

# Heart to Heart

## Meet Diana Ventimiglia, Associate Editor, Silhouette Books, New York Interview by Bronwyn Jameson

In the last few years the ranks of authors writing for the popular category romance line Silhouette Desire has swelled with an influx of down-under talent. Among the numbers are New Zealanders Nalini Singh, Yvonne Lindsay, Jan Colley and Tessa Radley, while Fiona Brand has also contracted to write her first book for the New York-edited series.



This month, Bronwyn Jameson caught up with newly promoted Desire editor Diana Ventimiglia to see if there are openings for any more new authors – the answer is good news! – and to see what the editors are looking to acquire.

**Bron:** Have you always been a booklover? What were your favourite books growing up?

Diana: I've been a booklover since I could read! I used to read a book or more a week when I was growing up. Everything from Nancy Drew to Superfudge, to Their Eyes Were Watching God. My favourite was Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. I remember staying up till 2am because I couldn't put it down. But I've always been a fan of the happy ending. I am a sucker for anything romance, so I read authors such as Lynda Curnyn and Nora Roberts.

**With your love of books and reading, did you always want to work in publishing? Was that a long-time ambition?**

Believe it or not, I wanted to be a doctor growing up...until I realized you had to touch people and be around blood, so I said No Thank You! I almost pursued law, but my passion for writing and literature was too much to push aside. Once I declared my major as English in college, I knew I wanted to be involved with books...whether I was editing them or writing them.

**How long have you been working for Harlequin/Silhouette and is this your first position in publishing?**

I'll be at Harlequin three years in April. This is my first position in book publishing, although I was a writer for some local newspapers in Long Island, New York for a bit. So I was familiar with deadlines and shaping stories.

**You have recently been promoted from Editorial Assistant to Assistant Editor and then to Associate Editor – congratulations on the latest promotion! Can you tell us, briefly, the difference in duties between those jobs?**

Thank you Bron! As an Editorial Assistant you're becoming familiar with the  
*Continued on page 4*

## Inside this Issue...

**Meet Diana Ventimiglia** — *Bronwyn Jameson* interviews Silhouette editor Diana Ventimiglia.....1

**From the Pres**—RWNZ President *Pat Snellgrove*.....3

**7 Habits of Highly Successful Authors**—Australian writing tutor *Suzanne Harrison* tells how to get set for success.....6

**Digital Romance**—*Emily Veinglory* brings news and views from the world of e-publishing.....8

**World of Romance Publishing**.....9

**Literary Agents 101**—*Sara Hantz* demystifies the process of finding an agent.....10

**Writing Markets**.....12

**Investigating the Crime Scene**—How to write plausible police investigations in your romance, by *Marianne Petit*.....13

**Contest News**—contests from RWNZ and around the world.....14

**New Releases**.....16

**RWNZ Regions**—find an RWNZ group near you.....19

**The Naked Writer**.....20

## ROMANCE WRITERS OF NEW ZEALAND, INC.

**President:** Pat Snellgrove  
email: [pat.snellgrove@xtra.co.nz](mailto:pat.snellgrove@xtra.co.nz)

**Vice President:** Gracie Stanners  
email: Gracie Stanners  
[graciestanners@orcon.net.nz](mailto:graciestanners@orcon.net.nz)

**Secretary:** Sally Rigby  
email: [sallymrigby@hotmail.com](mailto:sallymrigby@hotmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Bronwen Evans  
email: [bronwene@xtra.co.nz](mailto:bronwene@xtra.co.nz)

**Membership:** Emily Gee  
P O Box 4085, Blenheim 7242  
email:  
[membership@romancewriters.co.nz](mailto:membership@romancewriters.co.nz)

**Publicity:** Cathy Sneyd  
email: [csneyd@xtra.co.nz](mailto:csneyd@xtra.co.nz)

**Immediate past president:**  
Joanne Graves  
email: [joanne.graves@gmail.com](mailto:joanne.graves@gmail.com)

**Editor:** Abby Gaines  
email: [abby@abbygaines.com](mailto:abby@abbygaines.com)

**Website:** Kamy Chetty  
email: [kamychetty@yahoo.com](mailto:kamychetty@yahoo.com)

**Principal contest coordinator:**  
Ellie Huse  
email: [elliehuse@yahoo.com](mailto:elliehuse@yahoo.com)

**Founder:** Jean Drew  
(founded RWNZ September 1990)

### Romance Writers Of New Zealand Inc.

P.O. Box 10264, Dominion Road,  
Auckland

**Heart to Heart** is the official publication of Romance Writers of New Zealand, published eleven times per year.

No part may be reproduced or used for profit by RWNZ or others without prior permission from the editor. The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of Romance Writers of New Zealand, Inc., or of the editor. While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, no responsibility will be taken by the publisher or the editor for inaccurate information.

To subscribe to the RWNZ online loop, a loop dedicated to the support of its writers by and for members, send a blank email to [NZromance-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:NZromance-subscribe@yahoo.com) or contact [Giovanna@xtra.co.nz](mailto:Giovanna@xtra.co.nz) for information about the Loop.

To join RWNZ's Critique Partner Register, run jointly with RW Australia, email Rachel Robinson at [rachelrobinson@dodo.com.au](mailto:rachelrobinson@dodo.com.au)

*This is my last issue as editor of Heart to Heart.* I've enjoyed the job greatly, but deadlines are getting the better of me, as you'll have noticed from the tardiness of the last couple of issues, and so it's time to hand over to someone else.

Thankfully, two wonderful people have volunteered to step in. The interim editor will be Kate Gordon, a talented writer and editor who used to edit *Heart to Heart* a few years ago. Kate's one of those people who seems to juggle a million things, and I'm grateful that she's added this newsletter to her mix.

Soraya Nicholas has said she'll take over the newsletter in 2009—naturally, I bit her hand off in my eagerness to accept her offer! It's always great having newer members (though Soraya's not *that* new!) stepping into our many volunteer roles—it helps keep the organisation fresh, and there's much to be learned from seeing the different ways people do things. I often have to concede that my way isn't the best way—and that's never easy for me...

We do still need someone to provide a round-up of contest news each month for the newsletter. We can give you the sources for the information, you just need to comb through it and find the contests that are of most interest to RWNZ members. Please email me [abby@abbygaines.com](mailto:abby@abbygaines.com) if you're interested in taking on this job.

I hope you enjoy this first issue of *Heart to Heart* for 2008. We're off to a cracking start with **Bronwyn Jameson's** insightful front-page interview with Silhouette editor **Diana Ventimiglia**.

On page 6, Aussie writing teacher **Suzanne Harrison** shares the 7 Habits of Highly Successful Authors. I read this article elsewhere and was so impressed by its simple commonsense that I asked Suzanne for permission to use it in *Heart to Heart*.

**Emily Veinglory** has offered to supply regular updates on the romance e-publishing market, something of interest to many of our members. Her first contribution, *Digital Romance*, is on page 8.

I was very excited to receive **Sara Hantz's** article *Literary Agents 101*, which you'll find on page 10. I've had two agents in my short literary career, so I know a little about the perils and pitfalls, and I thought Sara really homed in on what writers need to know.

If you're writing romantic suspense, or just want to include a crime in your regular romance story, check out *Investigating the Crime Scene* on page 13. American writer **Marianne Pettit** has done the legwork to provide you with the basics of crime scene investigation, plus some good sources of further material.

Ciao!

...Abby



**Heart to Heart** welcomes contributions of interviews, articles, news, etc from RWNZ members and from people with expertise relevant to our members. If you'd like to contribute, please contact editor Abby Gaines on [abby@abbygaines.com](mailto:abby@abbygaines.com) to discuss.

Contributions should ideally be previously unpublished. Copyright to previously unpublished contributions reverts to the author two weeks after publication in *Heart to Heart*, or earlier by arrangement.

# From the Pres

**H**appy New Year!

Firstly I must apologise for the shortness of this report. This is the silly season of motor racing and we are currently on the road with the Toyota Racing Series.



I hope that everyone had a fantastic Christmas and New Year with lots of fun with family and friends. Did you make any New Year resolutions? As usual, I thought about it but never actually put pen to paper. For those who did make the effort, here's hoping that you achieve your goals.

Being the start of the New Year, it is time to think about contests and conferences. The first contest you should be thinking about is the Clendon Award. In this newsletter you will find the entry form, so those of you who are intending to enter should get on to finishing the damn book and sending it off to this unique competition for a full, unpublished romance manuscript.

I hope that at least one of your resolutions was to write more, submit more books and to get published. Even though I didn't write anything down, the above are really what I want to do. I have books languishing on my computer which are nearly finished. I need to get them finished. Perhaps we should have another Book in Four months challenge. What do you say? Let me know via the NZRomance loop if you want another one of these. The last one was run by Giovanna who did a fabulous job of mentoring us, and all those who took part achieved amazing totals.

## Conference News

We are pleased to announce that Margie Lawson – [www.margielawson.com](http://www.margielawson.com) – has agreed to be our keynote speaker for the 2008 conference to be held at the Waipuna Hotel on the weekend of 15-17 August 2008. Go to her site and have a look at what she does. She should be an awesome speaker. From the communication we have had with her, she sounds like a terrific person and willing to help us in whatever way she can. I look forward to meeting her and learning from her.

We can also confirm that Samhain Publishing has offered to attend both the Australian and New Zealand conferences. Not sure if we have any authors with them, but they are definitely another publisher to look at for your precious books.

## Heart to Heart

Many thanks to Kate Gordon, a former editor of Heart to Heart who has kindly agreed to step into the editor role on an interim basis for next month, and to Soraya Nicholas, who has announced her willingness to take over at the start of 2009. Heart to Heart is RWNZ's primary means of communicating with our entire membership, and we really appreciate these two ladies stepping forward to take on this important role.

We do still need someone to do the monthly reporting for Heart to Heart on contests throughout the industry—we can give you the sources for the info, we just need someone to sift through it and sort out the contests that are relevant to RWNZ members each month. Please contact me or Abby Gaines or Kate Gordon ([kate@relishcomm.co.nz](mailto:kate@relishcomm.co.nz)) if you can help.

## Clendon Award

We also need volunteers (living in Auckland) to help out with the work involved in getting the Clendon Award competition organised. If you haven't entered the contest, and you can give half a day a week for a month or so to help get the entries sorted and sent out to the readers, please contact me or go direct to Barbara Clendon on [reading@barbarasbooks.co.nz](mailto:reading@barbarasbooks.co.nz), or on 09 263 5002. There may also be other jobs associated with this fantastic contest – chat to Barbara and she can tell you how much commitment is required for the various tasks.

Hope to have more to report next time

Pat Snellgrove  
RWNZ President



# Diana Ventimiglia...continued from page 1

publishing industry. It's very much a learning experience, and you dive right into it. You learn the criteria for the lines you're working on and begin making decisions on query letters and other materials based on that knowledge. There is quite some administrative work, but you do get to delve into the creative side. You have the opportunities to write and eventually start editing material.

Becoming an Assistant Editor is a lot of fun, because now you can start acquiring authors. You'll start to expand your author/agent relationships, as well as work closely on the development of editorial for your authors. As an Associate Editor, my biggest task is acquisitions. I am on the prowl for new authors and fresh material. Another part of my job is to provide my authors with the best editorial support I can give. It is my job to make sure I build my authors and market their material to gain more readership.

## Have you acquired any new authors yet?

As of now I haven't acquired any new authors, although I have been working closely with a few promising authors on revisions. I am always looking for new material. So send away!

## How many authors are you working with? Are they all Silhouette Desire authors or do you edit for other lines as well?

Currently I am working with 13 authors. As the year goes on I will acquire about another 10. My author base is mostly Desire; however I work on Historicals, as well as Romantic Suspense.

## What do you love most about being an editor?

I love knowing that I helped shape an author's book. It's a great feeling to see the finished product after you've been working closely with someone on its development.

## Can you tell us what excites you when reading a query or partial? What would you love to find when you open tomorrow's mail?

I love reading layered plots, not just the generic marriage of convenience or secret pregnancy. I think it's difficult to mix in elements without losing your characters or premise, so I always love getting my hands on a potential juicy read. I would love to open my mail tomorrow and find a near flawless manuscript.

## What elements are essential in a Silhouette Desire?

Some of the most important elements in a Desire are conflict, drama, passion, and a strong alpha male. These are also the same things I see a lot of authors having a hard time with. I think the most difficult ones to master are conflict and the alpha male. Some au-

thors are hesitant to have their heroes say or do certain things because they worry he will sound too harsh. Conflict can be tricky as well. It's important for authors to know that there needs to be more than just the characters' emotional reservations that keep them apart and bring them together in the end. I think authors just need to have fun. I suggest picking up different Desires and getting an idea of how to incorporate such elements.

## What exciting projects have you worked on that readers should look out for in 2008?

I would absolutely highlight the *Royal Seductions* series by Michelle Celmer. This miniseries is unique in that we'll be publishing the first two books of the series in the same month, June 2008. In *The King's Convenient Bride*, the King discovers the marriage of convenience he enters quickly turns very personal. In *The Illegitimate Prince's Baby*, the Prince realizes that the woman he has suddenly gotten pregnant is not who he thinks she is.

*The Kings of California* by Maureen Child is a series about three affluent brothers who find love in unexpected places. Maureen always delivers sexy and conflict driven stories so this is something to watch out for. They will be published in March, April, and May 2008.

The last project I have worked on that I'm very excited about is a six book continuity titled *Park Avenue Scandals*. This series will kick off in July 2008 with Maureen Child and continue through December 2008 with Anna DePalo concluding the series. The stories take place in a lush Park Avenue apartment complex where scandals and passion are a plenty. Murder, secret pregnancies, blackmail, and marriages of convenience are just some of the elements that make these books engaging reads.

## And, to finish up, a few fun questions:

### On my desk you'll always find...

A picture of my fiancé and me, a cup of coffee, a bottle of water, some kind of chocolate, and a picture of Tom Jones in his glory days. Now that's an alpha male.

### My favourite stories are all...

On one shelf in my bookcase at home.

### The most attractive man in the world is...

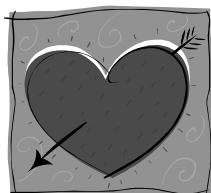
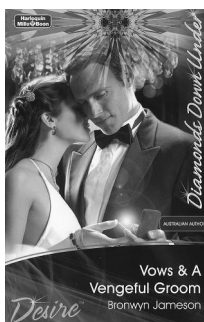
My fiancé, Kevin! (I know, I'm a romantic – what can I say?)

For more information on Desire and the chance to win one of 3 critiques, check out the contest page at [www.diamonds-downunder](http://www.diamonds-downunder) and the Q&A with senior

## Diana Ventimiglia...continued

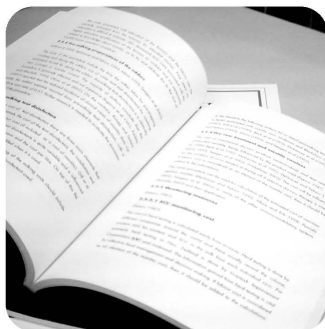
editor Melissa Jeglinski at  
[www.diamondsdownunder.wordpress.com](http://www.diamondsdownunder.wordpress.com)

**Vows & A Vengeful Groom** by Bronwyn Jameson, the first book in the Diamonds Down Under series, is a February HM&B Desire release and available now. Bronwyn is thrilled to be working with Diana on her future Desires.



### the IMAGING centre ltd

FOR ALL YOUR DIGITAL PRINTING NEEDS



Over the past 12 years we have moved with technology and innovation that has kept us up with the most advanced digital printing shops in the country.

In the last 3 months we have taken the lead in technology and can now offer you **economical short run perfect bound books**, ie. novels, family trees, manuals from disk, hard copy in line digitally printed.

For an obligation free discussion or quote,  
please call 09 298 9600 or 0800 IMAGING  
or email us [imaging\\_centre@xtra.co.nz](mailto:imaging_centre@xtra.co.nz)

# RWNZ Member Successes

Compiled by Jean Drew

**Robyn Grady:** Congratulations to Robbie who made the US bestseller list with *The Magnate's Marriage Demand*, her first Desire release! Great going, Robbie.

**Norah Hansen-Hill:** Received a contract offer for two of her books – *Bone Song* and *Relic*, from Drollerie Press. Way to go Norah. Also, writing as Melody Knight, Norah has signed two books with Red Rose Publishing - *Glass Works* and *Of Dragons*. There's no stopping our Norah.



**Jane Beckenham:** Has something else to be proud of - All Romance eBooks has contracted one of her short stories for their front page. Well done, Jane.

**Maxine Sullivan:** Maxine's first Silhouette Desire, *The Millionaire's Seductive Revenge*, was #7 on the Harlequin Top 10 e-books for 2007.

**Jean Drew:** Jean has signed another contract with Highland Press to re-publish her Cornish book, *Beats A Wild Heart*. Woohoo!!

**Natalie Anderson:** Natalie has hit the Waldenbooks list with *All Night with the Boss*. Way to go, Natalie.

**Please email news of member successes to [jeandrew@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jeandrew@xtra.co.nz) by the 15th of the month—otherwise, you probably won't make it into this column ♥**

# 7 Habits of Highly Successful Authors

## By Suzanne Harrison

**T**he more I read how the successful authors do it, the more I realise that, like successful people in all walks of life, they all do things in common that contribute enormously to their success. So how can we learn from successful authors to ensure our own success in 2008 and beyond?

We can start by adopting what I call "The 7 Habits of Highly Successful Authors". Adopt these 7 habits and you just may find that 2008 is the year you break through your own writing barriers!

### **1. Write about something you care about.**

Whether you are writing fiction or non fiction, it is imperative you write about something you care about. The successful authors have some emotional connection to their content or story. If you are writing fiction, then write from a place of emotional familiarity. Your genuine experience will come through in your writing and your readers will connect with that. If you are writing a non fiction piece, choose a topic you are passionate or enthusiastic about. After all, if you are going to invest your precious time in what you are writing, you owe it to yourself to write with passion, feeling and enthusiasm.

### **2. Take risks**

Don't be afraid to put your head, or your hands, on the chopping block when you write. In the world of fiction, you will have no doubt heard about creating characters that are "larger than life". That doesn't mean they are giants, it means they go above and beyond and take risks and make decisions that we would not have the courage to take in our own lives. After all, it's not about what we would do when we are tethered by the restrictions of polite behaviour, it's what we would do in our wildest imaginations that make our readers sit up and take notice.

For the non fiction writer, it's time for you to take a stand. Take a view and stick with it, presenting your case with conviction and vigour. No one listens to someone who writes meekly, or with a wishy washy hand. Stick your neck out, and don't be afraid to get it chopped off. All the greatest journalists are the ones who are not afraid to speak their minds. Get into that habit and you're well on your way to being that next great journalist.

### **3. Plan**

This is definitely the most ignored but equally the most important phase of the writing process. Planning is essential to the success of any undertaking and writing is no different. J.K. Rowling spent 5 years planning the entire Harry Potter series before she put pen to paper

on a single word that appeared in the books. If you are writing a short story, novel or screenplay, planning the story before you begin writing is as essential to your success as ink in your pen or power to your laptop.

There are some writers who claim to just start with an image or a sentence and then the whole thing just unfolds before them, but the writers who can do this with any degree of success are few and far between. Take the time to plan out your story, at the very least know where your beginning, middle and end are. The more planning you do, the more enjoyable the writing process and the less rewriting and editing you will have to do. The same goes for non fiction pieces, where it's always advisable to have an outline in place before you write your article or book.

### **4. Write every day**

Joyce Carol Oates said that she would write, even when her soul felt as thin as a playing card, because somehow the act of writing would set it aright. There are going to be times when you just "don't feel like it", but like any other job or activity that is important to you, you must still, somehow, sit down every day and write.

It has been said that it is by sitting down every day to write that one becomes a writer. Stephen King writes every day, including Christmas Day. Whether you are working on a book, story, article or nothing, still sit down and write something every single day. Even if you only write one page every day, that's 365 pages in a year and that's a whole book, isn't it? When you are a writer, you cannot not write, and writing is like breathing. You have an urge to put things down in print, so to keep that fresh and alive, you need to turn that tap on every day. It's more than practice. It's life.

### **5. Be prepared to work hard**

I read somewhere once that John Grisham worked for 4 hours per day and made \$20 million per year. Whether that is true or not (about the hours worked or the money he makes) doesn't matter. It is far more common to hear tales today of the world's most popular commercial authors working their proverbial butts off to keep up with deadlines, promotional commitments and the ins and outs of their everyday lives.

Janet Evanovich gets up and writes every morning at 5am so she can get a full day's writing in before she has to answer mail, emails and deal with her other affairs of business. Jodi Picoult has a wonderful stay-at-home husband who allows her the luxury of writing through school pick ups and travelling for long periods to do research for her novels.

J.K. Rowling also said she (misguidedly) thought that life as an author would be a Jane Austen-type of affair, sitting in a room overlooking a field and writing in anonymity. Of course her life is a whirlwind of book launches, movie premieres, media commitments, school commitments, and of course she has a family with three children. And while we all no doubt wish we had her "problems" it is very obvious that in the early part of the 21st century, the life of an author, successful or not, is a hard-working life.

We are either working hard to get noticed, working hard to stay noticed, or working hard to avoid being noticed. Any way you look at it, if you have an aversion to hard work, you need to look elsewhere. Successful authors work hard. Period.

## 6. Persistence

It is said that persistence outstrips all other virtues. I have a card propped up on my desk that says, "Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go". Almost every successful author I have studied has said that their success is due, at least in some part, to pure persistence and determination.

If your manuscript or article is rejected, rewrite it and submit it again. Or submit it to someone else. The first Harry Potter novel was rejected by every major publishing house before Bloomsbury picked it up for a song.

Even so called "overnight successes" have a story behind them about how many times they were rejected, or how many novels or articles they've written that have no value other than as fire kindling. The authors that succeed are the ones who don't stop until they do. It's that simple. Never give up. Winners never quit, and quitters never win.

## 7. Let it go

And finally when you have written your article, book or screenplay and have submitted it for publication or approval, let it go. If you've done the best you can with it, let it go and trust that it will make its way to where it needs to be. And start something else straight away.

Regardless of whether what you have submitted is accepted or rejected, you are a writer and a writer writes. Once you finish one manuscript start immediately on another. If the one you've sent is picked up, they'll be happy that you've got something new already, and if not you're well on your way to finishing your next manuscript.

So, those are the 7 Habits of Highly Successful Authors. Adopt these habits yourself, and before you know it, you too will join their ranks!

*Suzanne Harrison is the Director and Founder of Writers Central, an innovative online creative writing school and community, offering creative writing, short story, novel and screenplay courses, news, reviews, articles, professional services, competitions and tips for writers. She can be found at <http://www.writerscentral.com.au>.*

*Suzanne is also a popular and inspirational speaker and workshop leader, renowned for her motivational style and her passion for story. She begins her unique teaching process by helping you to hitch your writing arm to your unconscious mind, then guiding you through the basics of story structure before taking you step by step through a process to write award-winning short stories, then onto the ultimate, planning and writing a novel or screenplay that sells.*

# WELCOME

## RWNZ welcomes this month's new members

Deborah Allen	Australia
Marion Havell	Christchurch
Karen Browning	Christchurch
Shirley Wine	Waihi
Allison Withers	Australia
Nikki Benyon	Australia
Melissa Smith	Australia
Jackie Coates	Auckland

# Digital Romance

## News and views from the world of romance e-publishing

**I**t seems as if December was brought to us by the letter 'P' for plagiarism and 'D', both for dragon and 'dropping like flies'.

### [December 1] Plagiarism #1

Accusations surfaced that the e-book *The Edge* by JJ Massa (Linden Bay) borrowed heavily from another writer's Star Trek: Voyager fan-fiction story. The e-book was withdrawn from sale and no further comment has been forthcoming. Other books by the same author remain available at Linden Bay.

### [December 11] Thud #1

E-publisher Mardi Gras closed last August, leaving many authors (as many as 50) with their royalties unpaid. However CEO Teresa Jacobs seemed to think there would be no trouble with her opening a new e-press, called LA Media. An immediate and adverse online reaction seemed to convince her otherwise. The e-publishing arm of this new enterprise was closed down a few days later.

### [December 25] Harlequin promotes e-books

On a more encouraging note, Harlequin demonstrated its commitment to selling in e-book form by giving away a free e-book every day between Xmas and New Year—offering a range of recently released books from each of their major lines. Clearly they feel that if readers get a taste for these free e-books they might just come back for more.

### [December 26<sup>th</sup>] Whiskey Creek Press pays for a round

Whiskey Creek Press is an e-publisher that had previously flirted with vanity press status by passing along a \$90 fee to the author if they wished to make their book available in trade paperback. Having long defended this strategy they have now decided to cover that expense themselves, so long as the title sells at least 50 copies in e-book form.

### [December 13] Plagiarism #2

EPIC (Electronically Published Internet Connection) published the finalists for their e-book awards, the Epies. Unfortunately, a book that should have been withdrawn slipped through the judging and finalled. *A Hidden Passion* by Lucia Logan (Dreamspinner Press) had already been exposed on a book review blog as a thinly paraphrased gay version of *Jane Eyre*. The book had already been withdrawn from sale by the publisher. The category finalists were hurriedly revised.

### [December 28] Samhain Publishing feels the love

Samhain Publishing is currently closed to unagented submissions from new authors. They have also announced: "When we re-open for submissions, we will be refocusing the company's efforts. To that end, we will

re-open to focus only on Romance and all the various subgenres such as romance/erotic romance/erotica as well as the following with romantic elements: fantasy/urban fantasy/science fiction/paranormal."

### [December 29] Thud #2

A satirical blog about the romance world posted a poll for readers to vote for "*which e-book publisher s\*\*t the worst on authors in the wake of going out of business?*" Currently leading the pack is Triskelion at 31%, followed by Mardi Gras at 28%. At first I considered the listing of extant e-press Ocean's Mist a simple mistake—but it proved rather prescient, as by January 10<sup>th</sup> this press's website was down and they too seem to have closed.

### [opening January 31] Firedrakes where?

There are a lot of e-publishers out there, and some of them don't last very long. At first glance, newcomer 'Firedrake Weyr' doesn't look too promising, not least because of the spelling mistakes in their submission guidelines which include: "How too books" "Dr. Suess" and my favourite... part of their definition of the fantasy genre "Think Anne McCafferty, or *Lord of the Rings*". I suspect they mean Anne McCaffrey, the author who *invented* the word 'Weyr'. Yet another dragon-themed e-press—interestingly named Dragon Spell—plans to open on May 5<sup>th</sup>. One hopes this dragon *can* spell.

### [January 7] Cassie Edwards gets bitch-slapped

Lest plagiarism be seen as a vice peculiar to e-book authors, the bloggers at 'Smart Bitches who love Trashy Books' revealed that best selling author Cassie Edwards had cribbed large sections of her Native American historical romances from a wide range of sources. After initially brushing off the allegations Signet Press (part of the Penguin group) conceded: "we will be examining all of Ms. Edwards' books that we publish, and based on the outcome of that review we will take action to handle the matter accordingly." For a full outline of the evidence see:

[http://  
smartbitchestrashy-  
books.files.wordpress.com/2008/01/  
cassieedwards.pdf](http://smartbitchestrashy-books.files.wordpress.com/2008/01/cassieedwards.pdf)

In summary, e-publishers opened and closed—and authors moved between them like migrating herds of lemmings. Authors were caught cutting and pasting by bloggers who have learned to do the same. So it was business as usual in the world of digital romance.

*Emily Veingslory*





# World of Publishing—Industry News

**Managing director of Random House New Zealand** Michael Moynahan has stepped up to chairman of that company, and he has been appointed managing director of

Random House India as well. RH NZ sales and marketing director Karen Ferns will take over day-to-day management of the division as managing director.

**November was a solid month for USA bookstore sales**, with sales rising 7.5%, to US\$1.19 billion, according to estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. The November jump beat the gain in sales for the entire retail segment which rose 6.7% in November. For the first 11 months of the year, bookstore sales were up 0.8%, to \$14.65 billion; sales for all of retail increased 4.3%.

**Independent booksellers in the USA** reported better results in 2007, although most sales gains were modest. Several books were in strong demand across many parts of the country, including *I Am America*, *The Dangerous Book for Boys*, *The Daring Book for Girls* and *Eat, Pray, Love*. The children's book *Gallop*, released by Workman, could have been a bigger hit had it not been out-of-stock for a period.

**The "most literate cities" in the USA** in 2007—determined by per capita booksellers, educational attainment, internet resources, library resources, newspaper circulation, and periodical publications—were

- 1 Seattle, WA
- 2 San Francisco, CA
- 3 Minneapolis, MN
- 3 Cincinnati, OH
- 5 St. Louis, MO
- 6 Portland, OR

- 7 Pittsburgh, PA
- 8 St. Paul, MN
- 9 Cleveland, OH
- 10 Washington, DC
- 10 Denver, CO

**Harlequin is the latest publisher to sign on with DailyLit**, the new service that sends daily e-mail and RSS feeds of book installments to subscribers. Under the agreement, 100 Harlequin backlist titles will become part of the DailyLit service and Daily Lit will make 20 frontlist titles available on a monthly basis. Most titles will be priced under \$5 and will be delivered in daily installments of 1,000 words to a customer's computer or handheld device.

## Revolving Doors – Editor and Agent Changes

After seven years as vp, editorial director at Pocket **Maggie Crawford** will take a "purely editorial role" to focus on acquiring and editing for Pocket, Threshold Editions and Downtown Press as of next January. Pocket publisher Louise Burke says it "stems from her desire to spend more of her time doing what she loves to do and does so effectively."

**Lauren McKenna** has been promoted to executive editor at Pocket, and she will head up the women's fiction program.

After four years as an agent with Levine Greenberg Literary Agency, Los Angeles-based **Jenoyne Adams** has started her own agency, Bliss Literary Agency International. She will focus on middle grade/YA, literary/ethnic-world fiction, and creative nonfiction/women's interest.

Industry information sources include Publishers Weekly, Publishers Marketplace, Cindi Myers Market Newsletter, and RWA e-Notes.



## Members sought for new writers group in Dunedin

Central Dunedin has no Writers groups, and the ones it has had in the past are now inactive or disbanded.

Adrian McCauley and other writers are forming the Dunedin Writers Collective and are looking for writers keen to join. It can be simply for sharing fiction/essays/poetry/articles or doing projects/assignments/"homework"/playing word games.

If anyone is interested or has any ideas then he can be emailed at [diotras@yahoo.com.au](mailto:diotras@yahoo.com.au).

# Literary Agents 101

By Sara Hantz

**U**ndertaking an agent search can be daunting for all writers, whether published or not. Finding a good agent, one you click with, has been compared with finding the right marriage partner. It's an extremely personal decision and one person's *ideal* agent is another person's *monster*.

In this article I hope to provide you with some basic knowledge about literary agents and give you some idea of how to start an agent search and what to look for.

## What is a literary agent?

A literary agent is your business representative. She or he will try to sell your manuscript to a publishing house, handle contract negotiations (to get the best deal possible) and act as a go-between between you and the publisher. Agents make their money primarily from the 15% commission they take after selling your manuscript. For overseas sales commission rates may vary from the standard 15%.

## Why do you need an agent?

If you're writing category romance, then it's not considered essential to have an agent. Some category authors do, and others don't, because Harlequin accepts unagented submissions and their contracts are pretty standard. If you write single title, however, it's widely believed having an agent is the best way to go. An agent will use their insider knowledge to place your manuscript with the right editor. Also, many big publishing houses won't accept unagented submissions, and even if they do it's likely your manuscript will end up in a huge 'slush' pile. According to bestselling author **Erica Orloff**, "I worked as a book editor and knew it was probably foolish to even try to land a book deal without an agent. I've seen slush piles in person. They're an avalanche of manuscripts."

Also, when it comes to negotiating the deal, a good agent can often obtain a higher advance than authors can for themselves. They can also fight for deal points, remove harmless-sounding but deadly clauses, and are familiar with all the legal issues concerning a publishing contract.

## Finding an agent.

Although there are hundreds, if not thousands, of agents out there, not all of them will represent your genre, so finding out which ones do is a good place to start. This can be done in a number of ways. You can find out who the agent is of other authors writing in your genre – by searching online, or visiting the library or bookshops and looking in the acknowledgements pages of books, where authors often thank their agent. Or you can go to specialist websites such as **Agent Query** [www.agentquery.com](http://www.agentquery.com) or **Query Tracker** [www.querytracker.net](http://www.querytracker.net) and gather a list of agents whom

you think would fit with your requirements. You can also subscribe to **Publishers Marketplace** [www.publishersmarketplace.com](http://www.publishersmarketplace.com), a huge database full of information about publishing – including deals made, reviews, agents, writers, editors, and publishing news. It costs \$20US per month (though they do have a free month's trial, which might be sufficient). Alternatively, you can subscribe to their free emails **Lunch Deluxe** and **Daily Deals**.

Once you have compiled a list of suitable agents, check out their websites, so you can get a better idea of what they're like and also find out their submission requirements. Remember to follow their guidelines to the letter. Some agents get over twenty thousand queries a year, and from these may only take on three or four clients. So when they're culling queries, one of their criteria might be people who don't follow their guidelines.

Another way to find out more about an agent is to visit their blog (if they have one). Some high profile agents who blog include **Kristin Nelson; Rachel Vater; Bookends Literary Agency; The Knight Agency; Jennifer Jackson; Lori Perkins; Nathan Bransford; Jonathan Lyons; and Kate Schafer**.

Agents can take anything from five minutes (if it's an email query) to more than a year to respond to your query. And in some cases may never respond at all. So, it's not advisable to query one at a time. Many people will query up to 20 agents, often more, at any one time.

The bad news is, it's at this stage where many people get stuck. It's often said that it's harder to get an offer of representation from an agent than it is a publisher. So, don't be disheartened if you receive a flow of rejections. Don't take it personally. It means that your project is not right for that agent at that particular time. Remember, every rejection is taking you one step closer to your goal of being published.

## What makes a good agent?

A good agent is one who's willing to share their client list and published books. Be wary of any agent who tells you, either directly or on their website, that their client list is confidential and cannot tell you any books that are in the book stores which he/she has sold.

Good agents will be members of the Association of Authors' Representatives (AAR), or state that they adhere to their code of practice.

A good agent will never charge reading fees or any upfront expenses, for such things as phone calls or photocopying (though nowadays, as so much in publishing is done electronically, photocopying doesn't apply). Any expenses will be charged once the book is sold and

taken from the advance.

**NOTE OF CAUTION:** Agents who ask for reading or editorial fees up front are deemed unethical and you should steer well clear of them. Before signing with any agent I advise you check them out on **Preditors and Editors** <http://anotherrealm.com/prededitors/>, a site that gives information about agents and editors, and in particular you can see if any of them are not recommended.

#### How do I choose between agents?

You may be lucky enough to find yourself in the position of having more than one agent to choose from. So how do you know which one is right for you? There is no set rule because it varies from person to person, and depends on personal preferences.

Young adult author **Linda Gerber** had strong preferences when she was looking: "I really wanted someone I could talk to without feeling intimidated, someone who was not overwhelmed with clients, so that I wouldn't be put on the back burner, and someone who was well-connected and could guide me to a career in writing, not just look at one sale at a time."

Another thing to consider is whether you want an agent who is hands-on in terms of editing, or who leaves the writing to you and sends out the book as you submit it to them.

You'll also need to decide whether you want an agent who will simply get you the most money, or one who will help develop your career and help you become a better writer. For bestselling author, **Alyson Noel**: "I chose the one I connected with the best. Though I admit the agency's good reputation was also part of the decision."

#### What's an ideal author/agent relationship?

Although each agent/writer relationship is unique, there are certain basic requirements of an agent. They should be honest with you, and have your best interests at heart. They should respond to your emails in a timely manner and support you and help build your career and develop your writing skills.

Likewise, as a writer, there are things you should bring to the relationship. You should aim to meet deadlines, honour any contracts, behave in a reasonable manner, realize that you are not their only client, and respect their time.

Adult and young adult author **Amanda Ashby** has this to say about the relationship she has with her agent: "I have a great relationship with my agent. She is very supportive of my writing, but at the same time is quick to point out if she doesn't think something will sell; and while at times it can be disappointing, the fact that I've got an inside ear to what's happening in publishing, is invaluable."

#### Advice from published authors.

Finally, a number of authors agreed to offer some ad-

vice for writers searching for an agent:

Young adult author **Linda Gerber**, whose agent is **Elaine Spencer** at **The Knight Agency**: "Be realistic. Be respectful. Be aware that agents are very well connected with each other and your reputation as a writer, be it good or bad, may precede you."

Adult and young adult author **Amanda Ashby**, whose agent is **Jenny Bent**, at **Trident Media Group**: "Don't give up and don't take it personally. Finding an agent can be a lot of hard work, but when you have the right book and find the right person, it all becomes a little easier and well worth the effort."

Adult and young adult author **Erica Orloff/Liza Conrad**, whose agent is **Jay Poyner** at **The Poyner Group**: "I have come to the conclusion that we are each nurtured as writers with different needs, different expectations...we respond to totally different motivators and personalities. And so I would say it's an intensely personal decision and working well with someone is just as important as their guidance and deal-making abilities."

Middle grade author **Jessica Burkhart**, whose agent is **Alyssa Eisner Henkin** at **Trident Media Group**: "Be picky! Make sure you connect with this person who will be submitting your work to houses. Professionalism is a must, but don't be afraid to be real. Some of the most meaningful and helpful conversations with my agent happened after I became comfortable enough with her to share my concerns and questions."

Adult and young adult author **Alyson Noel**, whose agent is **Kate Schafer** at **KT Literary Agency**: "Do your homework! A bad agent is way worse than no agent. It's important to sign with someone who you feel comfortable with, who understands your genre, and who will be an advocate for you in case any issues arise."

I hope this has given you an insight into how agents and writers work together. For those of you embarking on an agent search, good luck.

*Sara Hantz is an author of young adult fiction. Her debut book **The Second Virginity of Suzy Green** was published by Flux in September 2007. Her agent is **Rachel Vater** at **Folio Literary Management** in New York. Visit Sara's website [www.sarahantz.com](http://www.sarahantz.com) to find out more about her, and to read an excerpt of her book.*



# Romance Writing Markets

Compiled by Patrika Salmon.

Additional reporting, Cindi Myers' market news, et al.

---

## Grassroots Publishing Co, Inc.

Grassroots Publishing Co, Inc. has been a magazine publisher for over twenty-five years. We are in the process of putting together a new publication, *Love Story Magazine*. Its launch is planned for the end of 2008. At this time, we are accepting submissions from writers who specialize in short romance stories (2000-5000 words) for publication. If a manuscript is accepted the writer will be compensated for the work. For details please visit our website. <http://grassrootsmag.com/wrgu.html>

---

## Tor Books

The Spotlight on Tor at the Romance Writers of America annual convention was presented by Editor Heather Osborn and Editor Melissa Singer. Heather is relatively new to Tor, coming to the company in April 2007 from Ellora's Cave. She edits Tor Romance. Melissa has been with Tor for more than 20 years. She edits science fiction, fantasy, mystery and thrillers, as well as women's fiction and fiction with romantic elements.

Heather began by talking about Tor Romance. Tor Romance publishes one book a month. In July 2007 Tor released its first romantic suspense title with no paranormal elements. They are looking to acquire more books like this. They would like to eventually publish one romantic suspense and one paranormal per month. These are published in mass market paper format. Tor also publishes paranormal romance, fantasy romance, and futuristic romance.

Heather is a huge fan of paranormal romance in general. She likes "kick-butt" heroines – intelligent heroines. She doesn't want heroines put in jeopardy solely for the convenience of the plot. Heroines should be capable of rescuing themselves. She says vampires are a tougher sell right now because there are already so many good vampire series established, so if you are going to submit a vampire story, it will have to compete in that market. She's looking for plot-heavy, action driven romantic suspense. Heather would like to see urban fantasy with a lot of romance in it. She is open to time travel stories, but there needs to be an ongoing paranormal theme within the time travel, if the characters are traveling into the past. Time travel alone is not enough. However, if the characters are traveling into the future, they would be interested in that as a futuristic. Heather likes humor, but she's very picky about it. She prefers snark and sarcasm over slapstick or anything campy.

Melissa acquires general women's fiction. She's particularly looking for books that will appeal to the female reader over the age of 35 – with heroines over the age of 35. She's interested in both contemporary and

historical fiction. She's interested in different settings, such as India or China.

She's looking for series mystery with a female protagonist. Humor is good, but it should be witty, not silly. She is also acquiring a limited amount of fantasy and science fiction. And she is acquiring horror fiction and darker urban fantasy. A really dark vampire story would be welcome as a horror story. Gore is fine, but don't make it gratuitous without a point. She's not interested in erotica, but is open to sensual stories.

Tor will accept unagented, unsolicited manuscripts. The FAQ on the website ([www.tor-forge.com](http://www.tor-forge.com)) has information on submitting to TOR. All submissions must include an SASE (a letter envelope with one stamp is sufficient.) Submit the first three chapters and a brief (2-4 pages) synopsis with a cover letter. Mention if you've met one of the editors at a conference. They do not accept electronic submissions. The turnaround time for proposals is approximately four months, though Heather admitted it may be longer for romance.

---

## Cobblestone Press

[www.cobblestone-press.com](http://www.cobblestone-press.com)

Cobblestone Press is an ebook publisher of sensual and erotic romance, releasing two to three titles each week. They work with a number of editors. They contract for electronic rights for one year and pay a royalty of 35% of the cover price. They require a full manuscript – no query or partials. The stories may range from sensual to erotic, in any genre – paranormal, historical, contemporary or romantic suspense. They publish everything from 10,000 word short stories to 100,000 word novels and periodically release special themed collections. Be sure to check out the detailed submission guidelines on their website to see what they're looking for right now.

---

## Black Gate

<http://www.blackgate.com>

Black Gate publishes epic fantasy fiction at all lengths (including novel excerpts), articles, interviews, news and reviews. We are looking for adventure-oriented fantasy fiction suitable for all ages – including urban fantasy, sword & sorcery, dark fantasy/horror, "magic realism" and romantic fantasy – as long as it is well written and original. Create accessible, epic/heroic fantasy suitable for all ages... fiction that incorporates strong elements of heroic myth, adventure-oriented themes and exotic and colorful settings.

Submission Guidelines: [www.blackgate.com/bg/guide.htm](http://www.blackgate.com/bg/guide.htm)

---

Continued on page 18

# Investigating the Crime Scene

## by Marianne Petit

*Writing romantic suspense? The article below first appeared in the April 2007 issue of Shorelines, the newsletter of the Long Island Romance Writers. While some job titles and procedures are specific to the USA, much of the information is relevant to police investigations in any country.*

**O**kay. You've started your thriller. Murdered off a character. The police are on their way. Now what?

Readers demand accuracy. Feed them the wrong information and they'll let you know you've made a mistake. So, to the best of your ability, you'd better know who does what, and what happens, at the crime scene if you are going to write about one.

Sherlock Holmes said: "Whenever you have excluded the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth." In other words the truth is present at every crime scene. And if it's your character's job to find it, make sure he's doing his job correctly.

Keep in mind that precincts vary in their allotment of duties. Not all houses have a large enough staff to divvy procedures out. In a small town, the local sheriff may do it all; whereas in a larger precinct, the Patrol division, Identification section, Scene of the Crimes officer, and detective will likely all be called in to investigate.

The following is the procedure used at a crime scene, in a homicide case, by a large precinct.

The primary responsibility, of those people involved, is the isolation and protection of the crime scene. This is very important. Any discrepancy, any contamination of evidence jeopardizes the case. If this is an outdoor crime scene, conduct all examinations as soon as possible due to weather and light changes.

The patrol division usually gets the initial call and goes to the scene to determine the situation. Upon arrival the first officer at the scene should preserve its integrity until the patrol division supervisor can arrive.

### **Responsibilities of first officer:**

1. Record exact time of your arrival and or notify Communications that you are on the scene.
2. Enter immediate scene using one path of entry.
3. Check victim for signs of life.
4. Secure and define the scene by assessing the entire crime scene noting all exits and paths of entry.
5. Isolate a perimeter with a type of barrier.
6. Isolate witnesses and remove all persons from the

immediate area.

7. Ascertain whether or not any evidence is present and control collection.
8. Request additional units as needed.

### **Responsibilities of patrol supervisor:**

1. Take an initial survey of the area, developing a mental image to ensure the scene is preserved.
2. Record names, addresses, dates of birth and telephone numbers, etc., of all persons present.
3. Set up a command post if police are to be at the scene for a long period of time.
4. Start a crime scene log to enter everyone who enters the crime scene.
5. Interview witnesses.
6. Notify the homicide division and record time of notification and who was notified.

Important: Don't touch anything; unless there's an injured person. Once backup arrives, if the victim is removed from the scene, an officer should accompany the victim, in the ambulance, to the hospital. Upon arrival, the detective takes over. It is now the officer's job to assist the detective.

### **The detective will:**

1. Record exact time of his or her arrival.
2. Interview witnesses.
3. Canvass the area. Note the surroundings, who's loitering around. Everything should be considered as evidence.
4. Record everything from the time, to the weather, the lighting, to the amount of people on the scene, which includes ambulance personnel, family members, witnesses and police personnel.
5. Interview first officer and other police personal at the scene to determine sequence of events.
6. Arrange transport for witnesses to be sent to headquarters and take written statements. It will be the detective's job to follow-up on the investigation and

*Continued on page 17*

# RWNZ Contest News

For all contest queries contact: Ellie Huse,  
RWNZ Principal Contests Coordinator  
[elliehuse@yahoo.com](mailto:elliehuse@yahoo.com)

## RWNZ CONTEST SCHEDULE 2008

### Clendon Award

Entries must be received by: 29 February 2008  
(entry form enclosed with this issue of Heart to Heart)

### Short Story Contest

Entries postmarked by: 28 March 2008

### Great Beginnings Contest

Entries postmarked by: 24 April 2008

### Meet the Editor/Agent Contest

Entries postmarked by: 23 May 2008

### Strictly Single Contest

Entries postmarked by: 26 September 2008

**SHORT STORY CONTEST**  
Closing date: 28 March  
2008

Final Judge: Julie Redlich,  
Fiction Editor, Woman's Day

1500 words – Open theme  
but stories must be ro-  
mances

Entry forms will be included  
in next month's newsletter

**Y**our Clendon Award Entry  
Form is enclosed with  
this issue of Heart to  
Heart. Get to work now, so you  
can enter the world's best con-  
test for unpublished romance  
manuscripts.

If you can help out with Clendon  
Award administration, contact  
Barbara Clendon on  
[reading@barbarasbooks.co.nz](mailto:reading@barbarasbooks.co.nz),  
or on 09 263 5002.



# Other Contests

## Compiled by Chrissie Ward

### First Kiss Contest

Romance Writers of Australia

Deadline: 14 February 2008

Entry forms at: Members Only section of [www.romanceaustralia.com](http://www.romanceaustralia.com)

award is May 31<sup>st</sup> 2008.

Submission forms, conditions and details of eligibility criteria, are available on the Society's website in the Awards & Fellowships page. [www.authors.org.nz/](http://www.authors.org.nz/)

### SQ Love Story Contest

Contest from Story Quarterly, open to fiction and non-fiction entries. The contest offers a First Prize of \$2,500, a Second Prize of \$1,500, a Third Prize of \$750, and ten Finalists each will receive \$100.

Deadline for entries: March 31, 2008.

<https://narrativemagazine.com/SQ/shared/contest.php>

### Tom Howard/John H. Reid Short Story Contest

Sixteenth year. Fourteen cash prizes totaling \$5,250. Top prize \$2,000. Seeks short stories, essays and other works of prose, up to 5,000 words. Winning entries published online. Both published and unpublished work accepted. Fee per entry is \$12, payable to Winning Writers. Postmark deadline: March 31. Judges: J.H. Reid, D.C. Konrad.

Submit online or mail to Winning Writers, Attn: Tom Howard Short Story Contest, 351 Pleasant Street, PMB 222, Northampton, MA 01060.

More information: [www.winningwriters.com/tomstory](http://www.winningwriters.com/tomstory)

### The Rawene Book Festival 2008 Short Story Competition (Open)

Phone/fax (09) 405 7529 • [janine.mcveagh@ihug.co.nz](mailto:janine.mcveagh@ihug.co.nz) • P.O. Box 96 Rawene, 0443 Northland

Judges: Diana Menefy and Lesley Marshall

1st Prize: \$500 2nd Prize: \$300 3rd Prize: \$200

Maximum story length of 2,000 words, previously unpublished stories only. Closing date is 31st March, 2008. The entry fee of \$5 must accompany your entry. If you want an individual critique, please enclose another \$20 with your entry fee.

### The Ledge Fiction Awards Competition

Prize: \$1,000.00. Entry fee: \$15.00. Deadline: 02-29-2008.

First prize: \$1000 and publication in The Ledge Magazine. Second prize: \$250 and publication in The Ledge Magazine. Third prize: \$100 and publication in The Ledge Magazine. All Stories must be previously unpublished and not exceed 7,500 words.

[www.theledgemagazine.com/Fiction%20Awards%20Contest.htm](http://www.theledgemagazine.com/Fiction%20Awards%20Contest.htm)

### Ashton Wylie Awards

Ashton Wylie Charitable Trust in association with the NZ Society of Authors is calling for entries for the 2008 Ashton Wylie Charitable Trust Unpublished Manuscript and Ashton Wylie Charitable Trust Book Awards. These two \$10,000 awards reward excellence in the mind, body and spirit genre.

This year's awards generated a lot of interest and we had 58 entries for the unpublished manuscript award which was won by Keith Hill for *Striving to be Human: How Can We Act Morally in Today's Complex World?* and 35 entries for the book award. Brian Broom won the book award with *Meaning-full Disease*.

The deadline for the unpublished manuscript award is March 31<sup>st</sup> 2008. The deadline for the book

### 2008 New Women's Voices Chapbook Competition

Prize: \$1,000.00. Entry fee: \$15.00. Deadline: 02-15-2008.

A prize of \$1,000 and publication will be awarded by Finishing Line Press for a chapbook-length poetry collection. Open to women who have never before published a full-length poetry collection. Previous chapbook publication does not disqualify. All entries will be considered for publication. The top-ten finalists will be offered publication and will be included in the New Women's Voices Series.

Submit up to 26 pages of poetry.

[www.finishinglinepress.com/submissionguidelines.htm](http://www.finishinglinepress.com/submissionguidelines.htm)



# New Releases from New Zealand

M&B release details courtesy of Harlequin Mills & Boon. Additional reporting by Pam Slade, reviewer

## February 2008 Releases

### Mills & Boon Sexy

#### **Expecting His Love-Child**, Carol Marinelli

Family once meant everything to Levander Kolovsky, until they betrayed him. Now the brooding billionaire trusts only himself: he doesn't want a permanent woman in his life, or an heir to the Kolovsky name.

Millie has returned to Australia to find Levander. They shared a night of passion when Millie went from serving him champagne to drinking it out of the finest crystal in his penthouse. However, ordinary girl Millie wasn't seduced by Levander's riches and power, but by the man himself—and now she must reveal her secret to him...

#### **The Greek Tycoon's Unexpected Wife**, Annie West

Even though Stavros Denakis and Tessa Marlowe are married, their union was never consummated. Stavros suspects the wife he hardly knows is a gold-digger after her share of the Denakis millions. But Tessa is a temptation that he can't resist.

Bedded by her gorgeous Greek husband, Tessa realises that she has fallen in love with him, and she longs for their marriage to become real. Only Stavros, though he may be passionate in private, remains cold in public, and seems determined that they will stay wedded only in name.

### Mills & Boon Sexy Sensation

#### **My Tall Dark Greek Boss**, Anna Cleary

Gorgeous billionaire Samos Stilakos is the answer to every woman's prayers. And, from what I can tell, he's happily answered a lot of them.

But Sam is also my new boss! Even though we've had one thrillingly passionate night, I'm going to have to forget it—fast. Only Sam wants to explore the attraction that sizzles between us—and this guy is my boss, the CEO, and he's not used to taking no as an answer!

### Mills & Boon Sweet

#### **The Bridesmaid's Best Man**, Barbara Hannay

Nothing has been the same for cattleman Mark Winchester since he was best man at a wedding in London six weeks ago and met bridesmaid Sophie Felsham.

On the other side of the world, city girl Sophie is about to make the most difficult phone call of her life. The one beautiful night she shared with rugged Mark has resulted in pregnancy—and now it's time to tell Mark that he's going to be the father of her child.

### Mills & Boon Medical

#### **Their Special-Care Baby**, Fiona Mcarthur

When an unknown woman is dragged from the wreckage of a train crash, her final words before she falls into unconsciousness are for the life of the baby inside her.

As the baby fights for its life in the special care unit, Dr Stewart Kramer knows he must do all he can to save it—he believes it to be his late brother's baby. But as the baby's mother recovers Stewart gets closer to her, and discovers there is much more to her than anyone first thought.

### Mills & Boon Desire

#### **The Magnate's Marriage Demand**, Robyn Grady

Marriage and children played no part in Armand De Luca's plans. Then the hard-driving tycoon learned he had to marry and have an heir to lose his company. When he discovered his late brother had fathered an unborn child, Armand saw the perfect opportunity.

But expectant mother Tamara Kendle was not at all sure she wanted any part of Armand, his millions, or his convenient marriage. And she was so desirable, he wasn't sure this union could ever be strictly business.



#### **Diamonds Down Under**

##### **Vows & A Vengeful Groom**, Bronwyn Jameson

Ric Perrini, chairman of Blackstone Diamonds and Sydney's sexiest bachelor, still had one elusive prize to catch: Kimberly Blackstone. Luring her back to her estranged father's company, back to her birthright, would be Ric's toughest job ever. Luring her back into his arms, his most pleasurable. Ric had laid claim to part of Kim before; this time he'd accept nothing but her total surrender.

### Mills & Boon Ultimate Collection

#### **The Susan Napier Ultimate Collection**

##### **The Mistress Deception**

Matthew Riordan oozed sex appeal; he didn't need to blackmail Rachel into his bed. But they had clashed over



# and Australian Authors

for [www.loveromancesandmore.com](http://www.loveromancesandmore.com)

a business deal. Was Matthew planning to make Rachel his mistress simply out of revenge?

## Secret Seduction

Nina knew she'd lost her memory. She confirmed it when she rescued a stranger from a storm and he clearly recognised her, but Nina had no idea who he was. Had they once been lovers? The tense sexual attraction between them demanded release, but when their passion finally exploded, what secrets would be revealed?

## Mills & Boon Superromance

### How To Trap A Parent, Joan Kilby

Jane Linden's high-school sweetheart Cole Roberts had given her a child and offered her the security of small-town life when all she'd wanted were the bright lights and a movie career.

Now the town's charismatic real estate agent is a single parent himself. Not only that, it's clear Cole wants to make up for lost time with his daughter—

whether Jane likes it or not. The young love they remember seems to have burned itself out. Until their kids find a way to turn back the clock.

## Historical (single title)

### Captured, Helen Kirkman

A princess of defeated Mercia, Rosamund had lost all hope of a future, until she stumbled across a chained Mercian prisoner. Drawn by Boda's brutal strength and the defiance in his closed fist, she impulsively wagered her safety for his and won him from their Viking captors.

But Rosamund's risk is great. For just as Boda's loyalties may not be all they seem, she too, is not what she pretends to be. And though she yearns to trust his honour and lean upon his strength, the scars of war run deep, and betrayal may be the price of love...

**Note to non-Harlequin authors: If you'd like your new releases listed in *Heart to Heart*, please email title, publisher, author and 2-sentence blurb to [pamrs@extra.co.nz](mailto:pamrs@extra.co.nz) before the 15th of the month prior to publication ♥**

## Naked Writer—continued from p20

– I reckon go for it. Go to blogger.com. The thing is free!!

It's like having a website at no cost, you can update any time, delete stuff if you change your mind, put up photos and links.... And it is not at all difficult to set up. The possibilities for use are endless. A writing diary blog, a blog for your family overseas, you could get together with some fellow authors, come up with a snazzy name, and have a communal blog which sounds like fun. However, unless you were trying to actively promote something and advertising your blog, it's quite possible no one would ever read it. But it's fun....

I have two fave blogs at the moment (which is very bad because I have just sent off a partial to Special Edition and haven't finished the book so I really should be writing. Once school holidays are over, I tell myself....). One blog I love is the Harlequin American Romance authors' blog. <http://harauthors.blogspot.com>. It has that lovely, down-home feel to it. You just want to eat it, it's so yummy, and the book covers are gorgeous. Or I could try and sell a book to them, which would actually be the thing. Good authors at American Romance, too.

And as mentioned last month, the Diamonds Downunder girls ([www.diamonds-downunder.com](http://www.diamonds-downunder.com)) continue to do marvellous things with their blog, with prizes and contests and info on the books. They've sold me on the series and have some truly unbelievable prizes you could win just for posting on the blog – like a critique of a partial by the sainted Silhouette editor, Melissa Jegliński. And fun info. Like, did you know Fiona Brand was originally one of the six authors writing in the series but had to pull out because of deadline commitments to her other books?

Off to work on my novel now. I've inspired myself. This will be the year. (yeah, yeah, yeah... )

Everyone, have a Great 2008 - and that's an order!!

Check out The Naked Writer Blog: <http://johill.blogspot.com> ♥

# Investigating the Crime Scene, from p13

write follow up reports, as well as make any subsequent arrests.

7. Record location, and complete description of the body, including a detailed account of their clothing. Note condition of body.

8. If victim's identity known, get a background check.

9. Ascertain whether or not there are any suspects in custody.

## A few details the detective looks for:

- ♥ foot/finger/palm prints
- ♥ clothing fibers
- ♥ hair strands
- ♥ Blood
- ♥ paint chips if a vehicle is involved
- ♥ tire tracks

All "trace evidence" is collected by the use of tweezers or other appropriate instruments. (The name of the officer who found the evidence and the name of officer who receives the evidence at the evidence locker is noted.) \*\*Remember- all personnel must wear gloves.

Photographs of the area are shot from the four corners of the scene, long distance, close up, etc., as well as photos of the body. This is done before the ME examines the body. Now portions of the body which were not visual prior to photos can be photographed. This is done by the identification officer of the crime scene division, or the detective. Some departments hire civilian employees to be a technical photographer and they will take the pictures.

Physical evidence is transported to the laboratory for further assessment. An initial crime-scene sketch at location and another sketch at headquarters is performed. Fingerprints are taken which will be compared to the prints of known suspects.

The ME (Medical Doctor), EMT (Emergency Medical Technician), or Coroner examines the victim and pronounces dead at the scene. He determines cause and time of death. Time of death is usually determined by taking the internal temperature of the body.

The victim's location/position of body is marked. Body is then wrapped in a clean white sheet and placed in a body bag. Bag the hands of the victim with paper bags to preserve any trace evidence under fingernails. It is critical that all evidence is collected, i.e., photos, initial examination, etc., before the body is released.

Oh, and a little tidbit I picked up: if your body's been dead for some time, remember to have your character wash his or her hair. The smell gets into the hair shafts and stays there!

Check my links page for available research sites: The forensic information, The police magazine, and The FBI are just a few sites from the extensive list.

Reference books for the above article:

The Howdunit Series /Writer's Digest  
Cause of Death: Keith Wilson  
Amateur Detectives: E. Chase & A. Wingate  
Police Procedural: Russell Bintliff  
Murder One: M. Corvasce & J. Paglino  
Scene of the Crime: Anne Wingate  
Just the Facts Ma'am: Greg Fallis  
Hidden Evidence: David Owen  
Practical Homicide Investigation: Vernon Geberth  
Email from a Nassau County Detective concurring on the above procedures.

*Marianne Petit has received accolades for her writing from the Romantic Times, BookStar Review, and Romance Reviews Today. You can read excerpts from her books, as well as immerse yourself in her extensive research links, at [www.mariannepetitbooks.com](http://www.mariannepetitbooks.com)*

## Romance Writing Markets, continued from p12

### Romance and Beyond Magazine

<http://members.aol.com/rbeyond/romance.html>

Seeking fantasy, science fiction, paranormal, and other speculative fiction (up to 10,000 words) in which a romantic relationship develops between the hero and heroine. We pay ½ (one-half) cent per word, two free copies of the magazine in which your work appears, and a discount on future orders. Submission Guidelines: <http://members.aol.com/RBeyond/Guidelines.html>

### Heliotrope

<http://www.heliotropemag.com>

Heliotrope Magazine is looking for exceptional fiction that does not exceed 5,000 words. We are most interested in Science Fiction, Fantasy, Mystery and Horror. If your story is somewhere in between or is something you can't label – we are interested in that as well. We pay 10 cents a word for fiction. Payment will be made upon publication and in U.S. currency. Submission Guidelines: [www.heliotropemag.com/node/2](http://www.heliotropemag.com/node/2)

# RWNZ Regional Round-Up

## RWNZ REGIONAL CONVENORS

### AUCKLAND

Frances Housden  
[Fhousden@xtra.co.nz](mailto:Fhousden@xtra.co.nz)

### CHRISTCHURCH

Kathryn Taylor  
[Tylrs@clear.net.nz](mailto:Tylrs@clear.net.nz)

### MANAWATU

Joanne Cleland  
[d.j.cleland@xtra.co.nz](mailto:d.j.cleland@xtra.co.nz)

### HAWKE'S BAY

June Clarke  
[jiclarke@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jiclarke@xtra.co.nz)

### NELSON

Sue Mackay  
[Lsmackay@ts.co.nz](mailto:Lsmackay@ts.co.nz)

### WAIKATO/BAY OF PLENTY/KING COUNTRY

Gaylene Atkins  
[ada.farms@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ada.farms@xtra.co.nz)  
Phone: 07 8937857

### WELLINGTON

Ellie Huse  
[Elliehuse@yahoo.com](mailto:Elliehuse@yahoo.com)

## NEWS FROM RWNZ'S CHAPTERS AND BRANCHES

### Auckland

Meets the first Saturday of every month at Three Kings Tennis Pavilion, corner of Mt Eden and Mt Albert Roads, 12:30pm.

### Waikato / BOP / King Country

Our Christmas 2007 gathering held at Graham's Beach, on the Awhitu Peninsula, was a huge success. This was the perfect venue and a beautiful unspoilt part of NZ. We had 10 in attendance with seven sleeping over for two nights. Thank you for setting the task and running the main workshop, Liz (a pretty intense plotting workshop with handouts) and for organising the Bach for us. We also managed some verbal and written workshops with hilarious results. And in-between we did beachcombing, lots of writer chat, prepared and ate yummy nosh and of course drank the odd glass of grape juice! Thank you one and all for being there...

Our first meeting details for 2008 are as follows:

Date: Saturday 16th February

Time: 12-00 mid-day

Venue: The Lily Pad cafe (by popular request from members) 1242 Kaipaki Road, RD3, Cambridge. Ph: 07 823 9134

Task: Write a ½ - 1 page piece characterizing your hero/heroine. An inventive way to do this is to show a room in his/her home i.e. clean or dirty, tidy or messy, how is it furnished – contemporary or traditional? Or you could show him/her performing a task – are they calm and patient while trying to fix a car, or do they curse and throw the spanner down in disgust? How do they treat a stray dog, etc?

### Hawke's Bay

There will be a February meeting in Napier at 59 Flanders Ave. The date is to be decided. Please contact me on [ginny.suckling@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ginny.suckling@xtra.co.nz) if anyone, other than the members I've contacted already, wants to come.

### Wellington

Our December lunch was very well attended. Sally and Amanda arrived from Hawkes Bay (two published novels to celebrate) and brought Kate from Palmerston North. Gracie and President Pat (another new book) drove over from the Wairarapa. And that was just the extras!

The meeting rounded off a great year. Seven of us entered the Clendon, and four of us finalised. Various other contests were entered with success, several short stories were sold, and there are partials out there we're waiting to hear back about.

Sadly, Kendra has now left us to live in Queensland.

We meet at 1 o'clock on the first Saturday of each month at Ellie's, 135 Milne Drive, Paraparaumu.

**Convenors: please submit your news to [abby@abbygaines.com](mailto:abby@abbygaines.com) by the 15th of the month**



Don't see your region listed here? If you're interested in helping to start a local RWNZ group in your area, email RWNZ president Pat Snellgrove on [pat.snellgrove@xtra.co.nz](mailto:pat.snellgrove@xtra.co.nz), or membership secretary Emily Gee on [membership@romancewriters.co.nz](mailto:membership@romancewriters.co.nz).



# The Naked Writer



Oooh...scandal in the world of romance. Now this is what the Naked Writer is all about, people. This is the *very point of this column*. Scandal and gossip. The juicier, the better. Alas, if there is any to be had amidst the hallowed membership of RWNZ, you can bet the Naked Writer would be the last to hear, lest she, i.e. me, wrote about it in this column. No one tells me anything anymore. Or maybe there just never is any.....

But on to the juicy (albeit it fascinating, disturbing, sad) stuff, which will unfold even more by the time you read this – the business that American historical writer, Cassie Edwards, author of 100 novels, is embroiled in at the mo, which has taken a life of its own as other writers weigh in and the thing gains momentum...

It's pretty much a cert that 71-year-old Ms Edwards, who writes Native American Indian romances for Signet, is guilty of plagiarism. However, Ms Edwards does not see it that way at all. She has copied, practically word for word, from texts in her novels. The website [www.smartbitchestrashybooks.com](http://www.smartbitchestrashybooks.com) discovered this and it is truly astounding.

Quote from the website about the person, Kate, who discovered it: "They (the passages) were written in a distinctly different voice, and out of idle curiosity, she decided to Google certain phrases and sentences. The results were...interesting. Kate was able to find large chunks of text from a few sources that seemed to have been inserted into *Shadow Bear* with little to no modification..."

And this from the website where somebody found incidences of Edwards copying passages from a work of fiction called *Laughing Boy*. "*Laughing Boy*, unlike the other works, is not an ethnography, academic book or memoir. *Laughing Boy* is not only still under copyright, it is a fictional novel published in 1929, winning the Pulitzer in 1930."

The saga has gained its own momentum, with romance authors weighing in all over the place. Writers like Jen Crusie have condemned the way the Smart Bitch website and their readers have had a nasty go at Edwards (apparently they have often held Cassie Edwards novels up to some ridicule), while on the 'Bitches' and other blogs, Nora Roberts has weighed in to the discussion as well, (i.e. it's plagiarism, it's wrong).

Nora's famous brush with plagiarism came to light in 1997, when a fan read a Janet Dailey book and noted the similarity to a Nora work. Ms Dailey admitted the plagiarism, and cited health problems for why she copied from Nora's books. But in the Edwards case, it appears the author is claiming she didn't realise she had to acknowledge her source, that it was simply meticulous research. Which might be true. I've just flicked through a few historicals on my shelves and sources for research aren't acknowledged.

However, it's that she copied the research. There are even supposed examples of Ms Edwards copying passages of the famous American poem *Haiiwatha*.

Signet (an imprint from NAL) has said it is reviewing the books. On her Myspace page, Edwards writes about how authentically researched her books are, and in a statement allegedly attributed to Ms Edwards, claims she felt she was being picked on by fellow writers and the media, had done nothing wrong except meticulously research her books to tell accurate stories about American Indians. So, far from an historical author getting her research wrong, she got it wrong in a different way – 100 books later – by copying the research pretty much word for word in long passages. Some pundits reckon she's unbelievably arrogant and should just apologise, while others think maybe she just never knew it was wrong to copy some one else's research. Defies belief a bit, but.....

The Naked Writer has entered the blogosphere. Yep, everyone was doing it so what the heck. Actually, it was a result of a course at work that opened up how many cool things there are on the web that really made me think – hmmm. Not a lot of posts up there on Ye Olde Blogge, but gosh I had fun choosing the template and writing stuff about myself. The Naked Writer blog is at: <http://johill.blogspot.com>. If you are thinking of starting up a blog

*Continued on page 17*