

HEART TO HEART

Meet the editor:

Cheryl Wright
The Wild Rose Press

Cheryl Wright is an award-winning Australian author, freelance journalist, copywriter, ghost writer, editor, and consultant. She owns the www.Writer2Writer.com website, the Writer to Writer monthly ezine, and www.Resources4Writers.com — a membership site for writers. She is also co-owner of www.AussieAuthors.com — a website dedicated to the publicity of Australian and New Zealand writers. Cheryl will be available during the weekend for pitching appointments and participating in the 'introduction to publishing' conference session. She talks with *Gracie Stanners* about the joys and frustrations of getting published.

Gracie: Most writers glide into writing fulltime. You were catapulted into it! Tell us about it.



Cheryl: I have a lung disease called Bronchiectasis which I contracted from measles as a one-year-old but which wasn't diagnosed until I was forty-one. When I was forty-six, I collapsed at work. After several ambulance trips to hospital and subsequent releases they discovered my lung condition had been masking double pneumonia. I spent part of an entire month's hospital stay in the intensive care unit after almost suffering a heart attack.

After four more bouts of pneumonia over the next five months, I went home with an oxygen tank. I was so weak I was getting around in a wheelchair. During this time they discovered I had an immune deficiency—which often goes hand-in-hand with the disease—and I needed four-weekly transfusions to boost my immune system.

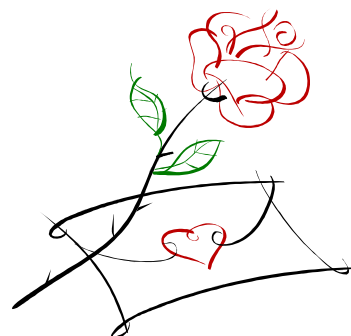
These would continue for the rest of my life. Three months later I was back in hospital, was told I would never work again, and I'd be lucky to survive another six months.

At that point I had three grandchildren and wanted to see them grow up. I changed doctors, and set about getting my life back on track. Alan had a good job, but we were paying off a mortgage and being the independent person I am, I wanted an income of my own.

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

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To subscribe to the RWNZ online loop, which is dedicated to the support of its writers by and for members, send a blank email to NZromance-subscribe@yahoo.com or contact giovanna@xtra.co.nz for information about the loop.

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

H2H contributor required

It's one of the best-loved pages in *Heart to Heart* – our **Members' Successes** page.

Long-time contributor Jean Drew is enjoying a series of overseas trips (Hawaii first ... aloha, Jean, & thank you!) and can no longer commit to collecting this news and collating it into a document for H2H each month.

It's not a hard job, but it's very much the 'heart' of the newsletter.

If you think you could help, please contact Kate Gordon
(kate@relishcomm.co.nz)

We need someone to contribute for the August issue onwards please.

EDITOR'S DESK

There's a lot of conference news we want to share with you this month, but I'm also very conscious that not everyone comes to conference for one reason or another. *Heart to Heart* is for all our members, after all, so...

Fran Tann puts together some great ideas on how to make the most from the loop's quiet spell while conference is on, and **Joanne Graves** finds out how a number of RWNZ members deal with the 'guilt' of taking/making/finding time to write. (Some good points for me here, as I steal a quite few hours from my paying writing to assemble another issue of *H2H*!)

Remember the AGM is held after Saturday's conference sessions. If you're not there, please complete and return the proxy form enclosed so that any remits can be voted on.

On the conference front:

- **Kylie Short** has compiled a very comprehensive list of transport options around Auckland for the out-of-towners;
- **Gracie Stanners** talks to The Wild Rose Press editor Cheryl Wright who'll be at conference taking pitches for this growing e-publisher.
- **Gracie** (again, bless her busy little fingers) shares her experience with pitching to editors and agents, with some extra-valuable comments from Kris Pearson and Sharyn Barrett – thank you, ladies!
- A pretty comprehensive draft of the weekend programme for **A Romantic Interlude** is also enclosed, which has given me a much better idea what's on and when. Great work, conference committee!
- And thanks to Jackie Coates for contributing a series of **technical tips** – this month she starts with back-ups, how, what, etc for PCs and Macs.

As always, I welcome feedback regarding H2H - what you'd like to see more of, or less of, in the future. Do you want to H2H focus on particular publishing industry opportunities or writing techniques or sub-genres in coming months? Is there a topic you'd like us to explore in-depth? Perhaps the paranormal genres or romantic suspense.

Come on, let's make this second half of 2008 as productive and fulfilling as we can!

All I need is a magic genie to clean the house, weed the garden, walk the dogs (no, I like that bit) and I'll have heaps of time for my romance writing..!

Enjoy

Kate





PResiDent Pat

This month it's all good news for our **Romantic Interlude conference** with a new extra-special raffle just announced.

If you haven't booked for conference, there might just be time to catch the early bird price deadline when this issue of *Heart to Heart* arrives! Early bird registration finishes on 30 June; after that date the conference registration fee costs an extra \$120. You'll also be missing out on our truly fabulous early bird registration prize draw (see below). If you're still deciding which workshops to do or whether you'll go to the cocktail party or awards dinner, don't worry. You can make these changes after you've completed your main registration – but do take advantage of the early bird pricing if you can.

For those of you who have already registered, I hope you've got your thinking caps on. What are you going to wear for the **CAT-E-GORY Cocktail Party**? A pair of cat's ears, some whiskers, a long swishing tail - it doesn't have to be much, or it can be as cat-like as you wish... Or just come as you are; there's no pressure to dress up and it's such a fun evening! For the **Moonlight and Midnight Awards Dinner** get out your posh frock and celebrate this year's amazing successes of so many RWNZ members.

Early bird registration prize

For those of you registered before 30 June – and thank you to everyone who has – your name will go in the draw for a **FREE WEEKEND CONFERENCE PACKAGE**. The lucky winner will be able to redeem the prize for RWNZ's 2009 conference in Wellington, receiving free registration for Saturday and Sunday conference days, Friday's cocktail party and the awards dinner. A worthy incentive, I'm sure you'll agree.

Jump the queue!!!

Here's our new extra-special raffle prize for one lucky conference attendee: Harlequin Mills & Boon editor Jenny Hutton has offered to read three chapters and a synopsis for our winner – and give you instant feedback. It'll save you maybe six months of waiting time, and a big chunk of airmail postage. The story can be suitable for any of the Harlequin Mills & Boon lines.

Here's how it works:

- Bring three chapters and the synopsis of your best finished novel to the conference 'just in case'.
- Buy your raffle ticket(s) on Saturday morning. The raffle will be drawn Saturday lunchtime.
- If you're the lucky winner, Jenny will read your submission and invite you for coffee and a chat sometime later during the conference. She'll discuss your work, and if she's impressed, she might request to see your full book.

Raffles

Our raffle coordinator, Rachel Collins, has done an amazing job sourcing prizes for our Saturday and Sunday raffles. You will be delighted at some of the prizes and their diversity. As usual, the goodie bags will be stuffed with giveaways. An awesome job, Rachel; many thanks for all your hard work.

Workshops

The conference committee is looking to slot in two extra workshops on Sunday morning. If you've already registered, don't worry. We'll provide instructions how to register for the new options, if you want to change, first thing on Saturday morning.

Don't forget, if you're attending the early morning breakout workshop with Angela James from Samhain Publishing, you must bring along two copies of one page of your book so that she can comment on it anonymously.

One final word, register now for conference and beside listening to and learning from some fabulous speakers, you get to meet up with old friends, meet new ones and NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK.

Spotlight your writing

In this issue, you will see an opportunity for RWNZ writer/s to spotlight their writing talent. Look out for the headline "Something Different to Try".

Until next month

Pat Snellgrove

RWNZ President (rwnzpresident@xtra.co.nz)

Meet the editor: Cheryl Wright

Continued from page 1

I'd been writing as a hobby for many years, but I'd never been published by magazines. I'd done a lot of charity stuff, and been editor of a staff magazine for six years, which was a great experience as well as incredibly good money.

After being confined to home, I started trying to sell short stories, but that was a total flop. My subsequent research showed that non-fiction was easier to break into, so I began querying local magazines, but got nowhere fast. Then an internet friend told me the editor of the magazine she wrote for was looking for writers. Next thing I knew I had a personal recommendation, and a job as a regular columnist for a magazine in the US.

My writing career suddenly soared. I got invitations to write articles, and was interviewed by several websites. At one point I queried the now-defunct Arabella Romance Magazine about writing a travel article. They checked my website, liked the description of one of my short stories, and asked to see it. *Popcorn Murders* appeared in the preview edition of the magazine, and they requested more stories. Unfortunately, it folded after just a few issues. But after the story was published I got up the courage to send my novel to a publisher. It was contracted, and everything just flowed on from there.

Gracie: You're married. Your son and his three children live with you. How do you juggle the demands on you as a wife, a parent, a grandparent, an editor, your involvement with your various writing websites, and your own creative process—without going crazy?

Cheryl: Alan and I have been married for thirty-two years. Our two kids had moved in and out, and finally we were alone. But it only lasted for about six months. Our son broke up with his partner and moved back with us. Then the new partner physically attacked the children. So we had a full house and a lifetime intervention order. That was five years ago.

I'm nearly fifty-two now, and I have to tell you, bringing up three children under eight can be very trying! Sometimes I do feel like I'm going crazy, but it all comes down to being thoroughly organised and managing your time the best way possible.

I try to ensure anything that needs concentration is done while the children are at school, because once they're home they either want my attention, or the noise is overwhelming. I also say 'no' when it all becomes too much. I generally take two weeks away from anyone and everything each year, one being in another state with my writing buddy, and the other is when I go to writers' conferences. I've recently begun to outsource some things to do with the websites, but it's not always possible. I try to commit to only what I can manage and I try to analyze everything carefully before I make that commitment.

Gracie: I read on your site that it was while you were in the process of shopping an anthology around that The Wild Rose Press (TWRP) asked you to be an editor for them. How did it all happen?

Cheryl: LOL - you have done your research!! As romance editor for QPN Press I was asked to develop a series of romance-related products. One idea was an anthology, and the authors and I worked on the project for around six months. Shortly before the book was to go to print the publisher decided that sales were low. So they just shut up shop. Worse still, they had recently contracted several authors for their latest addition—novels.

Instead of wringing our hands, 'my' authors decided that we would shop our book around. I had several friends who were published with TWRP and absolutely loved them. So we decided to query them.

I emailed explaining our situation, and got an email back from Rhonda Penders asking me to become one of their editors. At first I said no, but Rhonda persisted for a few weeks until I finally agreed.

Gracie: Can you describe the publishing process at TWRP?

Cheryl: All queries are done via email. Once your query is received, Rhonda allocates it to the senior editor for the line you're targeting. Then the senior editor allocates the query to an editor.

Once the editor has the query, she contacts the author. Generally, we'll request a partial, because as we all know, you can't gauge an author's voice or style from a query letter.

When the partial is received, the editor reviews it. Because TWRP is author-friendly, we endeavour to get back to authors within thirty days.

If after reading the partial, the editor believes the story has merit, she'll ask for the full. Once a book is contracted and the contract has been received at the registered office, edits will begin on the book. Authors are totally involved in the process, and expected to take an active role in their book's preparation. TWRP has high standards, and does everything possible to ensure all their books are error-free.

The author does have a certain degree of say in what's included on the covers. The contracted author is asked for ideas, but ultimately it's up to the cover artist/s. They know the marketing side of the business. TWRP has awesome covers, and I've never seen one I didn't like.

Once all the edits are completed, a galley is sent to the editor, who, in turn, sends a PDF of the book to the author. The author goes through the galley and checks for errors. She then sends an errata to the editor, who makes the amendments on the file.

The corrected galley is sent back to production for them to create a new galley, and the process is repeated until the editor and author are sure the file is error-free. Once the galley is approved for publication, a release date is set. We endeavour to have a book published within twelve months of contract date, but that's not always possible.

Meet the editor: Cheryl Wright

Gracie: You're down on TWRP site as being an editor for paranormal. Are you only interested in pitches from those of us writing paranormal romance?

Cheryl: I'll be taking pitches on behalf of all lines.

Gracie: Do you get to choose the manuscripts you edit?

Cheryl: Occasionally we get to choose which query we'll take, but that doesn't happen often. Once we've worked with an author, that author is free to submit queries directly to the editor if she chooses to do so. The authors who worked with me on the anthology mentioned above submit all their queries to me. They tell me I'm their editor, so it looks like I am. ☺

Gracie: What are you looking for when you look at a manuscript?

Cheryl: This is a hard question. Sometimes a writer's voice literally jumps out at you. Other times it's the story. I look for things like an opening that draws the reader in, tight writing, unusual storyline, and error-free copy. But the thing that always makes me contract a story is when I simply can't stop reading. I once had an author send me a partial that I couldn't put down. When I asked for the rest I was extremely disappointed, even upset, to find it wasn't completed. When I received the full, it was so good that I contracted the story immediately. The best part was that I discovered a wonderful new writer the world had never seen. I just love when that happens. I love being able to contract authors, and love being able to help them mould their story into a saleable manuscript.

Gracie: How do you know when a manuscript has excellent sales potential?

Cheryl: If it's good, if it falls within the confines of its genre, and if it will appeal to readers, then it will generally be saleable. As a writer I learned the hard way that stories are products. And products are a commercial item. If they won't make money for their seller—in this case, publishers—then that product is not worthwhile and won't be contracted. Writers need to be mindful of what makes a product saleable.

For all my non-fiction books I research, and that includes checking out my competition. What have they included in the book? What have they done that makes it so saleable and informative? But just as importantly, I ask this question: what haven't they done that I can do to make a better end product?

The same scenario can be applied to fiction. Understand the publisher and line you are targeting, because every publisher is different. Buy similar books to those you want to write. Study them, see what makes them special, and model your stories from them. I'm not talking about plagiarism! Far from it. But knowing your competition is what it's all about.

Gracie: There's still a lot of ambivalence towards e-publishing, and a concern from many authors that being published in e-book isn't really being published. How would you address that concern?

Cheryl: E-publishing is simply a way to present the end product, the story. It has nothing to do with the content. Just because something is in electronic format does not make it bad. E-publishing helps keep the price down because overheads are lower. It also means the buyer has their purchase within minutes instead of waiting for days and sometimes weeks.

Authors are able to earn much higher royalties than is possible with print books. Publishers like TWRP are able to offer both print and electronic formats, so the author has multiple opportunities to earn royalties. Some readers prefer print, and others like electronic. This gives them choices, and often results in more sales.

I recommend that all authors do their research before submitting to any publisher. Go to the publisher's website. Check out the books and the authors. Maybe even buy a book or two and look at the quality. Are there spelling and grammatical errors? Does the story flow? Does the layout appeal?

Getting inside information can often give you a good understanding about the publisher, and help you decide whether to submit to them. If you see an author listed that you know, even remotely, email and ask them their thoughts on the publisher. Make sure you tell them the information will be kept confidential.

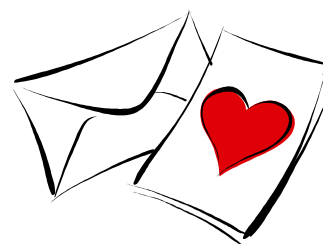
And authors, if someone asks you questions, please be truthful. If you're not happy with a publisher, say so when asked. (Can you tell I was given less than truthful information at one point in my writing career?)

Gracie: I guess an off-shoot from that question is: can an author make a good living from being published in e-book format?

Cheryl: That's a difficult one, because it often comes down to the publisher and their credibility. I've been with e-publishers where I've made virtually nothing, but the credible publishers, the ones that are highly regarded in the industry, are the ones where you are most likely to earn good money.

The secret to e-publishing success is to keep producing new books. Get your name known, and once you have a following, people will keep on buying everything you produce.

Continued page 21



HEY CINDERELLA

BY FRAN TANN

It's that time of the year. The buzz is growing on both sides of 'the ditch' – it's conference time.

There's quite a 'down under' contingent off to San Francisco to the RWAmerica conference. I had been hoping to be among that number, but, you know, work commitments, finances... Of course you know – that's how a lot of you are feeling too, and not just about San Francisco.

The RWNZ conference is next in line. If things are the same in New Zealand as they are here in Oz, there is much talk about travelling to the venue, taxis from the airport, what to pack, what to leave out, should I dress up or not? Can I get a roomie? Fantastic overseas speakers to hear and the chance to pitch to an editor or two.

Last in the queue this year is the Australian conference in Melbourne, located at the beautiful Langham Hotel. Catching up with writing friends, extra activities on Thursday afternoon – the costume collection sounds fabulous – those overseas and local speakers. Sigh... It's all fantastic – if you're going...

Not going to conference? (I confess, I'm going to be in Melbourne, but I have missed a couple of conferences in recent years and I hated it.)

The excitement starts to build on the e-lists, article after article appears in Heart to Heart, interviews with guest speakers. Sigh... you feel so left out. But there's no need to.

The point in the conference is to focus completely for 2-3 days on all things romance writing, right? So, what can you do if, due to distance, financial or health situations or family commitments, you can't attend?

Here are five things you can do to banish the Cinderella blues.

1. **Share the pain**

You are not the only one missing out on the conference (not that it makes it any easier), put out a call on the e-list for Cinderellas in your area. Arrange to meet at a local cafe, or at someone's house. Talk writing, share your writing, help each other with synopses, share a book you have loved reading. You get the idea...

2. **Call a cyber meeting**

If you live in a more remote location and there are no nearby Cinders, take your get-together online. Use the e-list again (what would we do without it?) and arrange an online chat (Yahoo, among others, has a chat system) and meet up for a chat, cyber or actual champagne and chocolate and network, network, network – just as you would at the conference. You might even persuade a local author or two to join you. If you can, you might persuade them to...

3. **Organise a one-day workshop**

No better way to get over missing the conference than to have a mini-conference of your own. This could be a Q&A via email, a set of notes on a mutually agreed topic – whatever suits the group (and the generous author involved).



HEY CINDERELLA cont.

4. How about a BIAC (Book in a Conference)?

Make the most of the weekend. Apply the usual BIAW rules – prepare meals ahead, unplug the phone, ignore the internet and write, write, write. Remind your family they would have to manage without you if you were at the conference so they can do without you anyway.

5. Laugh it off

If you are just feeling too down about not going to the conference and can't be bothered with any of the above, hire yourself a stack of romantic comedy DVDs, then invite, cajole, bully a friend or family member to join you, and have a sleepover like you used to have when you were young(er). Be silly and wallow in it.

And speaking of wallowing in it - if all else fails, go buy yourself some delicious chocolate – your favourite – and sulk. Then start saving for next year.

Fran is a freelance writer/editor based in Adelaide, South Australia. She has a regular column in a local magazine, is Senior Acquisitions Editor for Eternal Press, a small but growing e-publisher, and, in between, edits education/training publications and writes romantic suspense novels.

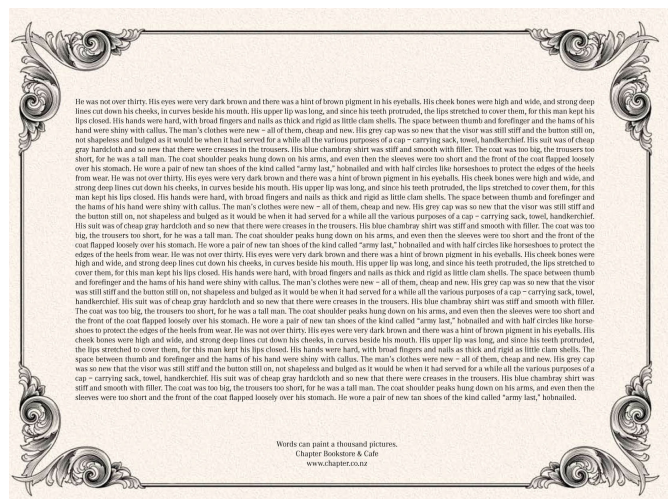
SOMETHING DIFFERENT TO TRY

"Words can paint a thousand pictures" – that's the theme of Colenso BBDO's innovative new bus shelter advertising. They're proposing 'read-while-you-wait' posters of approximately a thousand words, and our members are invited to submit work for consideration.

They're looking for very descriptive writing in terms of scenes and/or characters. Chapter Bookstore and Café, which sponsored RWNZ's recent short story contest, is also sponsoring this. The actual prizes are yet to be set. Chapter, RWNZ and the author of the thousand words will all be named at the base of the poster, but the author would relinquish copyright to the work.

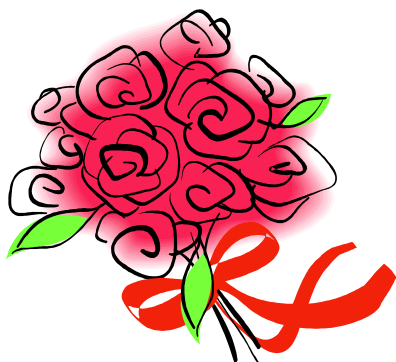
The first posters will appear in Mt Eden bus shelters, and others may follow if these are judged successful. If you like the idea, put together a thousand vivid words and wait for further details.

[Mock-up of the bus shelter ad shown]





MEMBER SUCCESSES



COMPILED BY JEAN DREW

NORAH HANSEN HILL has signed her 30th contract for a novella, *A Kiss For Luck*, with Red Rose Publishing. What a milestone, Norah.

JEAN DREW has sold her time travel, *Forever One*, to Highland Press for their upcoming anthology, *A Twist in Time*. Woohoo!

LISA GARDINER is a finalist in The Magnolia State Romance Writers Annual Dixie First Chapter Contest in the Super Sexy Category. Way to go, Lisa.

RWNZ CHAPTER SHORT STORY COMPETITION

The winners are:

1st - Tyree Bidgood

2nd - Lisa Anderson

3rd - Sally Astridge

Highly Commended: Cathryn Hein, Rachel Collins and Virginia Suckling (in no particular order)

The final entries were judged by Julie Redlich, fiction editor, *Woman's Day*. Great showing, ladies.

CHRISTINA PHILLIPS has sold her paranormal erotic romance, *Foretaste Of Forever*, to The Wild Rose Press. Welcome to the garden, Christina.

ROBYN DONALD is a finalist in this years R*BY, series category, with *The Prince's Forbidden Virgin*. Great news, Robyn.

SOPHIA JAMES is also a finalist on the R*BY with *Ashblane's Lady* in the long section. Well done, Annie.

TYREE BIDGOOD has sold her winning short story to *Woman's Day*. Great stuff, Tyree.

The RWNZ Great Beginnings competition finalists are **BARBARA JEFFCOTT GERIS** (twice), **SHARON ARKELL**, **SUSANNA ROGERS** and **NIKKI BEYNON**. Their entries have gone to Kimberley Young of Mills & Boon, London, for final judging. Good luck, ladies.

MAREE ANDERSON has a novella contracted with Red Sage Publishing. "They actually said they'd 'love' to publish my novella *Even Demons Get The Blues* which I entered in the Red Sage Alpha Male writing competition in March. I was a finalist, which was exciting in itself. Even though I didn't win the competition, the editors emailed me to say they really enjoyed my novella and were so impressed with its quality they'd love to publish it and could I get back to them? No guesses as to my answer - heck yes!"

Welcome to our newest members!

Sandy Allan - Australia

Joan O'Dea - Paraparaumu

Michelle Holman - Cambridge

**NEW CONTRIBUTOR
FOR THE MEMBERS'
SUCCESSES PAGE
NEEDED.**

**PLEASE SEE PAGE 2
FOR MORE DETAILS.**

First – the T-shirt

SPREAD THE WORDS

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

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

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



For those in the RWA San Francisco contingent who want one to take with them, please email Gracie Stanners on gstanners@xtra.co.nz. Available in sizes Small, Medium, Large, XL, 2XL and 3XL. \$25.00 for the shirt plus \$5.00 postage and packaging.



The back reads:

COMPUTER TERMINOLOGY FOR WRITERS

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

Romance Writers of New Zealand Inc. Notice of Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the seventh Annual General Meeting of Romance Writers of New Zealand Incorporated (RWNZ Inc.) will be held at 4.45 pm, on Saturday 16th August, 2008, at the Waipuna Hotel & Conference Centre, 58 Waipuna Rd, Mt Wellington, Auckland.

Romance Writers of New Zealand Inc. AGM Agenda

Business:

1. Confirmation of the minutes of the sixth Annual General Meeting of RWNZ Inc. held on Saturday 20th August, 2007
2. Presentation and adoption of the President's Report
3. Presentation and adoption of the Treasurer's Report for the year ended June 30th 2008
4. Other business
5. Introduction of the new Executive Committee

Pat Snellgrove
President - July 2008

THE PITS OF PITCHING HELL

BY KIRA SINCLAIR

Kira Sinclair knows firsthand the ups and downs of pitching. She sold her first novel, *Whispers in the Dark*, an August 2008 Harlequin Blaze release, from a pitch session.

This article first appeared in the May 2008 *The Heart Monitor*, the newsletter of the Heart of Dixie Chapter.

You've signed up to give a pitch at the national conference. And now you're panicking because you have no idea what to do next. The first thing to do is to take a deep breath. And follow these simple steps.

1. Research the editor/agent you're pitching to.

This is the most important rule of pitching. If you don't do anything else, make sure you do this. There is no reason to pitch an inspirational book to Brenda just like there's no reason to pitch a self help book to an agent who only represents fiction. You must know that the person you're pitching to is interested in buying/representing what you have to offer otherwise you're wasting not only your time but theirs. That's not a very good way to make friends and influence people.

2. Don't take up the entire 5 or 10 minute slot with your book blurb.

Your actual pitch should take no more than 2 or 3 minutes. It should be similar to the blurb that you would include in a query letter or the cover copy you'd see on the back of a novel. You can take in notes – I recommend note cards.

3. Open with your hook or high concept

Hooks

- Cowboy
- Marriage of convenience
- Woman in jeopardy

High concept

- *Basic Instinct* meets *The Bodyguard*

4. Description of your characters – not necessarily their names but WHO they are.

What makes them different and sets them apart?

- Occupation
- Characteristics
- Description

5. Goal, Motivation and Conflict

You can weave the 'who' into this statement ... your characters wants ____ because ____ but can't have it because ____.

For example, a by-the-rules Air Force Public Relations Officer will stop at nothing to succeed in her high profile career because she craves the approval of her Major General father. But if he ever finds out that she accidentally married the hot shot pilot he's never liked she'll lose his respect...not to mention her career.

6. Plot turning points

NOT everything; the most important things

- The inciting incident
- The black moment

7. Tying it all together

- Tying in the title
- Closing with a question – never in a synopsis but it can work in a blurb. A synopsis is to tell the editor/agent that you have followed through on the idea and can sustain the story through the length of an entire book. A pitch is designed to grab their attention and make them ask for more.

8. After the pitch wait for the editor/agent to ask you questions about the story.

Be sure to have answers prepared. Character goals, motivations, conflict – be able to go into more detail

- External forces
- Sub plots
- What books have you read lately in the genre/line you're pitching for?
- What authors do you think your voice most resembles?
- What publisher/house do you see your book fitting well with?
- Be prepared for just about anything. Have additional pitches ready just in case the editor/agent asks if you have anything else available.

9. Be prepared to ask the editor questions of your own

About her line, her job, her likes/dislikes, anything that makes you sound intelligent and informed.

10. When you're finished be gracious and appreciative whether the editor/agent asked to see more of your work or not.

This business is small and a bad reputation can get around faster than the latest viral video.

I will persist until I succeed. Always will I take another step. If that is of no avail I will take another, and yet another. In truth, one step at a time is not too difficult.... I know that small attempts, repeated, will complete any undertaking.

Og Mandino

EDITOR AND AGENT PITCHES: RWNZ MEMBERS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE

KRIS PEARSON

Don't pitch to an editor who already has a submission from you. I was all fired up to pitch to Kimberley Young a couple of years back. She'd seen me on stage as a Clendon finalist the night before - what a recommendation! But no - she already had a book from me and wouldn't consider the Clendon finalist until she'd cleared the other one through the system. This took absolutely months.

Last year I pitched to Sheila Hodgson - she didn't know me from a bar of soap, so I reckoned I'd be safe this time. Once again I'd finalled in the Clendon. Good pitch fodder? Darn - she knew exactly which authors had books waiting there at M&B's Richmond office. Once again, she wasn't the least bit interested.

This year I haven't even booked a M&B pitch, despite that being exactly where I'm aiming to sell.



SHARYN BARRATT

DON'T OVER PRACTICE – it'll make you too nervous. Just run your opening "hook line" through a couple of times in front of the mirror. Stop boring everyone and the dog with your pitch. The more people you get critiques from, the more confused you'll get.

DON'T TALK TOO MUCH – most Kiwis are hard to understand especially when we're nervous, so slow down and shut up occasionally

DON'T BE BORING – give them the buzz words in sound-bites that'll get their attention.

DON'T TELL THEM YOU'RE NERVOUS – chances are your knees won't be heard knocking, so why point it out? Besides, they've probably heard this opening line a zillion times before. Be different. Be confident.

DO research the agent/editor and who they currently represent. Try to bring this snippet of knowledge into your pitch (esp. if your style is similar to one of their current authors)

DO remember the rescue remedy – a couple of swigs beforehand will work wonders

DO have an intelligent question to ask at the end. Many will round up the interview by asking "do you have any questions?" You sitting there like a mute blinking owl makes everyone uncomfortable. Replying "I have my entire manuscript with me now, would you like to take it?" is not an intelligent question!

GRACIE STANNERS: Pitching Your Baby

When you decide to present your baby to an editor it's an intensely personal thing. You're like every mother with a newborn. You hold in your arms the most beautiful creation since Eve and here you are, about to show her to a midwife who has seen more babies, boobs, and butts than you can imagine. And this woman, bless her heart, might not agree with you. She might think your baby's (gulp) ugly!

Well, she might. But chances are even better that she won't!

If it's any help to those of you pitching for the first time, it doesn't matter how many times you do it. You're still nervous. You're still worried you're going to forget your own name and look like a git. The good thing is though, that the editors are REALLY NICE PEOPLE!! And they want to find good writers. It's one of the reasons they come to conferences like ours.

Your choices this year are: Cindy Hwang from Berkley, Jenny Hutton from HMB, Cheryl Wright from The Wild Rose Press, and Angela James from Samhain.

Go online and Google them. See who their authors are. Figure out where your work fits.

Remember that, while all editors are on the lookout for a great story told in a compelling style, in most cases every editor is looking for something different in terms of nuance. He or she is—essentially—a voice, a go-between, a representative, for a certain block of the available readership worldwide and, as such, is looking for things that appeal to that slice of the reading pie.

So, if you're writing a 80-90,000 word single title mainstream with romantic and paranormal elements, then pitching it to Jenny for Harlequin Mills and Boon Sweet isn't a good idea. Swot up on the publishing house or editorial guidelines before you choose your editor appointment.

Once you've decided who the best editor is for your work and made your appointment, then you need to do some work. Think about it. You have that person's attention for, let's say, ten minutes. So don't waffle around. And don't give your brain a chance to go blank. Prepare your spiel.

First, take your precious darling and distil its essence into one or two sentences. I prefer Lucy Monroe's High Concept pitch line using the formula: Heroine / Flaw / Opponent / Life-changing event / Ally / Battle.

EDITOR AND AGENT PITCHES CONT.

GRACIE STANNERS: Pitching Your Baby

This makes the High Concept pitch for one of my works in progress: A crusader (Heroine) with a heart-breaking secret (Flaw) is blackmailed by a manipulative psychotic (Opponent) to advance his criminal lifestyle (Life-changing event). However, when an enigmatic stranger (Ally) offers her a chance to be free, she must make a choice which might lose her all she holds most precious. (Battle).

There's also the 'What If' Pitch. What if the only man you've ever loved came back from the dead on the day of your wedding—to the man who murdered him? You get the idea.

Your editor will then ask you about the book. This doesn't mean she wants a blow-by-blow account of the plot. What she wants to know is how the characters in your story are moved and changed in their internal and emotional journey by their reactions to the external circumstances that comprise your plot. So focus on the characters. Where they come from. How they change. What they feel. What their internal and external conflicts are.

She wants to know what a reader will feel as she reads your book. You're not just selling words. You're selling an emotional experience. Make it good.

There are, as I see it, two major advantages to pitching in person. The first is that, if you manage to pique the editor's interest and she asks for a partial, you get to write those two wonderful words *Solicited Submission* on your envelope. This magic incantation is not to be under-estimated. It has the power to whisk your work past the dreaded slush-pile (slouching eight feet deep and four feet wide) on the office floor, and onto the stack (sitting primly with ankles neatly crossed) on the editorial desk.

The second advantage is that the editor gets to meet you. This too should not be under-estimated. Think of it as a job interview. What does an interviewer want? She wants to know you can do the job, that you can think outside the box, that you're going to need minimum supervision to produce maximum benefit to the company, that you're trustworthy. Well, what does an editor want? She wants a prolific writer who can produce quality work on or before deadline, for the minimum investment of time, money and emotional angst on her part. She's looking for someone who can be relied upon to bring in lots of money. Crass, but true.

So when you go into your appointment and she asks you about yourself, be honest about who you are and what your goals are. Why? Because who you are, your career goals, the way you present yourself, are all part of what makes up your writing voice. You are, in a way, giving the editor an opportunity to 'preview' your work.

Let's imagine that an editor—later—has to make a choice between two authors, equally proficient in their craft. Who is she going to choose? One she's met, or one she hasn't? If she's human, she'll choose the one who has impressed her as being the more professional, the easier to work with. She'll

choose the one who has the better value in terms of presentation of self. In other words, if you've done your homework, she'll choose you.

All this is preparation. Please do try this at home!!!

On the Big Day, visit the ladies room at least ten minutes before your appointment. Trust me on this. Then, when you go into the room for your editor appointment make sure you have a business card to give her. A photo on it can be helpful to remind her later who you are. Make sure you take one of her business cards if she gives it to you—you'll then have the correct address to which to send your three chapters and synopsis.

Ask her how long she wants her synopsis to be. Should it be double spaced? Does she prefer a plot-based or a character-based one? A character-based one is generally best as it gives the emotional core of the thing rather than the outward strategy of movement from A to B, and is therefore more saleable. Write what she wants down on the back of her business card. Don't lose the wretched thing.

Don't drag a whole host of stuff with you. If you have an appointment during a workshop or seminar ask the person next to you to keep an eye on your gear till you get back. Just take your handbag, a pen to write down her requirements, your business cards, and—if you're worried you'll forget something important—an index card with the important points or questions on it. And don't take your manuscript along and offer it to her for some light bedtime reading. Really. Don't.

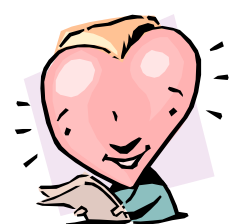
One piece of interesting trivia. Often an editor will ask for three chapters and a synopsis from a writer at a conference and the writer, thrilled to bits, dances away...and never sends it. This is absolutely true, and a complaint from several agents and editors whose blogs I've read.

One final thought. As writers we go into writing wanting to write. But writers also have to be able to sell. And in order to sell a book we have to sell to an editor or an agent. And in order to sell to an agent or editor we have to have emotionally real characters in stressful situations that readers everywhere can identify with.

So, what are you really pitching? You're pitching a marketing concept. You're pitching yourself. You're taking your experiences, your lifeblood, and myriad sleepless nights and mixing them into a fragrant gumbo of unforgettable characters, palate-blowing emotion, and off-the-chart sales potential.

And you're serving it to your chosen editor with professionalism and pride.

In ten minutes or less.



Avoiding the Transportation Nightmare



Researched & 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...

New Zealanders travelling to Auckland

Northliner Express 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.

Ph: +64 9 307 5873

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.

Ph: +64 96231503

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

New Zealanders & internationals flying in

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

Email: reservations@supershuttle.co.nz

Web: www.supershuttle.co.nz

Ph: 0800 748 885

Izabella Vane, Reservations Agent, said:

izabella.vane@tourismtransport.co.nz

"We provide transfers to and from Auckland International and Domestic terminals to the Waipuna, dependant on the arrival times of the delegates. It would be best to arrange for charter vehicles. Our vehicles seat up to a maximum of 11 passengers Costs per vehicle are as follows:

AKL Int/Dom - Waipuna Hotel \$90.00 (incl GST)

Waipuna Hotel - AKL Int/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."

MAXX for public transport in the Auckland region

Cushla Nichols, Communications Representative, said: "Travelling from the Auckland airports to the Waipuna 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"

Maxx Contact Centre

Phone: (09) 366 6400

Franklin and Rodney District call free 0800 10 30 80

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 has 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.alerttaxis.co.nz

With the information provided, you are looking at an approximately \$45.00 - \$50.00 depending on the traffic.

Auckland Co-operative Taxi Society is one of New Zealand's original taxi companies with over 700 vehicles, including Airport Shuttles & Tours and 7-11 Seater Group Transport. Phone: (09) 300 3000 for all your transport needs, including Airport "Meet & Greets" or book online at www.cooptaxi.co.nz

Email: info@cooptaxi.co.nz

Estimated fare from AKL Airport to Waipuna Centre is \$47-\$57 plus \$10 for White Name Board & \$6 Airport toll, total \$63-\$73. Return trip will be \$47-\$57, not including waiting time or delays.

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

Email: bookings@corporatecabs.co.nz

Cost approx \$45-50 from airport and \$40-45 to airport

Conference Transport Options cont.

Koru Cabs

Koru Cabs cater for the corporate, business and traveller markets. The 'people mover' vehicles seat 5-6 passengers.

Phone: +64 9 303 2000

Email: bookings@korucabs.co.nz

Web: www.korucabs.co.nz

Quoted \$51.00 each way based on the information provided.



Air Bus

Air Bus is an airport transfer service that 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

Email: stopthebus@airbus.co.nz

Web: www.airbus.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.

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 and you'll be driving an Ace vehicle from only \$24 per day!

www.acerentalcars.co.nz

Most of this information was taken from:

1. [http://www.aucklandnz.com/VisitorInformation/Getting Here and Around](http://www.aucklandnz.com/VisitorInformation/GettingHereandAround)
2. Emails received directly from customer service representatives

Technical tip:

Backing up

We welcome Jackie Coates as our new "technical" contributor to Heart to Heart.

You've spent many hours slaving away over that precious manuscript but suddenly your screen goes dead and your computer dies. It's all over - or is it? Luckily you've made a backup...

There are many ways to backup work but here's a selection as discussed on the loop:

- A Gmail account - you have up to 6 gigabytes of storage space so you can easily email yourself important documents that's enough for thousands of documents!). It's easy to set up and, best of all, it's also free and accessible from any computer.
- USB flash-drives or pen-drives - the storage space on these has increased hugely at the same time as the prices have come down. You can pick one up with a gigabyte of storage for \$20 or so, and this is plenty of room for text documents and photos too.
- CD - good for permanent backups you can store out of the house. Also good to keep in the house as well in case of burglary - who's going to steal a blank-looking CD?

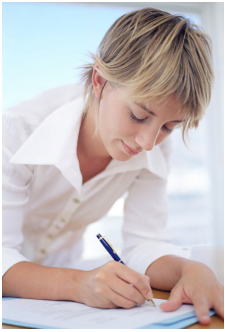
- External hard-drives - these hook up to your computer like a flash-drive and have huge amounts of storage space.
- Time Machine for Mac users - this nifty programme saves your document according to time rather than name, which means you never save over your last piece of work. Sadly they don't have it for PC users, worse luck...
- Home server - all important documents can be kept on this and backed up automatically (we have one and have set it to back up every night). Of course, the one catch is that you need a techie in the house in order to set one up...

If you have any other technical questions or tips, don't hesitate to email me at jackiec@paradise.net.nz. Jackie describes herself as "...not too bad with computers. I'm a librarian who does a lot of teaching and technical troubleshooting. If there's a question I don't know, then I can enlist help from my husband and he's pretty good (he set up our home network)."

Thanks Jackie!

Don't feel guilty for writing!

By Joanne Graves



In an August 2006 article on the www.wtopnews.com website, Nora Roberts addressed the issue of guilt.

"I had nine years of Catholic school," she said, "and grew up in an Irish Catholic family, with parents who expected you to do what you were told and do your job. And while I'm extremely lapsed, I still have the core of Catholic guilt. ... If I just blew off a day and didn't have a really good reason, I would feel guilty about that. I mean, it would just not be worth it to me." Working Monday to Friday, eight hours a day, she said "I'm not a machine. I think I have a really strong work ethic, plus I really love the work. If you love what you do, you do a lot of it."

That pretty much explains her amazing output and, boy, don't some of us wish we had to deal with *that* kind of guilt.

Unfortunately, however, for many of us, the guilt we suffer is a different breed altogether. The kind more likely to discourage, rather than encourage us along as writers.

Double Clendon finalist, Maree Anderson, calls that guilt "a killer."

When she began writing, she was a stay-at-home mum with two pre-schoolers, and she figured she'd give the dream a shot before her children started school. The enjoyment of writing, though, came with a price; guilt. Even though they were happy, well adjusted children, she admits, "I felt I wasn't giving them my full attention – not being a proper mum."

Melissa James suspects being a mother is to blame.

"We have the children, we feed them... I think it's genetic that we want to be there for them. So the guilt comes along whenever we aren't there and actually put ourselves first in anything." She admits to getting the guilts over a lot of things. "I feel guilty if I've worked late and my husband and son might have to get ready without me, so I wake up. I'm guilty if I sleep in because that's writing time." She even, she says, goes to her son's school functions, even if on deadline, "because I have horrendous visions of him shooting 20 people from a rooftop and yelling, "Why weren't you there for me, Mum?"

Barbara Jeffcot-Geris was the 2007 Valerie Parv Award winner – and the mother of two pairs of twins. She reckons guilt is carried on the X chromosome. "It afflicts all women and because as writers we have to do so much juggling in our lives, perhaps affects us more so."

Back in 2005, Alison Brennan had just sold her first book, and has since gone on to massive success – *New York Times* bestseller, a RITA nominee this year. Yet she admitted on *Romancing the Blog* (May) that guilt as a mother (she has five children) was huge for her.

"I still write at night when they're in bed because the two littlest will constantly interrupt my work and I don't have the heart to put them back in daycare. I have guilt waiting for next year when I can put one in pre-school. I love her dearly, but last time she pulled my hand off the mouse as I was attaching my manuscript to an email to my agent, I put her on time-out. And I felt guilty about that!"

Yvonne Lindsay says that as an aspiring writer, the key was to get serious about her writing and let people know it.

"I figured that once I started treating what I did seriously, and with pride, that other people could take me seriously and be proud of my achievements along the way too. Of course, when those achievements came with a financial reward as well I started being taken very seriously indeed."

It is that financial aspect of writing when you're not published that can add another branch to the guilt tree. The money you either spend on your writing career, which can be significant when you're going hard out with submitting and entering contests etc on a low income, or writing when you could be in a paying job.

When Maree's children began school, she took a part time job which not only left her with time to write, but meant she was earning and contributing to the household.

"When I entered that competition or went to that conference, I wasn't just spending my husband's hard-earned income because I'd earned some of the money I was spending."

When health issues sprang up in the form of severe allergies to products at her work, though, it left her too tired to even write, which led to her suffering with depression. Her husband encouraged her to quit the job, and focus on the writing. While her writing has rocketed ahead – a Clendon win, and more recently finalling in the Red Sage novella contest – she still hasn't sold, and it's back to the old not earning and 'feeling guilty while hubby shoulders the burden' scenario.

"Feeling guilty every time I fork out another USD25.00 for a competition, or buy a bunch of US stamps for query SASEs, or register for that conference because it's not MY money I'm spending."

The upside has been the support at home. "If you husband thinks it's a 'hobby' and doesn't respect your writing or your need to write, it's just not gonna work." She recalls giving her speech at the Conference Awards Dinner when she won the Clendon in 2006, and her husband finally understanding what it mean to her. "That's when he 'got it'. This wasn't just a hobby for me, it was a way of life."

Don't feel guilty cont.

Barbara agrees that support is a must.

"We writers need someone who will support us unconditionally and will *never* make us feel guilty or try to undermine what we're doing. My critique partners and writing friends have been an enormous help in pulling me out of the guilt trap - mostly by empathizing, but often by getting me to say out loud how important writing is to me."

Melissa James also has the support of her CPs, and of her husband, "Because of a wonderful opportunity I currently have, my hubby is nagging me to write more, and he's helping around the house, so I'm blessed at the moment." But she stresses that has come after years of the other...

In those years she was "training" for her career as a writer, Yvonne says, "I refused to be made to feel guilty by anyone who wanted to belittle what I did or put down romance as a genre. It doesn't mean to say I was successful at that all the time, but it went a long way towards explaining to my family why I wouldn't be keeping them company in the evenings, or why I would be away over a weekend and miss netball games etc., because of writing and writing related activities."

Like Yvonne during her pre-pubbed years, Barbara has made a conscious decision to give her writing everything she's got.

"My friends and family have understood that I'm not always available." If she can't get together with friends because she's writing, that's just the way it is. Although with her youngest twins starting school in a few months she's starting to get the guilts that maybe she should get a 'real' job. But, she says, "As before, I'm going to keep on juggling and reminding myself that not many people get the opportunity to follow their dreams, and guilt and self-sabotage are *my* issues to overcome."

And Maree emphasises the need to be strong. "You have to believe you're good enough, believe you'll be published some day or you'll be eaten up by the guilt of letting someone else shoulder the financial burden of supporting you."

Not that getting published solves all your issues. In fact, it can let loose some unexpected ones.

Melissa admits she feels guilty if she doesn't make deadlines. "I turn books in early if they ask because I feel guilty saying no. One early deadline was impossible and I felt bad for turning it in six weeks early instead of eight!"

And in that 2005 post, Alison Brennan wrote, "I'm going to Reno in July for RWA National and I feel guilty because I've never left the kids that long. Yeah, they'll be with their dad . . . great, now I feel guilty for leaving him with all the responsibility."

So, how to deal with the guilty feelings?

Know, for a start, you are not alone. Try and connect with likeminded people, either in person or on line, to support you. While e-lists have the danger of being time-consuming, they can bring you in touch with people who feel the way you do.

For a spiritual lift, Julia Cameron's books are exceptional to drum home just how important creative people are to the world and they can help change any rotten thinking you've got going on - they certainly changed my perspective on what writing is all about. In fact, *The Right to Write* was recommended at the workshop at last month's Auckland meeting.

Barbara Samuel's website has some excellent blog posts that will inspire you on www.barbarasamuel.com.

And with a clear Christian slant, (I wonder if some of our guilty feelings about doing something as seemingly 'frivolous' as writing a novel when we could be tending the spud patch and spinning the sheep's wool has trickled down through our colonial background), try Debbie Macomber's "Knit Together: Discover God's Pattern for Your Life." Debbie sums up the urge to write as being a pretty good indication that it's what you are "meant" to do!

Finally, I think Yvonne Lindsay puts it best when she says: "I really don't think you should allow yourself to feel guilty for showing others that you're dedicated to what you love doing. Yes, we all have to still be there for our families, emotionally and physically, but we're so much better at it when we can be great writers at the same time. "

Former RWNZ President, Joanne Graves has suffered her fair share of guilt over the years. She is currently putting her romance writing on the back burner to focus on paid work, and being around for her teenagers before they decide to ditch her and leave home.





ROMANCE WRITING MARKETS

WITH THANKS TO PATRIKA SALMON

Sourcebooks

American publisher; Imprint Casablanca; editor, Deborah Werksman; interested in all forms of romance. Check out all the details at www.sourcebooks.com/content/authors_submissions_guidelines.asp

Cobblestone Press

E-books; publish weekly! Sensual and erotic romances 10-100 thousand words; One year electronic rights and 35% of the cover price to the author. Check out all the details at www.cobblestone-press.com

Woman's Weekly (UK)

Contemporary and relevant to the over fifties! Always seeking fiction which is well written, contemporary and fits the style. 'Woman's Weekly', Gaynor Davis, Fiction Editor, IPC Media, Blue Finn Building, 110 Southward Street, London SE1 0SU. Include an e-mail address for response.

BeWrite Books

www.bewrite.net

E and traditional books; romance, between 60,000 and 130,000 words, submit only when completed; online submission system so check out the website.

Black Lyon Publishing

www.blacklyonpublishing.com

Sweet Romance 40-60,000 words; Historical and Paranormal 60-90,000 words; actively seeking pre 1000AD romances for their Ancient Times Romance line; e-mail queries to queries@blacklyonpublishing.com

Torque Press **Erotica**

PO Box 2545, Round Rock TX 78680

All submissions to *Torque Press* must adhere to guidelines or they will be discarded unread. All submissions must contain gay, lesbian, or transgendered characters. While works do not need to be graphic, they must contain homosexual romance and focus on the interaction between characters. If you have ménage or heterosexual stories, please see our subsidiary, *Bareback Angels*. We are primarily looking for homoerotic stories in all genres. We are not looking for sex without characterization. Plotty, sensual, character-driven novels are our focus; however, if you have a novel featuring a gay or lesbian character shown in a positive light, please feel free to submit it for consideration. 50,000 words+ (novels); 20,000–45,000 words (novella); 10,000–20,000 words (novelette); under 10,000 words (short stories). All submissions must be submitted as an attachment in either .DOC, .TXT, or .RTF format to submissions@torquerepress.com. Response time 3-8

weeks; extensive submission guidelines on <http://www.torquerepress.com/submissions/guidelines.html> Torquere Press also produces a number of anthologies, see website for full details.

Pink Petal Books seeks well-written romance stories starting with one character receiving flowers. The flowers can be received for any reason, and they don't necessarily need to be received from the other major character(s) in the story.

Each themed anthology will contain three to four 15,000-25,000 word novellas released first as individual e-books, then published together into one print volume. Heat levels in each story need to start at sensual and work up to erotic. Language may range from the occasional frank or graphic language to no holds barred.

Our first anthology will be **Pink Petal Books Presents: Shifters**. All stories need to contain a shifter as either the hero or heroine. Different shifters preferred. Think about animals you haven't seen in books, or seen very rarely, and use your imagination. You can submit a wolf, but preference will be given to the different animals, so the wolf story should be exceptional and new. Deadline for stories will be July 15 with decisions made by August 1. Electronic publication will happen during our official launch month of October, with print publication to follow in February 2009.

Please email your complete manuscript attached in RTF/Word format to meditor@pinkpetalbooks.com. Include in the body of the email a word count and brief blurb (one or two paragraphs). For more information about us, please read our complete submission guidelines.

Upcoming anthologies are:

Pink Petal Books Presents: Dragons
Submission Deadline: November 15, 2008 decisions by Dec 1
Electronic Publication: March 2009, print July 2009

Pink Petal Books Presents: Nature (think Shamans and Druids)
Submission Deadline: April 15, 2009 decisions by May 1
Electronic Publication: August 2009, print December 2009

For more information please visit Pink Petal Books – <http://www.pinkpetalbooks.com/>

Pink Petal Books is an imprint of Jupiter Gardens Press, a division of Jupiter Gardens, LLC. For more information about Jupiter Gardens Press, a metaphysical and sf/f publisher, please visit <http://www.jupitergardenspress.com/>

RWNZ Contest News

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

STRICTLY SINGLE CONTEST 2008

APOLOGY: The notice in last month's newsletter incorrectly stated that this contest is open to published writers. It is open to unpublished members of RWNZ and to published members *who have not been published in novel-length fiction in the past five years.*

Submission guidelines:

- * Open to young adult entries and open to single title entries.
- * All entries must be submitted in ARC format (see instructions below - it's easy!)
- * Submit: Young adult entries: up to first 10.5 pages of your unpublished manuscript in ARC format, plus a 2-page single-spaced synopsis. The minimum projected word count of your full manuscript should be 40,000 words.
Single title entries: up to first 18 pages of your unpublished manuscript in ARC format, plus a 4-page synopsis. The minimum projected word count of your full manuscript should be 70,000 words.

Note: ARC formatting does not apply to your synopsis, which should be in standard format but single-spaced, 3cm margins all round and typed in Courier New point 12.

- * Up to 2 entries per author may be submitted.
- * Editor Judge: Keyren Gerlach, Assistant Editor, HQN Books & LUNA Books
Agent Judge: Susannah Taylor, Richard Henshaw Group, New York
- * Deadline: entries must be postmarked no later than 26 September 2008.
- * Coordinator: Tyree Bidgood - tyree.bidgood@southerncross.co.nz
- * Entry form will be included in the August *Heart to Heart*.

ARC format resembles the text of a book and reduces the number of pages of a standard formatted entry by about a third, which makes entries easier to handle for the coordinator and represents a saving in postage costs. For young adult entries, 30 standard formatted pages equals 10.5 pages in ARC format (entry should finish half way down the first column on page 11); for longer single title entries, 50 standard formatted pages equals 18 pages in ARC format.

Conversion to ARC Format

1. Before you convert your entry to ARC, make sure it is in standard format: double-spaced with 3 cm margins on all sides and typed in Courier New 12 point.
2. Take the first 30 / 50 pages (or fewer if that suits you) of your double-spaced manuscript and go into Page Setup on the File menu, change to Landscape format and change margin settings as follows: top margin 2.5 cm; bottom, left and right margins all 1.5 cm.
3. Highlight the text and format it into two columns (under Format on the tool bar).
4. Change the font to Times New Roman 12 point.
5. Change to single spacing.
6. Turn on full justification.

If you have any questions, or any problems with the conversion, please contact me (Ellie Huse at elliehuse@yahoo.com). I'm very happy to help.

Other Contest News

August - September contests submitted by Lisa Elkind-Gardiner, aka Lisa Whitefern

GOTHROM PRESENTS THE DAWN THOMPSON MEMORIAL HAUNTED HEARTS CONTEST

Deadline: August 1 2008

<http://www.gothrom.net/contest.html>

For historical gothic and contemporary gothic romances; email and paper entries accepted.

Final Judges: Contemporary - Alicia Condon, Dorchester Publishing; Historical - Julia Thornhill, The Wild Rose Press

Entry fee: \$US25. Open to unpublished RWA members in good standing.

Other Contest News cont.

2008 GOLDEN ROSE CONTEST

Deadline: August 3, 2008

<http://www.rosecityromancewriters.com/contest.html>

The competition is designed to prepare you for the RWA Golden Heart contest. Therefore it follows the same formatting rules and category structures. The contest is open to any RWA member who has not been published by an RWA recognized publisher in the last five years. All main categories of romance except erotic romance.

Entry fee: \$US 35. RWA members only.

On The Far Side 2008 - Fantasy Futuristic & Paranormal

On The Far Side is all electronic. Deadline: August 8, 2008

<http://www.romance-ffp.com/OTFS.htm>

Final Judges

Time Travel: TBA; General Paranormal: Avon; Romantic

Elements: Ashley Grayson Agency; Futuristic: Harlequin;

Erotic: Caren Johnson Lit. Agency; Fantasy: Sourcebooks;

Young Adult: Greyhaus Lit. Agency

Entry fee: \$US 30. Open to all.

Got Wolf - Black Rose Writing Contest from the Wild Rose Press

Deadline: August 30, 2008

<http://thewildrosepress.com>

If you've got a hot hero/heroine that also happens to turn furry at least once a month, then Black Rose is looking for your story. All stories must have at least one HOT

consummated love scene. All six winners will be included in a Black Rose anthology. No fee to enter. Open to all.

http://thewildrosepress.com/publisher/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1235&Itemid=1

4 shorts – 15-25,000 word maximum and 2 full shorts – 25-45,000 word maximum will be chosen from the entries.

Palmprint Romantic Erotic Corporal Punishment Story Competition

Deadline: 30 September 2008

<http://www.palmprint.co.uk/>

First prize is £100, 2nd is £75, 3rd is £50 and 4th is £25.

The story must be between 2000 and 4000 words, your own original work, previously unpublished and must not have appeared on the internet. There is no entry fee. Must be over 18 to enter.

'Finally A Bride' Contest – Oklahoma Romance Writers of America

Deadline: September 1, 2008

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

\$US 30 for non-RWA members; \$US 25 for RWA members.

First pages of MS (30 pages max) that has finished, but not won, in a previous RWA or RWA chapter-sponsored contest. Manuscripts finishing in the top quarter of GH also qualify.

Electronic entries only. Open to all.

Chapter Short Story Contest 2008

What a delightful selection of short stories sent to me for read! No wonder they all reached the final half-dozen. Thank you for giving me the chance to assess them for your 2008 short story awards – even if the task is getting increasingly difficult. But it is such an honour to be asked to do so and I value the confidence you place in me – and trust it's not misplaced.

And congratulations to all the finalists. Those of us who aren't writers always admire those whose imaginative ideas turn into an absorbing tale with a thoroughly satisfying ending. We're probably like the people who ask actors "how on earth do you remember all those words?" The answer is of course in both cases is because it needs persistence and determination, to say nothing of a certain amount of talent.

And this applies to *all* the entrants this year. Even if you didn't make the finals, your ability to plot, create and entertain is something to keep on striving to improve. As I have said before, to do so within the limits of 1500 words is a huge achievement. There are plenty of "name" authors who decline the offer to write a short story saying that it is far too difficult for them. A full-length novel gives them wider scope – and I often reflect, rather sadly, that the word-processor has allowed some writers to plunge overboard with the length of their work and not always with better results!

When I sit down to read your stories I am looking for a story with endearing main characters whose search for that special someone to love is presented with the all the difficulties and the means to overcome them. The length limitation can cause problems if other characters need to be introduced: the best friend, the rival, the well-meaning meddlers and so on. To allow these people into a story and keep them under control can be daunting, so thank you for managing it so successfully.

Congratulations to the winner, the runners up, the other finalists – and to the RWNZ too.

Julie Redlich, Fiction Editor, Woman's Day

CONGRATULATIONS

1st - Tyree Bidgood

2nd - Lisa Anderson

3rd - Sally Astridge

Highly commended: Rachel Collins, Cathryn Hein and Virginia Suckling

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 – Liz Heywood
email: liz.heywood@gmail.com
phone: (09) 2351404

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

Last month was a small but great meeting. Barbara Clendon ran through an enticing selection of new releases, Nalini did a skite on how fabulous she was because her book cover was featured in the latest issue of *Publisher's Weekly*, (we are so lucky here in Auckland to have published gals like Nalini, Karina Bliss and Sophia James who popped along to the last meeting!), and Sandra Hyde led an excellent discussion on books that have helped with writing. There were some great recommendations to add to the personal library too, and some good discussion.

Inspired by that, next month we're going to follow a similar format and talk about... web resources. Yep, all those on line groups, courses, classes, websites that have helped with the writing. Keep them in mind for the July meeting.

The "boss: is away for the next two months, so any queries for the July and August meetings, send 'em off to me, joanne.graves@gmail.com. Ph (09) 6242492.

Situations vacant: Karen Clark has resigned from the most important job at the meeting - bringing the tea and coffee. Thanks heaps, Karen, for your commitment over the past year. But we need a new person starting with the September meeting. It involves bringing the box of supplies - the teas, coffees, the milk, the tea-towels... Naturally you need to be able to attend meetings - except December which will be the Chapter Christmas lunch, and of course January when we're recovering from the New Year festivities. Give it some thought and let me know - I can't imagine a meeting without a cuppa!

See you all, as usual, the first Saturday of the month - Saturday 5 July next time, Three Kings Tennis Pavilion, Mt Albert Road, Three Kings, 12.30pm. And don't forget a plate for lunch, and a few bucks for the books raffle.

Joanne Graves

WAIKATO, BAY OF PLENTY & KING COUNTRY

Contact Liz Heywood for details of this group's next meeting.

HAWKE'S BAY

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

CHRISTCHURCH

We are planning to brave the cold at Memories Cafe in Papanui Road for our winter meetings. Thursday 17 July and Thursday 21 August at 7.30pm. For information email sueknight@ihug.co.nz

Sue Knight

RWNZ NEWS AROUND THE REGIONS

WELLINGTON

We were very pleased to welcome Lesley Marshall of Editline to our June meeting. She shared plenty of helpful information with us, and was kind enough to listen and comment as most of us read the first five pages of a novel we're currently working on.

Rachel was congratulated on finalling with her first-ever contest entry. Diana shared the very nice letter M&B had sent about her 'Instant Seduction' entry. Giovanna opened the envelope of writing aspirations from our Christmas lunch and passed the slips around. Some of us had achieved more than others! We filled in replacements – we'll see what we can achieve in the next six months. And yes – Hugh Jackman made an appearance again...

Our next meeting will be on Saturday July 5th at 135 Milne Drive, Paraparaumu.

Kris Pearson

NELSON

Congratulations and celebrations were on the agenda for this month's meeting: firstly, due to the interest of two new prospective members plus a good turnout of other members, the meetings were revived. Secondly, two of us have recently had our books accepted for publication: Loren Teague (multi-published) and myself (debut novel). Plus Dorothy Palleson has self-published a book of poetry. Woo hoo!! We broke out the champagne!!

Next meeting will be at 248H Annesbrook Drive, Nelson, at 2pm on Saturday, 12 July.

Cherie Skinner

Getting to know our regional convenors

Hi, I'm Cherie and I arrange the Nelson meetings. I'm on the bottom left of this group photo which my husband took at our June meeting.

We are celebrating three members' publishing successes, including my own debut historical romance which has been picked up by The Wild Rose Press. I've been submitting since 2005 and am very grateful for the support and encouragement given to me by the group.



Meet the editor: Cheryl Wright

Continued from page 7

Gracie: Tell us about your up-coming book for writers, The Write Resources.

Cheryl: This book is written specifically for writers, and covers subjects such as getting the most of out conferences, how to market, getting a website, getting book reviews and interviews, entering writing contests, and so on. The majority of what is in the book are free resources, and many are already available to us, but in many cases, we don't know how to use them properly or to our best advantage. We hope it will be released in the next month or so. I'd love to be able to bring some copies to the conference.

Gracie: Do you have any advice for unpublished writers who feel as though they'll never get published?

Cheryl: Keep writing; keep working toward your dream of becoming a published writer. Don't listen to negative people,

because negativity brings us down. Anyone who wants to be a published writer, and works hard toward that goal, can get published. It can be a hard slog, but if it's what you want, forget about the hard work and keep trying.

Five years ago I was a total unknown. Today I have nine published books (or is it ten? hmmm) and two more scheduled for publication this year. That would not have happened without setting goals and keeping positive.

Start with short term goals, write them down, display them where others can see them. Retrain your family to help with meals and chores, set yourself specific times for writing. It will eventually all come to fruition. Remember that no one can fulfil your dreams except you. Now repeat after me: **I am a real writer, and I will be published!**

THE NAKED WRITER

Baring all in the world of romance and writing

July is almost here, and it's starting to hot up for the exciting events that await us.

Yes, the conference back at the refurbished Waipuna is nearly upon us, and we're lucky to get Margie Lawson's workshop down here, so many American writers just rave about her. Then the Clendon Award finalists are to be announced (might already have been when you see this), ditto our other contest such as the Great Beginning and Meet the Editor. Yep, it's all happening....

On a personal note, I have a huge announcement to make. We, here at the Naked household, managed to watch all of this last series of *American Idol* on TV2 without finding out what was happening over there in real time in America, as the episodes were screened here three weeks or so behind. Terrible, being that far behind on the most exciting television event of the year and not wanting to have it spoilt for us by knowing the outcomes. But we made it. Week by week we managed to avoid finding out the latest on *Idol*. Do you have any idea how massive an achievement this is, where at the push of a button I could have found out the winner weeks ago, or inadvertently seen a headline, or the information been slipped by a well meaning friend or colleague? True, there were moments that came close. At work one day a customer was photocopying something from the *American Idol* website, and she had a question. As soon as I saw the offending document in her hands, I covered my face as if the photocopy was the spawn of Satan, and told her I'd have to get somebody else to help her with this. Lucky, she didn't report me to the boss. Instead she just looked at me as if I was a chapter short of a full manuscript.

Indeed, over dinner times, it became apparent that those of us watching *Idol* had taken precautions to avoid finding out. One was avoiding the Trade Me message boards in case of spoilers. I had to avoid Fox News on the internet and the entertainment pages, and go off the American romance writers' loop I was on unless discussion turned to *Idol*. Another resident of this household informed his World of Warcraft online gaming buddies not to tip him off, and by dang, they honoured his heartfelt plea. Yes. In this age of free-flowing information, it is a tribute to our self control that we made it, week by week, to the final, where I told the family, as we waited for that great moment, to be calm if our favourite contestant didn't win and gave strict orders there was to be no screaming, but then shrieked hysterically when my boy won.

The Naked Writer is getting practical, because in the Naked household, cost cutting is necessary.

Yes, just as the nation is facing economic upheaval, and the cost of petrol is a shocker, the state of the Naked economy is, just like that of most of the nation I suspect, under serious review. Now while this isn't quite "starving artist in the garret" stuff, 'cos I do live in an actual house and I don't have to jump on the scales to know I am so not starving, watching those pennies is now becoming habitual.

Help, however, is at hand. I have discovered www.oilyrag.co.nz. It's a local website, and is from Frank and Dr Muriel Newman. Dr Muriel is the former ACT MP and husband Frank is an investment financial kind of chap. The two live up in Northland, and have written several books on getting by on the smell of an oily rag. So if you're having to cut costs to afford your scrape of budget margarine on your home-brand toast, this may be handy. In fact, I'm off to switch off the TV, the video, the microwave, and everything we're not using right now...!!!

And finally, here are some inspiring words on discouragement, because, boy, don't we frequently find discouragement a constant companion. Rick Warren, author of inspirational book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, writes, in a recent online piece, that over the years he's debated whether the worst enemy is procrastination or discouragement. One is putting off what we want to do; the other is thinking of quitting altogether. He says one way to resist discouragement is to outright fight it – don't get sucked in by it – and ask yourself these questions and take note of the answers.

How do I handle failure? When things don't go my way do I get grumpy, frustrated, start complaining? Do I finish what I start? (biggie here for me – I currently have about four unfinished manuscripts –yikes!), and how would I rate on persistence?

He says, "If you're discouraged, don't give up without a fight. Nothing worthwhile ever happens without endurance and energy. When an artist starts to create a sculpture, he has to keep chipping away. He doesn't hit the chisel with the hammer once, and suddenly all the excess stone falls away revealing a beautiful masterpiece. He keeps hitting it and hitting it, chipping away at the stone.

"And that's true of life, too: Nothing really worthwhile ever comes easy in life. The fact is, great people are really just ordinary people with an extraordinary amount of determination. Great people don't know how to quit."
(www.thepurposedrivenlife.com)

