, Austria and Switzerland in November, 2009 under the title "Einfach Himmlisch" (Simply Heavenly). Apparently, there's no German equivalent for Bonkers. The movie rights have also been optioned but it's a very competitive industry so I'm not holding my breath. Having said that, I want Viggo Mortensen to play Dan and an older version of Megan Fox to play Lisa – I'm not picky.

Do you have a "call story" you would like to share with us?

I made a New Year's resolution for 2006 to get serious about my writing, complete something and send it to a publisher. I submitted Bonkers in October, 2006 when it was almost finished expecting to get a thank you/don't bother us again letter in a few months.

I planned to finish the book during that time and was quietly satisfied with the progress I'd made. A week later I got a letter asking for the rest of the manuscript. Utter pandemonium reigned in our household until I sent it off the following Thursday. I finally heard from Lorrain Day at HarperCollins in February, 2007 that Bonkers had been accepted and I will *never* forget that call. Lorrain:- Michelle? Me:- Yes? Lorrain:- Yes. It's a miracle the screams didn't stampede the cows.

Your last release, Divine, hit the shelves in December 2008. Do you have any books out this year or next that we can look forward to?

I aim for one book a year and Knotted is due for release on October 1st. I love the characters, Danny (short for Daneka) and Ross, they have some of the smartest, funniest dialogue I've ever written, and almost wrote themselves.

What are you currently working on, and do you have a regular writing routine?

I regularly get asked for the next book in the Bonkers series because readers want to know if Lisa and Dan have a baby and think that may be my fifth book. Sherry and Glenn came bugging me and wouldn't leave me alone until I did a draft of the first chapter. I'm currently working on my fourth and I have no routine – I wish! I fit writing in around everything else. The horses and cows get to hear a lot, they're big fans.

And finally, what can attendees at the conference expect from your workshop, "Putting your foot in your mouth isn't fatal"?

What a first time author can expect both before, during and after the release of their book. I'll also talk about what to expect from your publisher and what they and bookstore owners want from the writer to help make those sales. My workshop is largely about my experiences to date and the things I have learned along the way. That the publicity/marketing part is your reward for all that hard work. Have fun!!

Thanks Michelle for taking the time to talk to H2H!

Thanks a lot, Soraya. Really looking forward to the conference.

NEWBIE AUTHOR

Sharon Archer interviewed by Kylie Short



Have you ever had a conversation with friends about what life would be like once you receive THE CALL? Have you wondered what happens next? What lies beyond that magical moment?

I thought it was time to ask some of our

newly published about their experiences and see if they can shed some light on what to expect and how they've begun to build their careers now that they're published.

Share a little bit about yourself and your writing.

We live close to bush on five acres in central Victoria. I absolutely love it. Especially the fauna. Over the years, we've had visits from a kangaroo family, wallabies, different types of lizards, koalas, snakes. One year we had an echidna that tried to hide in the zucchinis in the vegetable garden – the plants never recovered!

But we're not there right now! At the moment, my "backyard" is "somewhere, Outback Australia". We're on the road for my husband's long service leave, so we're travelling on the motorbike and towing our "home" behind us. 'Home' is a camper trailer, so I'm writing under canvas And playing electrical appliance "musical chairs"!

I write Medical Romance for Harlequin Mills and Boon. I'm very lucky because my husband is 100% supportive of my writing – which is such a relief since I'm revising book three as we travel.

How authors are "discovered" is as diverse as the brands of chocolate we consume. Please tell us your CALL story.

Oh, I like the "diversity of chocolate" comparison. My weakness is very strong dark chocolate – and it's such a good source of anti-oxidants that it's surely only sensible to consume as much as possible!

THE CALL came on 25 September at about 4.30pm! I'd just come back to the house from doing some burning off in preparation for the

summer fire season. The phone rang and it was Lucy Gilmour from the London office. She said they wanted to buy the book! Still covered in smoke and ash, I wobbled over to a chair and sat down and just mumbled omigosh, omigosh, omigosh. It's so hard to conduct a scintillating conversation when your brain has short-circuited and your face is trying to split in half horizontally! I started shaking like a leaf and that meant that the rest of the conversation was filtered through this weird castanet thing happening between my ear and the phone receiver.

But I do have to say that I haven't got to this point on my own. I have had fabulous encouragement and comments from wonderful friends and critique partners. Both RWNZ and RWA are terrific organisations dedicated to supporting writers, published and unpublished.

I spent a lot of time entering the contests. I think they're invaluable on many levels. It's a chance to send your work out and get other people's opinions – which can be daunting the first few times. It's a chance to treat your work professionally, meeting deadlines, following instructions. And it's a chance to land on an acquiring editor's desk if you're fortunate to final in a competition.

I just have to ask the-chicken-or-the-egg question. What happened first – agent or an editor? How did you go about finding one/both?

I guess you'd say it was straight to the chicken for me. :) I'm writing for a category line with Mills and Boon which means I don't need to have an agent. My editor (I love saying that!) found me on the slush pile. My aim had always been to write for Mills and Boon and, as they accept unsolicited material, I didn't have to worry about finding an agent. Having an agent can potentially speed up the process but since I'm a bit of a snail with my writing, I think the long road suited me--though I do confess there were times when I wondered if it really would ever happen. The waiting is difficult. No career in writing is easy but because I was aiming at category, I think it was "easier" for me from the point of view that I didn't have to find an agent.

What's the name of your book scheduled for release and can you tell us something about it?

My "latest" release (my very first!) is SINGLE FATHER: WIFE AND MOTHER WANTED. It's released in the UK in July 2009 and in Australia and New Zealand in August 2009. My working title for this was Love and The Locum and it haunted the contests for a few years. It's the story of country GP and solo father, Matt Gardener, and itinerant veterinarian, Caitlin Bulter-Brown. Matt's trying to hold his family together. Caitlin's looking for her roots. When her search threatens to upset Matt's foster mother whose health is precarious, he goes into protective mode.

Thanks to my husband who loves all things technical to do with the computer, I have a website! It's www.sharon-archer.com I'm trying to keep a travel diary which can be accessed through the "Latest News" section but it's a "little" behind at the moment with doing revisions. I do intend to catch up.

What's the most exciting thing about writing for you? The most boring?

The most exciting thing for me is when I can finally see the "shape" of the story and I feel as though all the bits are going to pull together. When it looks like it's going to work and the middle hasn't slumped into a mire of unworkable rubbish.

One of the most magical moments is when the characters run away with their story and start revealing things to me. This is a blessing but sometimes also a trap because I can find myself off on a tangent that isn't always helpful. The manuscript I'm working on now has shown me the perils of letting my characters get too carried away – it turned into more of a drama than a romance and I'm in the process of digging the romance out and giving it centre stage.

I don't find any of it boring exactly but I do find it scary at times. Especially at the start of a story. I still find the thought of the 50,000-words plus I need to put on paper before I can write "The End" mind-boggling. I try hard NOT to let myself think about the book as a whole but in bite-sized sections of 1000 words.

I can be really resistant about sitting down at the computer to start work. Sometimes ANYTHING looks like more fun than actually writing.

At the chat sessions during conferences we hear favourite authors telling us that things really change once you publish. What differences, good or OMG (oh my goodness),

have you experienced since getting THE CALL?

I seem to have had a string of OMG moments since THE CALL. Everything has gone very quickly – perhaps there was an opening in the publisher's schedule. So from being picked up at the end of September 2008, I'm being published in July 2009 which I understand is quite fast.

Things kept arriving like the contract, then the copy-edits. And while this was happening my second story was read, had revisions requested, then was accepted and slotted in for publication. MARRIAGE REUNITED: BABY ON THE WAY is out in Australia and New Zealand in November.

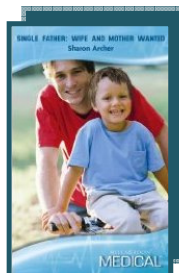
Suddenly, my writing can't be something I dabble with when the fancy takes me. Realising that was a big OMG moment! I have an editor who wants to know things like what else have you got, and when will you be able to send the full manuscript? It was an OMG coming down with a thud on book three with a five-page revisions letter. This is the one I'm working on right now. I love the characters, especially the hero and heroine – I've just let my secondary characters run away with the pencil!

And then there was the post office OMGs – when the hardbacks arrived in the mail! That was such a thrill! And the paperbacks have just arrived. My lovely neighbour very kindly sent them to me here in Broome. We picked them up from the post office yesterday!

Is there any other advice, "lightbulb" moments or comments you'd like to share about getting/being published?

My advice is definitely a product of my snail's approach to writing and I know a faster track suits some people and they cope very well getting there quickly. But I would say "enjoy the apprenticeship", make the very most of it. Use it to make your mistakes, learn your craft, experiment with different voices for different lines of romance. Enter contests. Finish manuscripts. Learn to polish, learn to edit, learn to get distance from your work.

Learn to recognise and listen openly to constructive criticism. It will get you where you're going quicker. I went through a stage where I was very discouraged about my romance writing. I worked on short stories. It was great practice for learning to write tight – most of the stories are under one thousand words. Working on short stories is how I discovered my writing voice.



GRACIE STANNERS

Interviewed by Soraya Nicholas

Gracie Stanners is speaking at this year's conference, and for those of you who haven't met Gracie before, read on to find out more! Gracie is a multi-published short story author, and by day she writes technical documentation, as well as ghost writing with her husband.

Tell us about yourself Gracie. What do you like to write and what's your backstory?

Well, my backstory is in writing songs and music, and I still love to write both. But there's no room for a piano in an RV, and my dog howls when I sing without musical accompaniment. So I write what I enjoy reading; battle-scarred, gutsy heroines and wounded bad-boy heroes--all of whom walk the knife edge of the dark side while struggling to maintain their humour and their humanity. In other words, paranormal romantic suspense.

I always admire someone who can write short stories, and you have had many successes with your short work. Do you write full length manuscripts too?

I like the technical discipline of short-story writing. Crafting a complete, emotionally satisfying story within a given word count is a challenge. However, I have to admit I prefer writing full length novels.

I've completed three, am working on a fourth, and have (counts hastily on fingers) twenty waiting in the wings. After I wrote my first book my main difficulty was to decide which of the plot ideas clamouring in my brain was the one to pursue. So I pursued them all...to about thirty thousand words each. Then I thought, 'This is silly. Pick one--any one--and finish it.' But I couldn't choose. In the end I followed a tried and true scientific decision-making method.

I tossed a coin.

Your conference presentation is entitled "Critiquing a Manuscript – Making it Sing". Can you share any 'teaser' tips about what conference goers can expect??

We'll be covering critiquing in four areas (for competition, in a group, with partners, and on our own work) from two perspectives (that of critique-er and critique-ee). We'll talk about the benefits of a critique, the potential pitfalls, and some practical ways to maximise the first and minimise the second.

For example, when someone tells you your characters aren't believable, what do they mean, and what do you

do about it? How do you say what you think without offending someone and turning them off writing? How do you take a general 'I wasn't engaged by this story' comment and turn it into something specific and helpful?

We'll also talk a little about the two aspects of personality that can help us most, and which are often the very things stopping us from sharing our work and journey with other writers.

Why do you attend the RWNZ conference? What keeps you coming back year after year?

Why do I attend conference? I find it an incredible motivator. I know of no other gathering where people don't think you're crazy when you shriek your head off over a sale, or a competition placing--or if you talk about getting up in the middle of the night because you've just thought of a great place to bury someone. You're allowed--no, not *allowed*--you're *encouraged* to be what you are. You're supported in your journey. And you make some fabulous friends.

I've heard from a fellow writer that you and your husband run fantastic courses on building websites. Can you tell us a bit about that . . .

That's lovely to hear! We've had a lot of fun the last three months. Jem is the technical whizz and manages the tools and their applications. I deal with the site content.

In this course (just finished) that content was geared specifically to writers and writers' sites. We dealt--among other things--with branding, blogging, marketing, finding your writing niche, how to set up your pages, what to cover in each one, how to maintain your site yourself...all that good stuff.

If anyone wants to know more, they can have a look at the course site: <http://www.threebearsmethod.com> and the demo site:

<http://www.romanceshewrote.com>

For paid up RWNZ members the course itself will continue to be free.

Places are limited--so we can give personalised help if necessary--and we'll be taking enrolments for the next course after conference.

Thanks for talking to us Gracie! We all look forward to seeing you at conference.

My pleasure. Conference is certainly shaping up to be a great time for all of us.

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Clendon Award - aka Finish the Damn Book - 2009

The Clendon Award is for a completed romance manuscript, and takes around 300 hours work, not including the thousands of hours reading done by Barbara's Books customers. Each year we wonder if we're able to find the time and resources to run the Clendon Award. Somehow we manage, and each year we are rewarded by finding wonderful new stories, fabulous fresh writers, and extremely generous RWNZ members who give their time to make the Clendon Award happen.

Heartfelt thanks to all the writers, readers, and volunteers who help make our Clendon Award the standout competition it is. Maree Anderson is a tower of strength. As well as coordinating, she comes in to help with score checking, and is an invaluable sounding board. Many people came in to Barbara's Books to help with the 2009 Clendon Award; way too many to thank individually, although a special mention goes to Alister Livsey for checking all the evaluation sheets [except the historical ones]; and Peter and I want to specially thank Anita Bunning without whose consistent help, every week, this job would have been impossible.

When you read a book you've bought, you generally enjoy it. It's rather less common to finish it thinking "Oh Wow!". There were several 'Oh Wow!' manuscripts in the 2009 Clendon Award, and we were not able to send all of them to New York. If your manuscript was Highly Commended or Commended, you can be HUGELY proud of yourselves, as the standard this year was exceptional.

Peter and Barbara support RWNZ writers because there is an enormous depth of talent in our group and we felt a need to do what we could to foster that talent. We set up the Clendon Award to encourage writers to "Finish The Damn Book" and we're full of sincere admiration for all those who have done this over the years the competition has been running. We also wanted to provide an extra 'credit' for NZ writers submitting to publishers or agents. Something has certainly worked. Close to half the writers who have been finalists in our Clendon Award are now published. This is a staggering statistic, and a credit to our writers, and to readers from Barbara's Books.

As writers, you rock! You also need to get your work out there. Submit! Use your placing in the Clendon Award when you approach editors. Editors need to know your writing 'credentials', and membership in RWNZ, and a placing in the Clendon Award, is a very useful tool to use in your query. RWNZ members are incredibly good writers, and it is a privilege to read your work. In fact, many of our readers really, really want to be able to buy the Clendon Award stories they've read.

These are the finalists, whose manuscripts have been sent to Leslie Wainger in New York. The first six placings will be decided by Leslie Wainger.

Note: The winner will be announced at the 2009 RWNZ Conference.

Finalists

Gracie Stanners	Romantic Suspense
Wendy Vella	English Historical
Kris Pearson	Harlequin Sexy Sensation
Sharon Kelly	Western Historical
Maree Anderson	Paranormal Chic Lit
Kylie Short	SFF Fantasy
Kate Buchanan	Young Adult

HUGE CONGRATULATIONS to all these finalists.

REPEAT NOTE: When you read a book you've bought, you generally enjoy it. It's rather less common to finish it thinking "Oh Wow!". There were several 'Oh Wow!' manuscripts in the 2009 Clendon Award, and we were not able to send all of them to New York. If your manuscript was Commended or Highly Commended, you can be HUGELY proud of yourselves, as the standard this year was exceptional.

Highly Commended

Giovanna Lee	Harlequin Sweet
Rachel Collins	Harlequin Sexy Sensation
Frances Maslen	Harlequin M&B Sexy
Jenny Yates	Silhouette Desire
Tyree Bidgood	Modern

Commended

Alister Livsey	Historical
Maree Anderson	Young Adult
Cathryn Hein	Romantic suspense
Angela Bethell	Harlequin Superromance
Wendy Vella	Harlequin Intrigue
Jenny Yates	Silhouette Desire

There were a ton of excellent stories this year, and we loved reading them. I hope you all enjoy your writing as much as we enjoy reading it.

Barbara and Peter Clendon
Staff, readers and volunteers at Clendon Award.

ROBYN DONALD

Interviewed by Soraya Nicholas



This month I have enjoyed reading Heart & Craft, which has a wonderful chapter by Robyn Donald. It made me feel like I “knew” Robyn, and made interviewing her even more exciting!

Robyn, I've been told you have written more than 70 novels. Do you still love the art of writing as much as you did when you were first accepted by Mills & Boon?

Actually, I've just had my 81st book accepted – I wonder sometimes where the years went! As I said in Heart & Craft, the excitement and sheer joy of writing without thought for publication did fade as I accepted – reluctantly – that writing was now a career rather than a self-indulgence. But other

aspects of writing have recompensed. The satisfaction of crafting a good book and the knowledge that my books give pleasure to people all over the world is enough.

You have been writing for many years – does that mean you have had to change your writing to fit evolving editorial guidelines?

Oh yes, and to fit changing times, changing attitudes, changing readership – and my own changes and growth from a young mother to a grandmother!

What is your writing routine? Do you aim to complete a certain number of books each year?

I'm usually contracted to write three books a year. My routine is a simple one – get up at 5am, write until midday with time off for breakfast and walking the dog, and then relax. After each book is finished I take a short time off before starting the whole process all over again.

What keeps you motivated when writing gets hard?

My standard and somewhat cynical reply to this is the thought of my bank balance, but that's not true. Well, only partially true. Although some books are a huge struggle, I take comfort from knowing that several of the ones I've had most trouble with have sold very well. I've accepted that while I'm writing a novel I'm not able to be objective about it. I do the best I can. So far it seems to have worked.

Do you need to find visual inspiration before “casting” a hero or heroine?

It can help, but I don't need it. What I do need to be able to ‘see’ is the setting for the book, and the house that someone – often the hero – lives in. Once I have those firmly fixed in my mind I can write.

Robyn, at the Conference this year you are doing a presentation along with fellow romance author Daphne Clair, entitled Taking Your Writing to the Next Level". Can you tell us a little about what you will be covering?

We'll talk about advanced techniques for writing that give your book an edge, an unforgettable impact that lifts it beyond mere competence.

You also run the Kara School of Writing with Daphne. For those who haven't heard of it, would you mind giving us a brief run down of the service you offer there, and where can we find out more details?

Unfortunately right now the two Kara courses – one for people who term themselves beginners, and an advanced course – are in abeyance. The beginners' course covers the basics of romance

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writing in a full-on weekend with four people attending. We ask for three chapters and a synopsis, and we do a full, oral critique of each student's manuscript, taped in private. The advanced course is based around the students' MSS and covers what we see as aspects each writer needs to work on.

Everyone will hear about it when we start up again!

What advice do you give to aspiring writers?

Read every romance you can get your hands on, the ones you love and the ones you dislike. Try to work out what you really like about the writers you adore, then write. And write. And write...

Thank you so much Robyn for taking time out of your busy schedule to chat with Heart 2 Heart.

Robyn will be part of the author panel at A Romantic Retreat, as well as presenting her Next Level presentation. You can find her on-line at www.robbyndonald.com.

August Web-Surfing by Nalini Singh

Barbara Samuel on The Three P's of Writing: Persistence, Passion and Practice:

<http://tinyurl.com/mbkpqu>

Tips on promoting your book from The Knight Agency's P.R. Director, Jia Gayles:

<http://tinyurl.com/mvc9dv>

Bestselling author Teresa Medeiros shares her very first query letter, with the note "whatever you do, don't do this!": <http://tinyurl.com/lojrk7>

Author John Green talks about royalties vs advances. (The comment thread is also very interesting): <http://tinyurl.com/lyb2hq>

A sales assistant at a major trade book publisher talks about book sales (from the publisher to bookstores): <http://tinyurl.com/m962m4>

Malle Vallik gives 10 tips for enjoying RWA - even if you're not going this year, they're good things to keep in mind for the next one! <http://tinyurl.com/mruvfk>

USA Today profile on John Grisham - including his inspiring journey to publication:

<http://tinyurl.com/ne98pb>

The zombies are here - PW discusses the rise of zombies in fiction (pun intended *g*):

<http://tinyurl.com/lqafc7>

Huffington Post article on the increasing scholarship of the romance genre by academics:

<http://tinyurl.com/m3v557>

Compiled by Nalini Singh, New York Times bestselling author and web junkie:

www.nalinisingh.com

A ROMANTIC RETREAT FROM GO TO WHOA

By Kris Pearson

RWNZ's 16th Annual Conference launches at 8.45 Friday August 21st. That's the 'serious' workshop day with three top-selling authors sharing their knowledge – and two of them are New York Times best-sellers.

You already know that our own Fiona Brand and Nalini Singh will be joined by American guest Mary Jo Putney for an exceptional day of storytelling, publishing info, fantasy writing and world-building. Because the big lecture room at Waipuna is always a little under-utilised on Friday, we've invited you to let writer friends know that there's something world-class going on for a laughably low price. \$235 includes GST, lunch, and three fantastic writers, so we hope some of your contacts take advantage of such a great opportunity. (It's not just that we're being generous – a few more enrolments would be good financially, and we might attract some of them as future members, too. Win-win-win...) From 7.30 Friday it's the Cocktail Party – your chance to meet overseas guests, speakers and all the delegates. Wearing something lacy and/or leathery is optional – and fun...

Eat breakfast in the dark

You'll need to so you can get to the early 7am Saturday workshop with agent Melissa Jeglinski of The Knight Agency. (Or you've ten minutes afterwards to gulp a muesli bar).

Bring two copies of the first page of your novel – 12-point Courier New, double-spaced, 3cm margins, just as you'd submit it to a real editor. Last year we had a couple of clever bunnies who thought tiny type and mini margins would get more on the page. Yeah – but it wasn't readable. Gracie will read out one copy. Melissa will comment. It's invaluable to see what she finds interesting, and to hear how other people write. Keep it anonymous if you like.

At 8.10 there's a quickie welcome for first-timers with Kylie Short. When you register and collect your goodie bag from the registration desk (at the far right-hand end of the corridor from reception) you'll spot a notice saying where this will be.

8.30 and we're seriously under way. President Pat will welcome you and introduce our stellar line-up of speakers. Then it's Harlequin Romance 101 – an overview of what this huge romance publisher is currently seeking.

Mary Jo Putney follows with 'The Warrior Poet and the Triune Goddess' – how to create heroes who are strong but appealing, and heroines who aren't too stupid to live.

Mary Jo continues after morning tea with her second workshop – 'Storytelling'. It's a look at plot, character,

pacing and more – and how a great story is more than a sum of its parts.

Then we split up for your choice of these three –

- Writing for Category with Melissa Jeglinski. Melissa was 17 years with Silhouette, and became Senior Editor before embarking on her current career as an acquiring agent. Her many years of category experience are yours to share.
- Marketing and Publicity with Michelle Holman. Harper-Collins chick-lit author Michelle says 'When I was first published I had no idea what to expect when it came to marketing and publicity. My workshop is about my experiences in NZ, what publishing houses want from authors, and what the public expects. And that you can have fun along the way.'
- Getting Your Manuscript Out of the Door with teen authors Sara Hantz and Amanda Ashby. (Don't they sound young!) This workshop will help you get past all the things that are stopping you from sending out your manuscripts, as well as teaching you how to start treating the submission process as a business and not an art form.

After a tasty lunch it's multiple-choice time again.

- Writing the Suspense with Fiona Brand. Fiona is published with Mira, Berkley, Intimate Moments and Desire. Learn the tricks of the trade – how to inject extra tension, immediacy and emotional punch into your story by honing your craft with tried and true techniques.
- Stolen Secrets – What we have Learned – with Karina Bliss, Abby Gaines, Sandra Hyatt and Tessa Radley. The top tips, tricks, cheats and lightbulb moments that these four have found indispensable to getting and staying published with Superromance, Desire and NASCAR.
- Writing to Your Strengths – Trish Morey (Harlequin Presents) and Yvonne Lindsay (Silhouette Desire) are running an interactive workshop so you can identify what you really do best. Then you can write to your strengths and take your weaknesses along for the ride.

We'll break for afternoon tea, and then Melissa Jeglinski from The Knight Agency will explain the role of an agent – what she needs from you, and what you can expect from her. Melissa has offered to 'be' one of

our most special raffle prizes, so buy your tickets earlier in the day and be in to win breakfast with Melissa early Sunday morning – a special one-on-one extended pitch opportunity that's worth gold to any aspiring writer.

After that it's AGM time and Saturday Raffle Draw time – followed by informal author chats. Buttonhole the writer you'd most like to talk with. These are half-hour small-group discussions where you can share time with the authors you most admire.

7.30 - The Awards Dinner. Here we honour the RWNZ members who've finalised in the year's contests and worked hard for our organisation. Find out who won The Clendon Award for 2009. Enjoy a sumptuous meal, fine wine and great company. This year's dress theme is 'a touch of fantasy' – which could be anything from a great costume to just a fake tattoo or outrageous jewellery you've never dared wear. But go on – you're among friends – be brave.

Sunday 8.45. Yawn... stretch... and find your seat again because after a few minutes house-keeping, the published authors will depart for Mary Jo's workshop. She wants to keep it casual – just a friendly chatty get-together where you can all swap experiences and information. She'd like some questions please. It would be a real help if you could email some ahead of time to Pat at rwnzpresident@xtra.co.nz.

The rest of us will stay in the main lecture room for Gracie Stanners' workshop 'Critiquing a Manuscript: Making it Sing'. Gracie writes technical documentation by day and paranormal romantic suspense by night. In her workshop she'll be covering: Competitions – what the score-sheets tell us. Critiquing in a group – the good, the bad and the ugly. Critiquing with partners – the ups and down of honest commentary. And critiquing your own WIP – tips and tricks to seeing what's really there.

Split-up time again –

After morning tea it's your choice of

- Writing the historical – Mary Jo Putney. New York Times best-seller, nine times a RITA finalist and twice a winner, Mary Jo has published thirty books in the last twenty-plus years. Many of these have been historical fantasies, including the acclaimed Fallen Angel series.
- Writing the paranormal - with New York Times and USA Today best-selling author Nalini Singh. What makes a strong paranormal romance? What you can do to make your proposal stand out? What's the current state of the paranormal market? Nalini has answers, and invites you to come prepared with further questions.
- Writing Romantic Love Scenes – Jenny Yates, short story and erotica writer. Jenny's aim is to have fun while showing everyone how to get over themselves when writing that love scene.

Really do it justice, know how and when to write it, what triggers it, and what makes it romantic.

Harlequin Mills & Boon's "Let's Do Lunch"

Phew! Just a couple of days before I wrote this article we finally had the good news that we'd have a Harlequin Editor at A Romantic Retreat after all. It'll be lovely having the ladies from Sydney, but Mary Teresa Hussey, executive editor of Silhouette Books in New York is the icing on the cake. Enjoy a great lunch with free books, find out who the three winners of a full manuscript request from the Harlequin on-line pitches are, catch up on other Harlequin news and have some fun.

And some more fun – Romantic Cliches that Drive Readers Nuts!

Susan Napier, author of 36 books for Harlequin Presents, will share things that drive romance-readers individually crazy – words and situations that jolt them out of the author's carefully-crafted fantasies, and into real-life book-throwing tantrums. This is an amusing look at the annoying clichés, phrases, plots and themes that commonly inspire the most vitriol from die-hard romance fans.

Getting Serious now... Taking your Writing to the Next Level.

Prolific and multi-published authors Daphne Clair and Robyn Donald let you in on their advanced techniques for honing your manuscript. Give it the special edge that can lift it from the slush pile and gain an editor's attention. Many students at their Kara School of Writing have gained contest placings and eventual publication.

Question and Answer Panel. Here's your chance to ask questions of some of our guests and speakers. This year, to save time and keep questions easy to hear, we'd like them ahead of time please so we can read them through the microphone. Email them to kris.p@paradise.net.nz or put them in the special box at conference. Ask anonymously if you like. It's a great way to learn, so make the most of all our top romantic brains.

And the Sunday Raffles. Boo-hoo – must be almost going-home time – but there are some wonderful prizes up for grabs. Some have been donated by our generous sponsors. Some are from RWNZ members and local chapters. Some have been donated by authors overseas who hear we run a great conference and want to be part of it. Be sure you have space in your luggage, just in case.

(Reminders: bring raffle money, books to donate to the second-hand table, two copies of your first page for Melissa's early-morning workshop, a \$10 note so you can easily order your CD of conference photos, emergency breakfast rations, and plenty of staying power.)

MEMBER SUCCESSES

Compiled by Tyree Bidgood

Official Releases - August New Releases

Tea For Two by **Shelley Munro** - Samhain Publishing (print) 25 Aug

Having the Billionaire's Baby by **Sandra Hyatt**

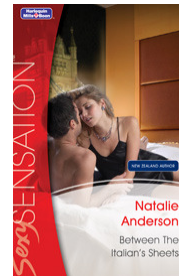
Magnate's Make-Believe Mistress by **Bronwyn Jameson**

Valente's Baby by **Maxine Sullivan**

Outback Grooms by **Emma Darcy**

Between the Italian's Sheets by **Natalie Anderson**

Single Father: Wife & Mother Wanted by **Sharon Archer**



Member Successes

Sold

Hélène Young has just signed a two book contract with Hachette Australia. **Border Lines**, a romantic suspense novel set in North Queensland in Australia, will be released in March 2010.

Zana Bell has sold to Harlequin Superromance! Her debut, **Tempting the Negotiator**, will be released in March 2010.

Yvonne Lindsay has had continuing success with two contract offers. One for a new trilogy to be released mid-late next year and the other for a continuity story mid year...

Cherie Skinner wa Harriet Hamblin has sold a short erotic story Accent Books Ltd. It will be published in an anthology entitled **Ultimate Curves** and will be available at their website: www.xcitebooks.com in August.

Signed

Our **Gracie Stanners** has signed with Nephele Tempest at The Knight Agency!!!!

And **Karen Christie** has signed with Emmanuelle Alspaugh from Judith Ehrlich Literary Management!!!!

Competitions

Yvonne Lindsay's February 2008 release, **Tycoon's Valentine Vendetta**, came third in the RWA chapter, Romance Writers Ink (Tulsa, Oklahoma) More Than Magic Sensual Contemporary category.

Abby Gaines is a double Gold Acorn Finalist! Contemporary Single Title AND Mainstream.

Sandii Manning has WON the Magnolia State Romance Writers Dixie competition in the CONTEMPORARY section.

Kamy Chetty finished SECOND in The Fab Five Contest – Series Contemporary for **The Consultant's Heartbreak Emergency**

And in more great news . . . as we went to the printers Nalini Singh's **Branded by Fire** hit the the New York Times list and the USA Today Bestseller list. Yay!!

The Clendon finalists have also been announced, see page 10 for details.

Please email submissions to this page to, Tyree at rocker.t@xtra.co.nz. by 13th of each month.

WRITING SOFTWARE

By Natalie Anderson

It was all Anne Stuart's fault. I was at my most vulnerable. Between books, I'd just finished and submitted, I was procrastinating from starting the next. Now I must tell you that every time I finish a book I am beset with anxiety – of the 'what will my editor think' variety – usually culminating in the 'it's so awful she'll never want another so I'd better come up with a completely different kind of story to send to someone else' paranoia. So I plot YA, crime, mainstream women's, bitchy chick lit – seriously – anything to get my head out of the old and refresh for the new. In that week or so post submission I'm working on a zillion different ideas and they all seem to get big and unwieldy and start to fall out of my head.

Anyway, at that moment the latest Romance Writers Report (The RWA monthly mag – June 2009 issue) landed in my letterbox. And there in the 'Writers on Writing' section was an interview with Anne Stuart. Now I love reading about other writers' work methods – just as I love reading call stories – it is interesting and motivational. And in just one sentence she got me –

"I have a huge weakness for writing software, and I've used most of them. My current favourite (and has been for a while) is Power Structure."

Well, there you have it. I didn't need to waste my extremely-limited writing time by testing them myself – Anne Stuart has used most of them already! And if this Power Structure is good enough for her, it'll definitely be good enough for me. (Ok I admit it – I thought Anne rocked at the conference a couple of years ago – I loved her straight talking). Anyway, what tipped the balance was when she said she likes the *"whole character building stuff"* – and as far as I'm concerned the characters are the books – and I am all for understanding my characters better, knowing them better, making them more rounded, more complex... and hopefully more compelling.

Now I know I could be filling in all those character sheets and stuff, I have a million different versions on A4 from a workshop – but I'm a digital convert – I want interactive, I want little boxes I can fill in and then manipulate. I lose little pieces of paper I write notes on. Yes, I admit it, I love my computer – I want to play!!!

So I Googled Power Structure and got totally caught at a weak moment when I saw I could not only get Power Structure (the structure thing) but Power Writer (the word processing thing) as well as an audio CD lecture of Swain's and DVDs on Vogler's hero's journey etc. All for a sale price! Ok it was actually quite a lot but it said 'sale' and that's what counts. So I clicked the 'buy' button and waited.

Then I asked myself what the hell I was doing? Why would anyone need writing software? Let's face it - you don't need *any* kind of software. Pen and paper will do the trick – has done for centuries. But hey I'm a lefty and my handwriting sucks – not even I can read it half the time.

But good old Word does it too doesn't it? Open a page and start typing.

But I manage to get that messy too. I write a fast draft – I have the opening, I usually have the end and parts of the middle and I get them down in skeleton form asap. I jump around all over the place. And although I know what I want each scene to mean I can then be dumb enough to forget what I've jotted at one point 10 pages on.

So, how handy to have it written in a note on the side – that doesn't affect my word count. Yes, the thing that sold me on it is so basic – it's the 'non-story text' box on the side where I can detail the plot point (and the WHY of the point and what the scene needs to do). Anything else is a bonus.

But actually I found a good deal of bonus. Power Structure is basically an outlining tool. You open it up and from the off there are a number of structures you can choose from – novel, screenplay, plays, TV structure, or the mythic hero's 12 steps a la Vogler. You can start by clicking on a tab to detail plot points, or theme or character notes. You can start any way in – and once you get going you can modify almost all the terms within it, add your own character questions (and delete theirs) and so on. The flexibility is pretty cool and I've found it very easy to use. And it has the films Casablanca and Erin Brockovich broken down – reading those is a useful way to understand the software and how it's meant to be used. (I then had to watch Casablanca again too – no hardship there). Basically it's all about organising your thoughts and, as a former

librarian, I'm all for organisation! Then you can sort them, see what's missing, and discover things you hadn't thought of.

Once you have your structure in place, you write your novel in a processor (like Power Writer).

Now I'm not convinced it's good to start plugging your stuff into Power Structure to get your outline before you start to actually write the story. For one thing, it can be too easy to procrastinate by fiddling with the structure thing for ages, pretending you're working really hard but you're never actually starting.

I think a lot of the serious analysis needs to come *after* you've gotten a fair amount of a rough draft down. This is because (for me anyway) – I have to write a lot to get to know my characters.

But you end up with a fabulous outline – one that you can change really, really easily and you can have so much fun looking at it in different ways it helps you think of yet more ways or tricks or turns to make things more interesting. It will make you think about each scene – the why, how, purpose of every one, ditto the characters and it will make you think very hard about the journeys within the story. I know, you do anyway, right? But now all there on the portable screen in front of you – I think this is fantastic.

There are of course, many, many other software programs out there. Another biggie is Dramatica – but that one starts by getting you to answer up to 350+ questions about your book. I don't know about you, but I wouldn't be able to answer a ton of them if I hadn't written half of it first.

M&B Romance author Fiona Harper uses Writer's Café – *"I'm quite visual, so I like charts and such like. I have toyed around with what I call my "plot board" for quite a few years now. Basically, it's a cork pin board which I litter with different coloured index cards - place to keep a basic structure of the book that I can see in a glance and where I can just scribble down ideas on a scrap of paper and pin them next to the relevant section of the book so I don't forget them. I like Writers' Café because it has a computer version of my cork board - but portable(!) and I can see all the plot elements in one long line, with the main plot and subplots and story structure headings and character motivation etc. I tend to use it when I get stuck and I need to help myself visualise the book in some way to see where the holes are or where I've taken a wrong turn."* – Again, it's all about the organisation. And yes, even in short contemporary categories there can be so much going on. I always feel like I'm spinning so many plates on sticks – it's nice to

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have 'someone' else holding a few for me so I can get back to them at leisure and not worry about them falling and shattering. And I was a plot board person too – or a 'coloured post-it notes on a huge piece of newsprint' person – but having this on my laptop is soooooo much better.

Now I'm not going to witter on with a breakdown of everything available. For a review site ranking ten different writing software products try going here: <http://creative-writing-software-review.toptenreviews.com/>

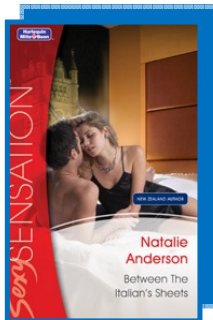
Most have a free online demo or free 30 day trial.

If you're looking for something to give you a kick start or just to re-energise your work routine, why not take a peek and see what you think?

Now I've sold 11 books already without needing this. Do I really need it now? Maybe not, but so much of the joy in writing is about stretching ourselves right? Well, it is for me. And learning – always learning and striving to write better, deeper, stronger. This is a tool that I think will help with that. And definitely, for those books that tease me in my post-submission zombie state, I need something like this to stop all those ideas trickling away. Then maybe one day I'll actually get to write them. Because here's the thing, none of these software packages will write the book for you. Nothing can write the book for you, but you. One word at a time. But it might help you to see where you're going.

Happy writing!

Natalie's latest release **BETWEEN THE ITALIAN'S SHEETS** is available in NZ in August. She is hard at work on her 12th M&B title and happily playing with Power Structure. For her latest news, excerpts and more go to her website <http://www.natalie-anderson.com>



Between The Italian's Sheets . .
Infamous Italian Luca Bianchi has sworn off women and is dedicated to his million-dollar business. Yet Emily Dodds' unadorned beauty and closeted lifestyle are tempting him... Luca's body has woken, and it's taunting him to show her a good time!

Emily's always had to be Miss Sensible. With Luca, Miss Sassy wants to come out to play - and for once she's going to let her! Exquisite nights between his sheets are all Luca can offer. But now Emily's tasted such sweetness - how can more be forbidden?

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Compiled by PDR Lindsay-Salmon, aka Patricia Salmon

Check out the new Harlequins

- **Teen** 'Not necessarily pure romance'
- **Nocturne Bites** Paranormals - vampires etc, e-book format.
- **Historical Undone** History and sex, e-book format.

Details at www.charlequin.com

Romance Anthologies: Check to see what is wanted. www.newconcordepress.com

Space Opera Romance Anthology: 25 -30,000 words. Details: www.samhainpublishing.com

INTERNATIONAL CONTEST NEWS

Compiled by Lisa Elkind-Gardiner

Lisa's Pick-The HARLEQUIN "I HEART PRESENTS" WRITING COMPETITION 2009

Enter: The competition entry must consist of the first chapter and synopsis of a Harlequin Presents or Modern Heat novel. Deadline: The contest is accepting entries now!

Deadline is November 2nd (but I thought I'd post this early for all you Presents fans.)

Prize: The services of a Harlequin Mills & Boon editor for one year! (Two runners up will win an editorial consultation!) <http://www.iheartpresents.com/>

White Rose Publishing Hearts Crossing Contest

Enter: Inspirational (Christian romance) contemporary story of 20-25,000 words which must follow provided synopsis.

Deadline: September 30th. Eligibility: Both Published and Unpublished can enter.

Prize: Winner will receive a publishing contract, with story released in 2010.

<http://whiterosepublishing.blogspot.com/2009/05/short-story-contest-hearts-crossing.html>

Dorchester Fresh Blood Contest

Enter: Finished Horror Novel of 80-90,000 words. Enter complete manuscript plus synopsis.

Deadline: September 30th 2009. Eligibility: Unpublished in print book form.

Prizes: A panel of editors will choose winners in a number of different categories such as

<http://www.dorchesterpub.com/>

Kathryn Hayes Love and Laughter Contest

Enter: Any scene in your novel between the hero and heroine which illustrates humour and romance (15 pages max) and summary (2pg max)

Deadline: October 1st. Eligibility: Unpublished writers

Fee: \$30 US. Prize: \$75

<http://www.rwanyc.com/Love-LaughterContest.html>

20th Emily Contest

Enter: First 35 pages of a romance or woman fiction novel.

Deadline: October 7th. Eligibility: Unpublished writers

Fee: \$30. Prize: 1st Place: Emily Brooch All finalists win a critique.

<http://whrwa.com/emily/>

Oklahoma-Romance Writers- Finally a Bride Contest

Eligibility: Unpublished 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.

Enter: first 30 pp + synopsis. Fee: \$30 US

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August 2009

GETTING TO CONFERENCE

Compiled by Kylie Short

Whether you're a "local" or flying in from overseas, getting to the Waipuna Hotel and Conference Centre to attend this year's conference can be an issue, especially if you don't know the area very well and can't bear the thought of negotiating Auckland traffic (been there, done that, and would like to avoid it if at all possible!).

If you have access to the RWNZ Yahoo Groups loop I'd suggest finding out who is also coming to the conference and link up with someone to share the costs, especially if you're flying in. The best option seems to be sharing a shuttle – the price is usually a fixed rate (regardless of the time it takes to get there) and guarantees you door-to-door service.

Here are a variety of alternate options to driving yourself...

NZ'ers coming into Auckland:

Northliner Express

Northliner brings you the most comprehensive and frequent bus timetable from Auckland City to destinations throughout Northland. All of our services travel the most direct routes so you can enjoy the most express travel possible! The company proudly operates a fleet of luxury late model coaches. All coaches are air-conditioned, video-equipped, have large panoramic windows and reclining seats for your comfort.

Phone: 64 9 307 5873 Fax: 64 9 307 5882 Email: info@northliner.co.nz

Web: www.northliner.co.nz

Intercity Coachlines

Information about routes and pricing available from their website or contact phone numbers.

Phone: 64 96231503 Fax: 64 96385774 Email: info.intercitygroup.co.nz Web: www.intercity.co.nz

nakedbus.com

Information about routes and pricing available from their website or contact phone number.

Web: www.nakedbus.com Phone: 090062533

NZ'ers & International visitors flying in:

Supershuttle

Supershuttle can take you door to door, servicing every flight, everyday with competitive prices.

Email: reservations@supershuttle.co.nz Web: www.supershuttle.co.nz Ph: 0800 748 885

Costs approx. per vehicle are as follows: AKL Intl/Dom - Waipuna Hotel \$90.00 (incl GST)

Waipuna Hotel - AKL Intl/Dom \$80.00 (incl GST)

Please be aware that for any extra pick-ups or drop offs enroute will incur a fee of \$5.00. To book you need to e-mail a date, passenger names and flight details.

For public transport in the Auckland region:

MAXX

Cushla said: "Travelling from the Auckland airports to the Waipuna Hotel and Conference Centre will require catching two to three buses depending on the time of day you are travelling. Please note that public transport from the airports is a Monday to Friday service only. Please email us with specific times and dates to best cater for your needs – email us maxxenquiry@maxx.co.nz or see our website www.maxx.co.nz" Phone: (09) 366 6400

Franklin and Rodney District call free 0800 10 30 80. (MAXX is brought to you by the Auckland Regional Transport Authority (ARTA) of the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) Group)

Alert Taxis

Alert Taxis has a fleet of approximately 200 owner-operated late model vehicles, providing a taxi service to the greater Auckland area. With an excellent reputation, Alert Taxis have focused on providing a safe and professional taxi service for more than forty years.

Alert Taxis also offer Maxi Taxi services for bigger groups. Phone: +64 9 309 2000

Web: www.alerttaxi.co.nz

Auckland Co-operative Taxi Society

Formed in 1947, Auckland Co-operative Taxi Society Ltd is one of New Zealand's original taxi companies. Auckland Co-op Taxis has over 700 vehicles, including late model cars, Business Class Fleet, Airport Shuttles & Tours and 7-11 Seater Group Transport.

Phone: (09) 300 3000 for all your transport needs, including Airport "Meet & Greet" or book online at www.cooptaxi.co.nz. Phone: (09) 300 3000.

Fax: (09) 300 3111. Web: www.cooptaxi.co.nz

Corporate Cabs

Corporate Cabs offer exceptional service – your courteous driver will open and close your door for you and strive to have you arrive promptly and safely at your destination. All Corporate Cabs are white Ford Fairlines or Holden Statesmans and are kept in immaculate condition. Phone: +64 9 377 0773

Koru Cabs

Koru Cabs cater for the corporate, business and traveller markets. The 'people mover' vehicles seat five to six passengers and offer comfort with the leather interiors with walnut trim, tinted windows, climate air conditioning and alloy wheels. Phone: +64 9 303 2000

Web: www.korucabs.co.nz

*Attendees may also wish to catch the Air Bus into Auckland's CBD and pick up a bus service to Waipuna Hotel & Conference Centre. The Air Bus stops at both the domestic and international terminals on its route into the city.

Air Bus

Air Bus is an airport transfer service that offers great value fares. The bus leaves Auckland City and Auckland airport every 20 minutes and every 30 minutes after 6pm subject to traffic. The transfers take approximately 60 minutes and start at \$15/adult one way.

To view your closest stop, visit the website listed below.

Phone: 0508 AIRBUS (within NZ) or +64 9 375 4732

Web: www.airbus.co.nz * There are also many rental companies at the airport terminals but mentioned on the Visitors Information site are two local companies.

Rental Cars

Jucy Rentals has branches conveniently located in Auckland City, Auckland Airport, Christchurch and Queenstown. Jucy Rentals have both cars and campervans available. www.jucy.co.nz

Ace Rental Cars operate a large fleet of modern vehicles that are relatively new with moderate mileages. Book online now! www.acerentalcars.co.nz Most of this information was taken from: <http://www.aucklandnz.com>

RWNZ NEWS AROUND THE REGIONS

Regional convenor contacts

AUCKLAND – Frances Housden
email: fhousden@xtra.co.nz

CHRISTCHURCH – Sue Knight
email: sueknight@ihug.co.nz

HAWKE'S BAY – Ginny Suckling
email: ginny.suckling@xtra.co.nz

NELSON – Cherie Skinner & Sally
Astridge
email: bruceastridge@aol.com or
cheriesk@hotmail.com

WAIKATO, BAY OF PLENTY & KING
COUNTRY – Sarah Hamilton:
craigandsarah@clear.net.nz or Lynne
Rasmussen: lyn@lynrasmussen.com

WELLINGTON – Ellie Huse
email: elliehuse@yahoo.com



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 Chapter

The members listened to a very thought provoking talk on Branding by Kevin Findlater at the July meeting and the attendance was excellent. In August we will be preparing for the conference and practicing pitches, so don't forget to bring your pitch along to work on. As usual, the meeting will be held at Three Kings Tennis Pavilion, corner Mt Eden and Mt Albert Roads at 12.30 p.m.

Waikato/B.O.P/King Country

Our June meeting was held in Hamilton at Sarah's home where Craig answered both general and very specific (thanks Liz our resident horror writer) questions relating to crime.

Once again it was great to gather together and just enjoy the company of others who share the same passion. All welcome to our meetings, please contact Liz or Sarah for details.

Nelson

Only four of us made it to July's meeting but we enjoyed viewing the recorded DVD of 'One Hundred Years of Passion with Mills & Boon'.

August's meeting will be on Saturday the 8th, at 2pm at 248H Annesbrook Drive, Nelson.

Wellington

Our July meeting was hurriedly moved to Rachel's home – Ellie and Diana were ill, Mig was singing somewhere, and Giovanna was in Europe. But Gracie came down from Waihi, President Pat joined us from Carterton, and we managed to have our usual good time.

Our exercise for the month was "Enhancing the first line" as per Donald Maas. A number of first lines were read out and discussed. Some of us discovered we've improved our writing skills over the years!

At the next meeting, members are encouraged to bring an item for our famous coffee/chocolate Conference raffle basket.

As Ellie has now hosted us in her home for six years, we think it might be time to give her a break. Therefore the next meeting will be at 1 pm, Saturday August 1st, at the changed venue of Meryl's home, 250 Airlie Road. (Turn into Airlie Road off SH1, 4kms north of Plimmerton. Go over the little bridge and it's the second entrance on the left – Homelands Kennels. It's the blue house at the top of the driveway.)

Christchurch

Our brave, core group of critiquers continue to face the cold on Thursday evenings – minus Gwen, who escaped to warmer climes for the winter! – and several of us are gearing up for the Conference. For meeting details contact: sueknight@ihug.co.nz

