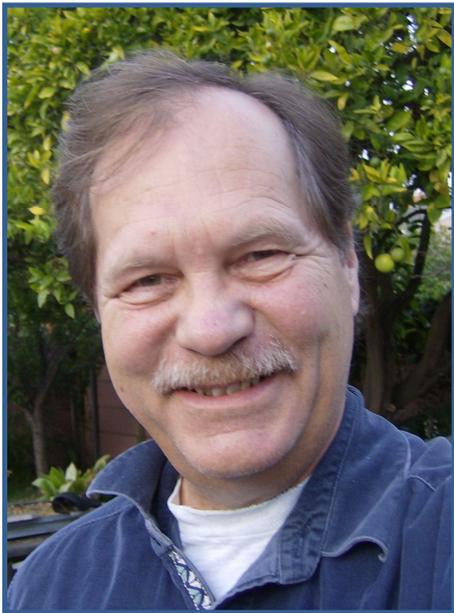


HEART TO HEART



CHRISTOPHER VOGLER

Interviewed by Tessa Radley



Q: We are absolutely thrilled to welcome you as the presenter of our Advanced Writer's Workshop on The Hero's Journey in Auckland. What started your fascination with story?

My mother and her mother were great readers and so the house was full of books. They read the fairy tales to me and were good critics of movies. I grew up in St. Louis, Missouri and loved seeing new Hollywood movies at the drive-ins and old classics on TV. I knew I wanted to be part of it somehow. Science fiction was very exciting to me, and of course myths. My father had a part in that -- he saw I was interested in those things and he used to bring me old books he'd find in junk stores.

Q: Does myth still have impact on modern story?

Absolutely. There is great unconscious influence because myths are so interwoven with our whole culture in subtle ways. But I've talked to many writers who are quite conscious of myths as a source of inspiration and structure. I'm constantly being asked by novelists and screenwriters to tell them about myths that relate to the themes they're writing about. They seem to find it comforting and they often get great ideas for scenes from our discussions.

Q: Where does the modern take on story sometimes go wrong?

You can always tell what the storytellers or filmmakers are interested in, and sometimes it's not story and character, but some other sensation like shock, violent action, or special effects for their own sake. That's fine, but the work would be so much more satisfying to the soul if they paid the same attention to the basics of story and character. On another tack I'd say there is a bit of what I'd call "over-writing" going on where some TV shows and movies feature self-consciously clever dialogue. Everyone in a script can't sound like a comedy writer.

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EDITORS' DESK

Welcome to the May issue of Heart to Heart. With the conference fast approaching, we are excited to include the registration forms and latest information in this edition. We also have an exciting interview with Hero guru Christopher Vogler, who will be incredible to meet in the flesh in August.

This issue also features interviews with authors Anna Jacobs and Sandra Hyatt, as well as some fantastic craft articles and up-to-date market and industry news.

Enjoy Heart to Heart, and please don't hesitate to send in ideas or articles should you want to contribute.

Until next time.
Soraya & Suzanne



"Wow, the house sure is clean these days. I'm guessing you have writer's block again...am I right?"

From Inky Girl

www.inkygirl.com

RWNZ & RWAustralia Critique Partner Scheme

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

PRESIDENT ABBY



I'm writing this while on a 4-week trip to the USA – not sure if the best thing is the sights, the food, the research opportunities for my writing, or the complete absence of housework! My husband's gone off to a conference in Miami, giving me free rein on my road

trip with the kids (driving slowly from Atlanta to Chicago) to visit bookstores – thankfully the kids are also bookaholics and will browse for an hour without complaint. I also visited my agent, just out of Atlanta, and she loaded me up with a couple of bags of books by her various clients... Trouble is, Nigel, my hubby, has given me stern warnings about not weighing down our luggage...so now I have just a couple more days to figure out where to hide the books before the family is reunited in Chicago. While in Chicago, I'll be attending the conference of the Chicago North RWA, which I'm really looking forward to.

But not as much as I'm looking forward to **An Affair to Remember, RWNZ's 20th anniversary conference**, running at Rydges Hotel in downtown Auckland, August 20-22.

You'll find your conference registration form in this issue of *Heart to Heart*, and it's also available on the RWNZ website. You've already heard about some of our speakers – our Friday workshop presenter Christopher Vogler, and our weekend keynote Stephanie Laurens. And you've heard about editor Dianne Moggy and literary agent Laura Bradford. And now...we have another, very recent addition to our speaker lineup...**Alex Logan, editor at Grand Central Publishing**, will also be joining us for conference.

Many of you will already know a bit about Alex and about Grand Central Publishing (formerly Warner Books). But for those who don't, one of her debut authors, Elise Chidley, is a RITA finalist this year, and check out these details of some recent acquisitions Alex has made (info courtesy of Publishers' Marketplace): a Scottish historical by Margaret Mallory, medieval historical by Peggy Brown, sexy contemporaries by Cathleen Smith and Lilli Feisty, a suspense trilogy by Cynthia Eden.... In other words, if you're writing and brand of single title romance or women's fiction, you need to hear Alex talk about her view of the market and what she's looking for. And if you have a manuscript ready to submit, you need to be reserving a pitch time with her!

Read the registration form for more details of our conference offerings. If you haven't attended one of our conferences before, rest assured that we'll make you very welcome, whether you're an old hand or a newbie writer. Note that the weekend sessions are two full days of talks, interspersed with breakout workshops (it seems every year someone turns up who's surprised to find there are more than just a couple of workshops happening on those days!). Friday is, of course, also an all day session. Editor and agent pitches will be scheduled across all three days.

You can read an interview with one of our speakers, Christopher Vogler, on the cover page.

Regional workshops

The second of our regional workshops was held recently, this time in the Wellington / Kapiti Coast area, and again was a big hit with attendees, attracting several new members to RWNZ. The Christchurch workshop will be held late May – contact our publicity officer Sue Knight (contact details on p2 of this newsletter) for more info.

Rule changes

Last month, I told you the proposed changes to the RWNZ rules would be available on our website "soon" for you to view. Turns out I was a little premature – the executive hasn't finished reviewing the amendments suggested by our hardworking rule change committee, so if you have a hankering to read the rules, you're just going to have to hold on a little longer!

RWNZ Executive

In this issue of the newsletter, you'll find details of our AGM, to be held August 21 during conference. The AGM is open to all RWNZ members, not just conference delegates. Instructions for proposing remits are included here, as are details of the executive positions. All positions are open to nominations, and several of the executive won't be standing again. Please contact me or any other member of the executive if you're interested in standing for election, or if there's someone else you'd like to nominate, and you'd like to find out more. Or, you can just go ahead and submit the nomination form, correctly completed. Serving on the RWNZ exec is very rewarding (many of you have heard my pet theory about how people who serve on the exec tend to get published!), and since we hold our meetings online, geography is no barrier.

Abby Gaines
President, RWNZ

Continued from page 1

Q: I'd love to hear about any book that you've read in the past year that has stood out in your mind. Can you expand on why it was so memorable?

I had a great time entering an entire world in the novel SACRED GAMES by Vikram Chandra, about a Mumbai policeman who gets in over his head while investigating the suicide of a crime lord. It's a huge epic that guides you through all the levels of modern India, one of those books where you're sorry when it ends. The main character, the Sikh policeman, is a wonderful creation and I hope he will be a continuing character. The book is eye-opening in the way it exposes the connections among government spy agencies, terrorists, Bollywood and criminal gangs. At the same time, it was a classic film noir story with intimations of being about something larger, speaking about gods and devils as much as cops and crooks.

And I must mention that for the last fifteen years my main pleasure reading has been the twenty novels in the "Master and Commander" series by Patrick O'Brian. I've read them all three times through and hope I have soaked up some of his magic powers of storytelling.

Q: With the centralization of publishing is it possible that great stories are being missed? Or will there always be a place for stories that run counter to the market?

I'm sure some great stories are being missed because it's a cold cruel world and the authors may well lose heart too soon after a number of rejections from the increasingly small circle of buyers. A glib answer is that the Internet is supposed to magically let everyone be famous and popular, and that we can somehow make money from DIY web publishing, but so far it's been the Boulevard of Broken Dreams. I am a bit disappointed in the promises of technology. It's great when it works and it does make some things a bit easier, but the price is very, very steep. □□ The good thing is that you can find an audience for your writing through blogs. I want people to find just as much satisfaction from getting their stories out of themselves in some form as they do from getting published or produced.

Q: Have you visited New Zealand before? What are you most looking forward with this trip to New Zealand?

I haven't had the pleasure but my friends who go often to New Zealand have made it clear I will enjoy it for many reasons. I'm interested in island cultures and in regional differences. I try to encourage the celebration of local accents and flavors in the media. To me, going to a new English-speaking country is like going to an alternate universe in a

science fiction tale. I always get a kick out of observing the subtle little differences in attitude or style that are not mentioned in the guidebooks. And of course I am looking forward to meeting a gathering of romance writers. Romance writers will always be my darlings, because they were the very first to "get" my ideas about story and put them to work. Very astute of them!

Well, I can't wait for Christopher Vogler's Friday workshop on The Hero's Journey. Look forward to seeing you there, too!

Christopher Volger's Bio

Christopher Vogler is a veteran story consultant for major Hollywood film companies and a respected teacher of filmmakers and writers around the globe. His book "The Writer's Journey", applying the ancient patterns of myth to modern storytelling, has helped to shape the way people in movies, TV, and publishing think about stories and is required reading at many film schools and literature programs. He has influenced the screenplays of movies from THE LION KING to THE WRESTLER and most recently wrote the first installment of RAVENSKULL, a Japanese-style manga or graphic novel. He is the executive producer of the feature film P.S. YOUR CAT IS DEAD and writer of the animated feature JESTER TILL.

A native of St. Louis and a graduate of the University of Missouri School of Journalism, he served as a U. S. Air Force officer and made documentary films on the military space program before doing graduate work at the University of Southern California film school. He started work in the film industry as a story analyst for Twentieth Century Fox and other major studios. He was part of the animation story staff at Disney while THE LION KING, ALADDIN, and HERCULES, were being developed. His book "The Writer's Journey" grew out of a short memo he wrote while at Disney, pointing out the usefulness of Joseph Campbell's concept of the "Hero's Journey". Currently he is consulting on movies in production at Warner Bros., Paramount, Sony, etc.

I have fond memories of New Zealanders. Years ago I was in the US Antarctic Program and worked in Antarctica. I worked at McMurdo Station and the New Zealand research station, Scott Base was our closest neighbour. I have spent my fair share of time with Kiwis. Why WOULDN'T I want to come here?

TITLEMANIA

Transforming stories from Ordinary to Extraordinary

by Cheryl Wright *(All Rights Reserved)*

As writers, we ensure that we use a great opening that the content is spectacular, and each scene ends with a cliff-hanger. In short, we spend the majority of time tweaking our story. And of course, that's the way it should be. But how much time do we devote to titles? It appears to be very little.

I recently did an unofficial survey of both published and unpublished writers, and here's what I found:

Most believed:

- The title was unimportant
- If the editor didn't like it, she would change it
- The title makes no difference to the book
- People would buy the book no matter the title
- It was something to think about later... if the book sold

They couldn't be any further from the truth if they tried.

Titles are extremely important to your story. So important, they will often mean the difference between selling or not. It's okay to have a weak or unrelated 'working title' – but that's as far as it should go. The minute you have an appropriate catchy title, change it. Not only on your ms, but also in your mind.

When I wrote *Saving Emma*, it had a horrid working title. "Undercover Love" was never a favourite of mine, but it would do until I could find something better. As I wrote the second last chapter, part of the dialogue talked about the main protagonist 'saving Emma' from certain death. In that unforgettable moment, the title jumped off the pages and into my brain.

Not only did my whole outlook on this book change, but it also changed in the minds of editors and publishers.

As "Undercover Love" I'd submitted the book to several publishers and had nothing but rejections. And not even personal rejections; I got form letter 'dear writer' rejections.

When the title changed, the responses also changed. I began to get bites and requests. Despite the fact the story itself was unaltered, editors became interested.

All this because of a title change?

Well, yes. Titles are extremely important.

To get an idea of how much difference a title really can make, take a look at these examples of title changes:

- Tomorrow is Another Day – Gone with the Wind
- John Thomas & Lady Jane – Lady Chatterley's Lover
- Something that Happened – Of Mice and Men
- Blossom and the Flower – Peyton Place

Sometimes it's just a matter of tweaking your title slightly. For instance, one of my works-in-progress was called "Into the Arms of a Stranger" I hated the title, despised it in fact, until I shortened it. "Arms of a Stranger" is a much better title, and has more appeal than the longer version.

Following are just a handful of titles I've started with, and then changed for the better:

- Poison Ivy – The Rubber Ducky Killer
- The Flight – The First Flight
- The Gym – Mystery at Joe's Gym
- First Person Point of View – Me, Myself & I: Writing First Person POV
- Finding Ideas – Today I Witnessed a Story

The title of your story, book, or article, should portray something of the content, as well as standing out from the crowd. Just as a great looking cover will sell your book, so will an outstanding title.

About the author: Cheryl Wright is an award-winning Australian author, freelance journalist, and editor. In addition to an array of other projects, she is the owner of www.Writer2Writer.com, www.resources4writers.com, and the Writer to Writer monthly ezine for writers. Her publications include novels, non-fiction books, short stories, and articles. Visit Cheryl's website www.cheryl-wright.com

ANNA JACOBS

Interviewed by Kylie Griffin



R*BY finalist and multiple Golden Web Award winner, Anna Jacobs writes historical romances and sagas and modern family relationship novels, science fiction/fantasy as Shannah Jay and the occasional book under her own name Sherry-Anne Jacobs.

Born in Lancashire, UK, Sherry-Anne Jacobs emigrated to Western Australia in 1973 where she now lives, south of Perth, with her husband of 30 years, a computer and a library of several thousand books. Kept busy with her writing schedule, Anna also enjoys holding workshops to help fellow writers.

Working with Hodder & Stoughton, UK and Severn House for nearly 20 years, and with almost 50 books to her credit, Anna takes time out from her busy schedule to share her thoughts with us.

Thanks for agreeing to be one of our feature authors, Anna!

What inspires you to write? I don't think 'inspire' is the right word. It's rather that there's something inside me welling up and I have to let it out i.e. the stories. And of course, by now I'm addicted to story-telling, which is how I think of what I do mainly. Has anyone warned you that writing is addictive? Very.

You write Lancashire sagas, modern novels and futuristic. Do you have trouble skipping from

one genre to another? Do you have a favourite genre you like writing the most?

I love writing all of them, though I'm not at the moment writing futuristic. I had 5 futuristic novels published as Shannah Jay and would love to write more, but just don't have the time. I alternate between modern novels and sagas. The sagas are not just set in Lancashire now. Quite a few of them are set in Western Australia. Actually, I love writing both sorts of story and I NEED the variety of writing both sorts, too, to keep my mind stimulated and active. It'd be boring to do the same sort of thing all the time. I've seen authors grow stale and write same old, same old, and I'm terrified of doing that, which is why I have two 'wise readers' who read my stories before I ever send them to my agent or publisher. My wise readers are sworn not to mince words!

What does your writing day consist of?

I get up about 5.20 am, not because I'm being virtuous, but because I wake naturally at that time. When I wake, I'm fully alert, so it's a waste of time lying in bed. I answer emails, which is part pleasure, part business and part networking. Then I get breakfast and shower, after which I play cards on the computer. For some weird reason, this settles my brain into writing mode. (It's something to do with left and right sides of the brain. One needs a very relaxing activity to foster the creativity.) I then dive into writing by re-reading and polishing what I wrote yesterday. I love doing that. Polishing is my favourite writing task of all. Afterwards I carry on telling the story and add about 2,000 words in a typical day.

I break at regular intervals to do odd household chores e.g. the washing but I don't have a housework gene, so I don't take it to excess. I do not iron or dust. One has to have standards! I'd move anyway because it's very bad for the human body to sit in the same position for hours on end. I never stay still for more than an hour and so far (touch wood) in spite of doing writing and writing-related 'stuff' for about 10 hours a day, I've not got any repetitive damage to my body.

I also, if I'm lucky, wake regularly in the night and 'see' scenes, which is very helpful. It's as near as I come to plotting.

I don't think there is any time when I don't have a story simmering in my mind. My husband is a musician and it's the same with him about music. It's always there.

My agent and three publishers (I just added a new one) are in England so they are 7 or 8 hours behind in time difference. Business emails come in overnight or after teatime. So I don't switch off the computer until 7 or 8, well after teatime. I never know when I'll get something that's urgent to reply to, you see.

And then there's research. That too is always with me, whether it's for historical or modern stories. And reader emails - I get more than two a day.

You mentioned on your website that you read at least 3 novels a week. Do you have an author you like to read? What are you reading right now? How does this help you as a writer?

I have a lot of authors I like to read. I enjoy a variety but not gruesome or nasty stuff. And it has to have a happy ending. Quirky is nice, too. Georgette Heyer is my favourite and I re-read her books every now and then. From today's authors, I like Nora Roberts (but not her gruesome ones, nor JD Robb), Sherryl Woods, C J Cherryh, Barbara Delinsky, Robyn Carr, and the new Aussie author Bronwyn Parry. Her two books are fabulous. I hope she writes a lot more. At the moment I'm reading a research book about Fremantle and Jill Mansell's 'Thinking About You', but am waiting for 'Major Pettigrew's Last Stand' a quirky English book that my husband got hold of when it arrived and as he's a slow reader i.e. takes a week or so to read a book, I'm waiting impatiently for him to finish it.

As well as entertaining me, reading a lot of books helps feed my imagination, which is essential. It also shows me what's been done to death as a plot and what sorts of plots are popular now. This is market research.

You have a number of sagas among your booklist. What methods do you use to research your novels (e.g. online, travel, personal experience etc.)?

I did a university unit covering my period in history before I started - there was a particularly good history lecturer here at the time. I buy and read a lot of research books. I have notebooks full of notes e.g. a file for each century and a page for each year on which I write notes about 'titbits' of history that I can follow up if I write a book set then.

Nowadays I research on line a lot, but you have to be careful whose web site it is i.e. credibility. I sometimes write to website owners asking for further help. In the book that's coming out in July in the UK (Beyond the Sunset) I had a cart crash and I did that via the Novelists Inc website. (This is an international organization for multi-published authors.) Someone on Ninc always knows the answer or where to find the answer. My ideas of a

cart crash were not at all correct, but with the help of some great people in the US, whom someone on Ninc sent me to, I redid the cart crash. It's correct now. Took me three days to crash that cart.

I start collecting research material well before I write a book. With modern novels, it's often pieces from newspapers or articles I've found on line. There is always something to check out. I try very hard not to make mistakes. I often get story ideas from my non-focused research. For example, many years ago, I read about a shipload of Lancashire cotton workers being brought out to Western Australia as maids, because the American Civil War had stopped supplies of cotton and therefore there was no work in Lancashire. I filed that away mentally for future reference. Some time later I found a book of memoirs, written in the 1870s by a lady who came to Western Australia on the same ship, so it seemed meant to be that I told the story that begins in 'Farewell to Lancashire' and is continued in 'Beyond the Sunset'.

What themes do you like exploring in your books?

I don't think about them as 'themes' but stories. I write about relationships and families mostly, whether it's historical or modern or futuristic, and always with a romance included, or even two or three romances, because I don't like to leave my minor characters lonely. <g> I don't write 'pure' romances, where the romance itself is the plot, but rather 'romantic' books where a romance is integral but something else is the plot. They're complex tales with several sub-plots usually.

And another on the same topic - what influences how many books make up a saga – your fans, your editor, you, a combination of all three?

The editor always has the final word about what will be published. But . . . the story itself is the main decider as to whether I suggest a series or not. I start some stories with the intention of having 2 or 3 books, because there's a lot of material around. Other stories suddenly seem to beg continuation, so I carry on writing when I hadn't intended to. I try not to go beyond 3 in a series, but with my first series my agent said I could get two more books out of it, making 5, and I did. Phew! Talk about baptism of fire as a writer!

Nowadays the editor and publisher's marketing teams combine and have a big influence on what I write. I tend to submit a story idea and discuss it a little - I can't do outlines because I don't know what happens after the setup. The book I'm currently writing features a secondary character from 'Destiny's Path' (book 3 and final of my current series). Bram was so vivid I just had to write his story afterwards.

I don't tend to do series of books for my modern stories, though I'm thinking about it for a current idea.

From your experience, what conventions have the most potential career impact for writers – conferences, workshops, writing groups, critique partners etc.? Have any of these affected/helped you?

For me, it's my inner self that has the most impact. I can't not write. But it's the readers who make the most difference to a career, and I never forget that. If they don't like you and your stories, you can go to every conference on earth and it'll make no difference.

That said I do go to conferences and greatly enjoy networking. I meet some wonderful people - I still remember the conference I went to in NZ with great fondness.

Workshops - well, most conferences don't have workshops suitable for authors of nearly 50 novels. Novelists Inc does, but they're in the US and sadly it's just too far a trip with my bad back. The Romantic Novelists Association of the UK does, as it's primarily an organization for published authors. I can go to their conferences now, since we've just started living part of the year in the UK.

My critique group is very important indeed to me. They're a wonderful, perceptive bunch of women and I was very lucky that they turned up out of the blue when I was starting up a new group in my home town. We've been together for a while now and I value their opinions greatly. The online email lists are very helpful too.

People working towards publication should be aware that it's quality of writing that counts most of all and focus on that, and what will improve their work. Only they can tell, because everyone has different needs as a writer.

What question have you always wanted to be asked in an interview? How would you answer that question?

Um . . . I can't think of one. Every interview has its own flavour and I enjoy that. Really, it's best to let the interviewer ask, as she/he knows what she's looking for and knows her audience.

What new books are due for release this year?

I have four books coming out in July in the UK, a little later elsewhere unless you buy them (post free) from www.bookdepository.co.uk. Two of them are paperbacks whose hardbacks have been out for a while, the other two are brand new stories,

hardbacks:

1. BEYOND THE SUNSET - hardback, new story, historical set in 1860s, second in the *Cotton Lasses* series, following on 'Farewell to Lancashire'. It's in NZ shops now in a trade paperback.

2. FAREWELL TO LANCASHIRE – is now a mass-market paperback, book one in the *Cotton Lasses* series.

3. LICENSE TO DREAM – available in hardback, and is a modern novel, new story, set mainly in Western Australia. Meriel has wanted to become an artist, but her mother forced her to become an accountant. When she wins Lotto she can realise her dream. Ben wants to landscape a big country block next to his - only Meriel owns it now.

4. IN FOCUS – is a trade paperback, modern story, set in the UK. Beth sees a TV show where a computer program regresses people to what they were like as a child. She's shocked to realise the host is her baby brother, who vanished without a trace 38 years ago.

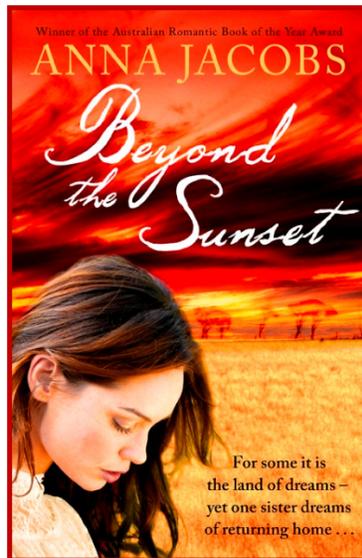
Keeps me out of mischief!

Lastly, what's next for Anna Jacobs?

Who knows? Hard work, certainly. I've got a new publisher, so now have three publishers in the UK. I'm certainly writing faster. Much faster. By the end of April I'll have written two books since 18 December, long books, though the second one will be only in 'dirty draft' and will still need polishing. Maybe I'll need a new writing name if I continue to speed up?

This will be our third year of living 5 months in the UK, 7 months in Australia, so my UK life/PR/etc is changing. I'm doing more PR over there, making more contacts, am able to do more research and am able to interact personally with my agent and editors. It's all very exciting.

And of course, we're all going to be affected by the rapidly expanding sales of ebooks, aren't we? Life never stands still. Thank goodness or it'd be boring.



Thanks for this interview, Anna, it's been a pleasure having you here!

Anna's latest book, BEYOND THE SUNSET, available in hardback, is her new historical set in the 1860's, the second in the *Cotton Lasses* series, and follows FARWELL TO LANCASHIRE. You can visit and find out more about Anna on her website www.annajacobs.com/

NEWBIE AUTHOR

Sandra Hyatt

interviewed by Kylie Griffin



Share a little bit about yourself and your writing.

I live a little way out of Auckland and write for Silhouette Desire.

Our readers love a good story - please tell us how you received THE CALL.

I started writing romance while my two children were pre-schoolers because I thought it would be fun and easy! I was partially right about one of those things. It's fun (most of the time). But if you're reading this, then you know it's not easy. Certainly, the selling a manuscript side of my dream was far more difficult and took far longer than I dreamed it would.

It took me nearly ten years of working my way up from the very bottom of contest rankings and form rejection letters, to a place where I was fairly consistently finalling in contests and getting very nice rejection letters – where editors used my name and gave me reasons for their rejections. I also used that time to experiment with different sub genres to figure out what type of romance I was best suited to write.

As part of my learning, I attended Robyn Donald and Daphne Clair's, Kara School of Writing—twice. The second time I was lucky enough to be doing the course with Tessa Radley, Abby Gaines and Karina Bliss. Not only was the course itself extremely helpful, but we four attendees clicked. We got on well, we liked each others' writing and we were at similar levels. After the course, we began meeting regularly back in Auckland. It was partly a critique group but it was also for support and friendship and information sharing.

Several years after that second Kara course, Karina sold to Super Romance, the following month Tessa sold to Desire. And a couple of months later Abby sold. My time, surely, was just around the corner. Right? Wrong. Leastways it was a very big corner.

It was another two years before I sold, during which time I knew I was close...but not close enough. One day in mid '08 I commented on the Diamonds Down Under, Desire Authors' blog. Via that comment I won the draw for a full manuscript critique by the then editor of Desire, Melissa Jeglinski. I duly sent off the manuscript I'd just finished, and not expecting to hear anything back for months I more or less forgot about it.

I packed up my bags and headed to San Francisco for the RWA national conference. I was rooming with Tessa and early one morning she came charging back into our room to tell me that Diana Ventimiglia wanted to call me.

I don't know if you can imagine my panic? On the one hand I had Tessa there saying (as she jumped up and down) that the only reason Diana would want to speak to me in person was if she wanted to buy my manuscript. And on the other hand I was thinking it was far too soon, and well, I'd been disappointed so many times in the past that I was frightened to get my hopes up.

After several excruciating minutes in which I alternated between pacing the room and sitting on the bed with my head in my hands, the phone rang. And yes, it was Diana, and YES she did want to buy my manuscript. I didn't tell her then and there that I loved her—but I was thinking it!

Abby and Karina were in the room next door and quickly came in and added substantially to the noise level in the room. I can't imagine selling in better company. They were almost happier for

me than I was for myself (partly because I was struggling to believe it). The rest of the day, in fact the rest of the conference, passed in a blur. I had sold. I had FINALLY sold.

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

I found my agent before my editor, but they can be equally difficult to get. I watched Publishers Weekly for a time to see which agents were making sales to the lines I was targeting. From there I compiled a list of agents and set about querying them. And from there eventually found one who loved my voice.

Can you tell us about your debut/current book up for release?

My next book (my third) His Bride For The Taking, is out in June in the US and July here and in Australia. I think of it as my Shrek book. Here's the blurb:

It was understood that Prince Rafael Marconi's brother would wed Alexia Wyndham Jones. So Rafe was shocked to be asked with escorting the American heiress to his country. Yet it proved the perfect opportunity to discover her real motives for marriage. One ounce of deceit and he'd send the beauty packing.

What the royal playboy never bargained for was his fierce attraction to the bride-to-be. Alexia was more surprising, spirited...and sensual than he could have imagined. She was also strictly off-limits. How could Rafe even dare to touch, to take, a woman who was promised to another?

Writers' tend to have strengths and weaknesses. Can you identify them? What's the most challenging thing about writing process for you and how do you strive to overcome it?

I guess I'd have to say my voice is a strength but only because that's the thing that comes naturally. The rest, while enjoyable when it's going well, is still hard work. And in particular the plotting. I'm a seat of the pants writer, who prior to selling started with the germ of an idea and wrote to see what happened (sometimes a good book, sometimes a big mess). Having to sell on proposal is changing that but it's something I have to work really hard at and possibly always will.

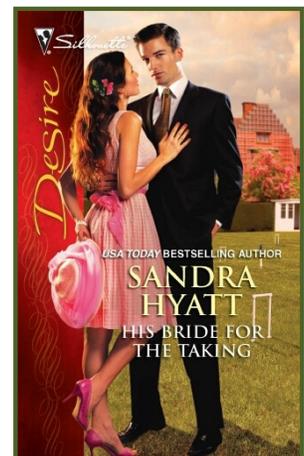
Is it fair to say getting published takes you on a steep learning curve in the next stage of your career as a writer? What's something you've learnt since getting THE CALL?

I treated my writing seriously well before I sold; writing consistently and setting deadlines for myself. What's changed is that the deadlines are set by someone else and I can't chose to let one slide, and now I sometimes also have to revise to incorporate another person's suggestions – fortunately my editor's suggestions have always been spot on and have definitely made my books better.

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

Seeing as it's Clendon season, I wanted to add a note about contests. I entered many, many contests both in NZ and overseas, and benefited greatly from the feedback received and the opportunity to get my work in front of editors and agents. (And to my mind, The Clendon is the best romance writing contest there is.) But you still have to get the right book in front of the right editor at the right time. My first sale book was entered in the Clendon the year it sold. It placed fourth (and similar stories from published authors abound). So take heart contest entrants – just because your entry doesn't win or even place, doesn't mean it's not going to be the one that sells. Good luck!

For more information on Sandra and her books, go to her website www.sandrahyatt.com



DISCIPLINE

by Joanne Graves



From Wikipedia: “Self-discipline refers to the training that one gives one’s self to accomplish a certain task or to adopt a particular pattern of behavior, even though one would really rather be doing something else.”

In this article as part of *Make This Year Your Writing Year*, I look in to what I believe to be the key to it all - **discipline**. Yet it is extremely difficult for some folk to take that approach to their writing as they allow distractions to get in the way. So how can you get more disciplined in your writing life? What follows are some thoughts gleaned from authors themselves. Read on.....

First and foremost you have to accept a hard fact. When it comes down it, writing is just hard graft. Desire author Emily McKay, talks about being in a coffee shop, trying to write on a laptop as she juggled her young son on her knee, waiting for her daughter to finish a class, when she struck up a conversation with the guy next to her. He was a university professor, working on a political biography, and when she commented that she was a romance writer, nothing as high brow as the work he was doing, the professor commented that in the end, all writing is just blue collar labour – it’s just getting the words down. And when you think about it, that’s what it is. It’s work. It’s slog. It’s sitting at the computer, and writing the book. That’s what it all comes down to. There’s no easy way. It’s work.

Keep track of how you’re going:

Disciplined writing means knowing how you’re getting on, and as mentioned in last month’s article on “Time” it pays to keep track of your word or page count, and have a weekly goal. Wendi Corsi Staub has a specific number of words she knows she has to have completed in a week to be on schedule to meet her deadline, and she marks it on her calendar. Friday is her cut off point for her word count thus if it’s Thursday and she’s running short of that number on the calendar, she

knows she has to work longer that day. Historical author, Elizabeth Boyle, was frequently late on deadline, until her husband devised a plan for her writing. Now she gets books in ahead of deadline, with less stress to the household. Her plan is similar to Corsi Staub’s. She keeps an Excel spreadsheet. She knows what she has to write each day in terms of pages, and she enters her totals in the spreadsheet. At the end of her week, she might see that her page count is down, and if so, why? For example, Boyle realized that every January her sons got sick, so she knows that in that month she has to build that in to her plan and leave days free while she’s caring for the sick children.

Eliminate distractions– It’s a lot easier to stick to the writing if you don’t allow yourself to succumb to distractions. Even something as basic as having your writing space organised can help. Have everything handy - your notes, bottle of water or thermos of coffee ready, carrot sticks(?!), reference books. Organise your writing space so it gives you less excuse to get sidetracked, eg having to go to another room to look for your notes. You know what you need to do so that the next time your mind wanders away from the page, you don’t give yourself excuses to get away – you plough through it. Save the getting up for the important things – like a few minutes to stretch - or to go to the loo.

Try instituting a creativity practice – The key here is the word “practice.” It is important to show up each day and treat what we are doing as a *practice*. Creativity coach and author Eric Maisel’s perfect creativity practice is writing seven days a week, two hours every morning. So take a moment right now and think about it – what is your best creativity practice? Treat it as a regular, non negotiable part of your life. Another suggestion is that you should separate the idea of getting back to your book and getting back to your practice. The two are different. A book comes and goes, but your practice doesn’t. It will be with you for as long as you are writing. Thus if you can’t work on Book X for some reason, work on a new outline or a short story, or your website. But turn up. You don’t not show up just because you’re having a

plot problem. You show up irrespective of how your book is going.

When you lack discipline, you are generally wasting time doing other stuff – can you really afford to do that? One of the joys of being unpublished is that it might be depressing at times but let's face it, if you go to critique group and spend the time gossiping, what the heck. There's always next time. In the RWA conference talk, *Stairway to Plot Heaven*, Susan Mallery said that when she goes to her bi-annual plotting weekend away in Las Vegas with her four author friends, they don't get distracted by chit chat, because they can't afford to – literally. "We are all there to work. There are hundreds of thousands of dollars at stake. We are talking about books we are going to sell, so if we screw up that time, you're talking a quarter of your income with every book. Are you really going to mess that up? We need to get these books done. We have bills to pay. This is serious for us." The lesson there for the unpublished is that there will come a day when you are published – isn't it better to get that discipline under control now, so that when it does get serious, when you can't just fob off a deadline, you're already ahead of the game?

Mental energy – It can be hard if not impossible to write when we tell ourselves we're tired. And when we're mentally tired, we think the only thing that will work is a nap. Eric Maisel suggests this is a mistake. There is a way we can regenerate mental energy quickly and efficiently in a way we can't do with physical energy, and we've probably all experienced this and not really thought about it. The trick is to fall in love with your work again. *Love renews energy instantly* – it's the difference between being bored by your book, or losing track of time as you write your heart out. Love, passion, enthusiasm - call it what you will, but it makes one energized. Maisel also says that it's really not so much discipline as *devotion*. Pavarotti apparently said: "People say I'm disciplined. It's not discipline, its devotion." So maybe if you're being hard on yourself because of your lack of discipline, you need to flip it around – and try and feel the love for your work.

Tip:

At the 2009 RWNZ conference talk "Stolen Secrets," Abby Gaines suggesting writing scenes set in unusual places. Have you got too many scenes set in the workplace, the kitchen, the café? Sounds boring, right? Come up with 20 places to set a scene – and choose the craziest. That is sure to get you thinking.

www.romancewriters.co.nz

Practice the work ethic. Emily McKay says that the moments when life is calm, are the moments to develop your work ethic – just as the Wikipedia definition says: "...the training that one gives one's self to accomplish a certain task or to adopt a particular pattern of behavior." In other words, when the going is good, get yourself into routines (like the creativity practice) so that if a crisis (sick kids, sick parent, financial emergency) hits you, and you still have to get the work down to enter the contest or get that full ms finished because you've already sent in the partial, you have a routine in place for making yourself sit down and write, no matter what.

Pamela Morsi tells the story of how, in 1996, she was writing a book about a widow. The heroine was a riot – a very merry widow indeed! But in December of that year, her husband died. The book was due in March, she was half way though, and overnight, widowhood wasn't particularly funny after all. She says she knew she had to start the book again, because what she had already written wasn't "her" any more and she was "about as empty as a human being gets." Her publisher was able to add an extra two months on to her deadline, and because she was now the support for her family, she had no choice. She had to get that book done, and she had to write a whole new book - in the months following her husband's death. "What I do know," she says, "is that I had to force myself to go in there and sit down at the computer and get it down every day and remind myself that the grieving had to go to the back, and I had to focus on the story." She adds, "I do know that you can find the stuff inside you to go on when you don't think you can."

Finally - realise that while it is darned good fun to get together and talk about writing over the phone or over a coffee with your writing buddies, and often helpful, talking about writing is not actually writing. American screenwriter and psychotherapist, Dennis Palumbo is purported to have said "Every hour you spend writing is an hour you're not at Starbucks talking about writing." So stop talking about writing. And write.

Finally, finally, if you feel like blaming your muse for your problems, ponder these words from Elizabeth Boyle: "*Your muse doesn't pay your mortgage. You do.*"

Author comments from Elizabeth Boyle, Eric Maisel, Susan Mallery, Emily McKay, Pamela Morsi, Wendy Corsi Staub are taken from the 2008 RWA Conference Disc Set.

AUTHOR-AGENT CONTRACTS

By Kylie Griffin

Once you get an offer of representation from an agent, some will ask you to sign an author-agent contract. Some don't. It all depends on the particular agency (and, keep in mind, there may be small variations in the clauses, too).

Following common sense, I sought legal advice on the document (I arranged for a phone appointment with a legal consultant from the Australia Society of Authors) and she went through each clause and explained in layman's terms what each meant and what I was obligated to do and what the agent was obligated to do. She'd also researched the agent and her background to assure me I wasn't signing with a con-artist. I made notes during the phone conversation and she emailed me the comments she'd made when she examined the contract so I had a hard copy.

NEVER SIGN ANYTHING UNTIL YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE SIGNING!!! I can't stress that enough. If you don't know, find someone who does.

According to the ASA legal consultant the author-agent contract I received was a pretty standard one. Here's what it looked like...

AUTHOR-AGENT CONTRACT

AGENCY LETTERHEAD

DATE

YOUR NAME & ADDRESS

Dear AUTHOR:

As requested, I shall be pleased to serve as your literary agent. This letter sets forth the terms and conditions of this representation, and is to be considered our Author-Agent Contract. Please review, and if you accept these terms sign and date two copies, and return for countersignature.

1. For the term of this Agreement, NAME (the "Author") located at ADDRESS retains AGENT of AGENCY NAME (the "Agent"), located at AGENT'S ADDRESS:

A) To represent the Author for the sale of (1) all book length fiction written or to be written, and (2) any other writing that the Author and the Agent may agree upon.

B) To negotiate sales for the represented works in (1) the United States ("Domestic Sales"), (2) non-domestic markets ("Foreign Sales"), and (3) derivative or secondary rights in the represented works including but not limited to film, TV, recording, or other dramatic media, anywhere in the world ("Subsidiary Sales").

C) To receive payments and royalties from the represented sales, as per an agency clause that will be included in any contract with the publisher of such works.

2. The Author agrees that during the term of this Agreement, the Author will not retain another literary agent to represent the Author's work unless the Agent, (AGENT) specifically consents to this arrangement. As to Subsidiary and Foreign Rights, the Agent shall engage all subsidiary or co-agents which the Agent believes will best represent the Author in selling Subsidiary and Foreign Rights, unless the Author and the Agent agree in writing to a different arrangement.

3. The Agent will use best efforts to promote the Author's work, in order to sell the represented works. The Agent shall negotiate the terms of any contract that is offered, but the Author will have the right to reject any contract if the terms are not acceptable. A sale will not be binding unless approved by the Author in a signed contract.

4. The Agent shall be entitled to a fifteen percent (15%) commission on Domestic Sales, a fifteen percent (15%) commission (which includes seven and one-half percent (7.5%) for co-agents) on Subsidiary Sales within the United States, and twenty percent (20%) (which includes 10% for co-agents) for Foreign Sales and Subsidiary Sales obtained outside the United States.

5. The Agent will pay for all expenses that arise in selling the Author's work except in the following situations:
 - A) If it is necessary to produce multiple copies of the Author's unpublished work, including bound manuscripts that are greater than fifty (50) pages the Author will be charged for making the copies, at the time the costs are incurred.
 - B) The costs of mailing your book or manuscript to foreign agents, editors, or subsidiary agents will be deducted from your earnings, if that work or any subsidiary rights, including film rights to the work are sold.
 - C) The costs of mailing your book or manuscript to domestic agents, editors, or subsidiary agents will be deducted from your earnings, if that work or any subsidiary rights, including film rights to the work are sold.
 - D) All mailings, both foreign and domestic, will be made using the lowest applicable rates allowed by postal regulations.
 - E) If a book or manuscript needs to be delivered via next day service, the Agent will request written permission from the Author prior to mailing the work.
6. The Agent shall make all payments due to the Author within thirty (30) days of receipt of any fees covered by this Agreement. Such funds will not be intermingled with funds belonging to the Agent.
7. The Agent shall send copies of statements of account received by the Agent to the Author when rendered. If requested, the Agent shall also provide the Author with an annual accounting showing all income for the period, any fees paid, the dates of payment and the amounts on which the Agent's commission was calculated, and any sums due less those amounts already paid. The Agent will provide the author with a 1099 form. On the giving of reasonable notice, the Author may request an examination or independent audit of the Agent's books and records by a certified public accountant, once per calendar year. This examination or audit will be at the Author's expense.
8. This Agreement may be terminated by either party by giving thirty (30) days written notice to the other party. If a project is under consideration by editors at the time of termination, the Agent will still earn the commission on that project, if an offer is made by one of those editors within one calendar year of termination. A project is defined as under consideration if it has been formally pitched to an editor either through e-mail or a phone conversation, and the editor has the manuscript or is waiting for the manuscript.
9. This Agreement shall not be assigned by either of the parties. It shall be binding on and inure to the benefit of the successors, legal representatives, or heirs of the Author and Agent.
10. Any controversy, claim or dispute between the parties hereto, that cannot be resolved amicably will be taken to Arbitration subject to the rules of the American Arbitration Association, and the differences resolved under the laws of the State of New Jersey.
11. All Notices shall be given to the Author and Agent at their respective addresses set forth above.
12. All changes to the Agreement must be written. This Agreement represents the entire understanding of the parties.
13. If any part of this agreement shall be held unenforceable, the rest of the agreement will remain in full force and effect.

Sincerely,

AGENT'S NAME

ACCEPTED AND AGREED TO:

AGENCY

AGENT SIGNATURE

Member

AUTHOR SIGNATURE

Date

Date

Social Security Number (OF AUTHOR)

One of the most important clauses to ensure you have in there is Point 8. It gives you both an out if things don't work out. Just remember, if you don't understand something in any contract, consult someone who does and get them to explain it to you.

ROMANCE OF NEW ZEALAND INC.

National Executive Committee Brief Job Descriptions

President

Tasks:

- Serve as the Chief Executive Officer of RWNZ.
- Serve as spokesperson in regard to established policy.
- Call, set the agenda for, and preside over all meetings of the Executive Committee and meetings of the membership.
- Appoint, with Executive approval, such committees as may be needed or provided for in the Rules and the chairpersons of such committees.
- Serve as ex-officio member of all committees.
- Appoint, with the approval of the Executive, non voting office holders.
- Execute RWNZ business as specified by the Executive Committee and established policy including, but not limited to the expenditure of RWNZ funds in accordance with the annual budget approved by the Executive.
- Open and close all bank accounts in conjunction with the Treasurer and Secretary.
- Act as cheque signatory.
- Co-ordinate all activities.
- Attend Executive meetings (in person, via phone or the internet).
- Fulfil any other obligations designated by the Executive.

Treasurer

Tasks:

- Open and close all bank accounts in conjunction with the President and/or Secretary.
- Act as cheque signatory.
- Ensure all monies received are receipted and banked.
- Ensure all accounts are paid by due date.
- Keep annual cash book, computerised accounts and/or any other records deemed appropriate by the auditor showing adequate record of financial transactions to enable a clear up to date position of financial statements.
- Ensure that the financial statements are ready for auditing at the end of the financial year.
- Attend Executive meetings (in person, via phone or the internet). Present a financial statement at Executive meetings.
- Arrange for accounts to be audited annually.
- Present an audited set of financial statements at the Annual General Meeting.
- Prepare budgets.
- Keep an asset register.
- Fulfil any other obligations designated by the Executive.

Vice President

Tasks:

- Preside over all meetings of the Executive in the absence of the President.
- Assume the duties of the President in the event the President is temporarily incapacitated or otherwise unable to perform.
- Until such time as the Vice President may be required to assume the duties of the President they will:
 - *Act as Chapter liaison
 - *Assume other duties to be decided upon in consultation with the rest of the Executive at the beginning of the term.
- Attend Executive meetings (in person, via phone or the internet).
- From time to time fulfil any other obligations designated by the Executive.

Membership Secretary

Tasks:

- Maintain a membership list.
- Respond to queries by people seeking membership.
- Register new members and send them membership packs.
- Send out membership accounts.
- Attend Executive meetings (in person, via phone or the internet).
- Send address labels to the newsletter editor.
- Fulfil any other obligations designated by the Executive.

Secretary

Tasks:

- Open and close all bank accounts in conjunction with the President and Treasurer.
- Be responsible for the recording and preserving of minutes to all Executive meetings and presenting such minutes to the Executive for corrections and approval.
- Prepare the nomination form, proxy form, notice of AGM and Agenda.
- Send forms to members at the appropriate times
- Send election ballot papers (if necessary) to members.
- Prepare minutes of the AGM
- Fulfil any other obligations designated by the Executive.
- Act as cheque signatory.

Publicity Officer

Tasks:

- Serve as spokesperson in regard to established policy.
- Have responsibility for all publicity and press releases.
- Arrange sponsorships.
- Organise fundraising through events and applications to funders.
- Attend Executive meetings (in person, via phone or the Internet).
- Fulfil any other obligations designated by the executive.

Romance Writers of New Zealand Inc - Notice of Meeting

It is hereby given that the eighth Annual General Meeting of the Romance Writers of New Zealand Inc (RWNZ) will be held on Saturday 20th August 2010, at the Rydges Hotel, Auckland. Members wishing to propose remits to be considered at this meeting must send them to:

The Secretary
AGM Remits
RWNZ
PO Box 102 64,
Dominion Road,
Auckland

Please note that to be accepted, remits:

- May only be proposed by a current member.
- Need to be seconded by a current member.
- Must be dated
- Must be accompanied by arguments for the remit.

by 5pm Saturday 29th May 2010

Abby Gaines
President

NEW MEMBERS

Elise Michelle Penning, Hamilton
Georgina Casey
Julie Adams, Wellington
Janet Kortlever, Wanganui
Coralie Yamashita, Auckland
Sheila Squire, Porirua
Jane Ashurst-Smoult, Kapiti Coast
Kara Isaac, Wellington
Rosemary Wiggan, Taupo
Rozellia Boland, Waikanae
Carol Sainsbury, Paraparaumu Beach
Sue Parker, Otaki
Cate Prestidge-King, Hamilton

Reproduced from the Jokes About Writers website. For more, head to

<http://sites.google.com/site/writersjokes/>

Three guys are sitting at a bar

#1: "...Yeah, I make \$75,000 a year after taxes."

#2: "What do you do for a living?"

#1: "I'm a stockbroker. How much do you make?"

#2: "I should clear \$60,000 this year."

#1: "What do you do?"

#2: "I'm an architect."

The third guy has been sitting there quietly, staring into his beer, when the others turn to him.

#2: "Hey, how much do you make per year?"

#3: "Gee... hmmm... I guess about \$13,000."

#1: "Oh yeah? What kind of stories do you write?"



An Affair to Remember

ROMANCE WRITERS OF NEW ZEALAND
20TH ANNIVERSARY
CONFERENCE
AUGUST 20TH - 22ND 2010

RYDGES HOTEL
CNR FEDERAL & KINGSTON STREETS, AUCKLAND

HARLEQUIN 

THE KARA SCHOOL OF WRITING

The Kara School of Writing is thrilled to be offering weekend romance writing courses again! Please contact Lesley at editline@xtra.co.nz for further details.

The Kara School of Writing has been instrumental in the success of many published authors. A dozen past students are now writing for Harlequin, and other world-wide and New Zealand

OFFICIAL RELEASES & MEMBER SUCCESSES

Official May Releases

Brooding Billionaire, Impoverished Princess by **Robyn Donald**

What the Librarian Did by **Karina Bliss**

His Ring, Her Baby by **Maxine Sullivan**

Worlds Apart by **Anne Ashby** (Wild Rose Press)

Let Sleeping Demons Lie by **Maree Anderson**



Member Successes - Competitions and Accolades

The Sales

Louise Delamore - *The Wild Rose Press* have accepted a short story which is set in the same world as her full length due out in July.

Maree Anderson - Red Sage have made an offer for **From the Ashes**.

Anne Ashby - has sold to *The Wild Rose Press*

Kathryn Taylor - has sold a second novel to *Eternal Press*. **Diamonds & Deceit** is a romantic suspense novel set in Tekapo.

Competitions

Kylie Griffin - 1st place Paranormal "Best of the Best" in the Emily 2010 for **Bloodborn**, has ALSO Finalled in the Yellow Rose Chapter of RWA 2010 Winter Rose Contest "Paranormal" AND finalled in the US Valley Forge Shelia Contest with all three of her entries!

Susanna Rogers is a finalist in the 2010 Sandy Contest, in the thriller/suspense/mystery category.

Agented

Catherine Robertson - signed with the Sheil Land Agency in England.

INTERNATIONAL CONTEST NEWS

Compiled by Lisa Elkind-Gardiner

Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers 27th Annual Colorado Gold Writing Contest 2010

Enter: Submit the first twenty pages of your commercial (genre fiction) manuscript and an eight-page synopsis. **Deadline:** June 1st 2010. **Fee:** \$25 US **Eligibility:** Unpublished, uncontracted in book length fiction. Entries capped at 200. **Prizes:** 1st Place winner: \$100 and certificate. Remaining finalists receive \$25 and certificate.

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

Heart of Louisiana Romance Writers of America Heartbeat Contest

Enter: A romance. **Deadline:** June 1st 2010. **Fee:** \$10 US. **Eligibility:** Unpublished, uncontracted in book length fiction. Or unpubbed in last 5 years

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

Northwest Houston Romance Writers of America Lone Star Contest

Enter: First 25 pages, including prologue, if desired. **Deadline:** June 6, 2010 **Fee:** \$25 US.

Eligibility: Unpublished or not published in last five years. **Prizes:** First place winners in each category will receive the Lone Star Brooch. Certificates for finalists.

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

Colorado Romance Writers of America Heart of the Rockies

Enter: 1st two chapters plus 1-5 pp synopsis (35 pp max). **Deadline:** June 15, 2010. **Fee:** \$30 US **Eligibility:** Unpublished. Entries limited to first 215 received.

<http://www.coloradoromancewriters.org/hor.html>

Indiana Romance Writers of America Golden Opportunity Contest

Enter: Romance (YA entry does not have to be romance) **Eligibility:** Unpublished. **Deadline:** June 27, 2010. **Fee:** \$25 US **Prizes:** Best of the Best Award: \$100 cash and certificate and more.

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

INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

Compiled by PDR Lindsay-Salmon, aka Patrika Salmon

Read-a-Romance.com is a brand new site geared toward attracting romance readers. Submission details can be found at www.read-a-romance.com/contribute

Speak Only to Me (Adult Content), Australia - publisher of erotica stories and articles for women in an audio format. Stories should ignite passion, romance and fun in the lives of women lives. Pay USD\$0.10 per word. Guidelines: <http://www.speakonlytome.com/writeforus.html>

Echelon Press is hunting for good short stories for electronic downloads. It is a paying market.

<http://www.echelonpress.com/index.ph...page=page&id=4>

Short stories are considered 3,000-10,000 words long.

Fried Fiction is actively looking for short story serials. If selected, you publish your stories in short episodes of 1,000 words or less at your own pace. <http://www.friedfiction.com>

Choc Lit - independent publisher, highly successful, looking for quality fiction for women where the heroine is like chocolate - irresistible. Details at www.choc-litpublishing.co.uk

RWENZ NEWS AROUND THE REGIONS

Regional convenor contacts

AUCKLAND – Frances Housden
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NELSON – Annika Ohlson-Smith
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WELLINGTON – Ellie Huse
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OTAGO - Viv Adams, email:
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AUCKLAND

Although it was Easter weekend, we had a good turnout for Yvonne Lindsay's talk on Writing on Demand. For our May workshop Louise Williams will be speaking on Science Fiction/Fantasy. As usual this 1st of May meeting will take place at Three Kings Tennis Pavilion, corner of Mt Albert and Mt Eden Roads at 12.30p.m. Bring a small plate for a shared lunch.

CHRISTCHURCH

A few of us have been meeting to polish Great Beginnings entries and we are looking forward to our Sunday Workshop, 30th May. Speakers are Natalie Anderson, Zana Bell and Sandra Hyatt. All welcome. Email sueknight@ihug.co.nz for information.

OTAGO

Our March meeting was a brilliant success. Our guest writers were impressed with how little writing for romance differs from their more 'literary' style. No magic formula involved – other than inspiration, hard work with words, critique partner support, and knowing and delivering What Editors Want. They were amazed with how generously RWENZ supports its members to achieve success in their writing. We'll continue to share info with them about H2H, the CHCH workshop, and our August Conference and hope some will join us as visitors, or as new members. Our April meeting was Thursday 22nd. As our May meeting is TBA please contact Viv for details. Phone 034822685, or email whitecliffodge@xtra.co.nz.

WELLINGTON

Our Easter Saturday meeting was at Meryl's lovely home. Being a holiday we feared numbers might be down, but new members Leeann and Juliet joined us, and a good time was had by all. Easter eggs and hot cross buns made a timely appearance. After ensuring there were no judges present, Diana read out Meryl's current contest short story, and Leeann read out Kris's.

Next up is a Friday night pot-luck dinner with special guests from the writers' workshop we're holding on April 17th. Then at 1pm on May 1st we're at Ellie's, 135 Milne Road, Paraparaumu.

NELSON

Saturday 10 April we were all back at school. The purpose of this meeting was to learn how to judge short stories. Our teacher, Cherie Skinner, provided us with two different stories to mark. One was Regency and the other Contemporary. Firstly she went through what judges have to look for in a story and also explained the scoring system. Then we worked on one story at the time for 15 mins each and took turns in reading out our scores and comments. It was a really worthwhile exercise and Cherie, who has judged several competitions, was very pleased with our achievements and declared us 'fully fledged' judges.

Now it only remains to dare to do it for real.

While having a cuppa and Swedish banana & cinnamon cake we further planned our much desired trip down to Christchurch and the workshop there in May. It would be great to go as a group. Next meeting will be Saturday 8 May at 2pm. New members are always welcome.

WEB SURFING

Compiled by Nalini Singh

- Author **Jim Hines** recently did a survey on sales of first novels. The results are up here: <http://www.jimchines.com/2010/03/survey-results/>
- This is a fascinating site that offers an amazing insight into the human heart and psyche: <http://www.postsecret.com> It's a community art project where people send in their secrets anonymously on the back of a postcard. (Updated every Sunday).
- **Romance University** presents "A Day in the Life of Book Buyer Sue Grimshaw": <http://tinyurl.com/y7wqs7a>
- An interesting discussion of "Vampire Romance: Dead or Undead" over at **Read, React, Review**: <http://tinyurl.com/y6oaayr>
- Also, linked to by **RRR**, an essay at The Millions looking at the trend of "Ethical Vampires": <http://tinyurl.com/yyefajj>
- In industry news, a number of writers have recently gotten together to directly publish electronic copies of their backlist books, as well as new work. For more info, check out: <http://www.awriterswork.com/>
- Want something intriguing to wake up to every morning? Subscribe to **National Geographic's** Photo of the Day here: <http://ng-photo.livejournal.com/>

Nalini Singh, New York Times bestselling author and web junkie: www.nalinisingh.com

BITS AND PIECES

Compiled by Soraya Nicholas

Apple's new iPad has taken the world by storm. Despite only being released on the 7th April, hundreds of thousands of iPads have already been sold. Many traditional publishers are still opposed to e-books, although it looks like they are growing in popularity and here to stay. Former Random House CEO and Harvard Business School Professor Peter Olsen says, "Traditional trade book publishers are scared. The world they have known, of print books and brick-and-mortar bookstores – the whole physical distribution system – is on the cusp of changing fundamentally." Read more at <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/6369.html>



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Want to find out more about your favourite authors or your favourite Harlequin Mills & Boon line? The eharlequin community is a great place to hang out, and they have dedicated blogs for each category, with all your favourite authors popping in and out.

<http://community.eharlequin.com/author-blog-pages>

Need to perfect your pitch pre-conference? Curtis Brown literary agent Nathan Bransford has a video link on his website about how to pitch well, head to <http://blog.nathanbransford.com/2010/04/importance-of-pitch.html>

Still confused about whether to self-publish or not? Head to <http://pimpmynovel.blogspot.com/2010/04/dont-go-down-that-road.html> if you need to be convinced NOT to self-publish!

May2010

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