

# HEART TO HEART

## *STELLAR SETTINGS: Bring Your Story to Life by Nicola Marsh*



The crux of any good story is character and emotion. You can set your story in Vegas or Paris or the wilds of Africa but unless your readers care about your characters, and those characters are strongly motivated and believable, setting is irrelevant.

But if used correctly, as an adjunct to your powerfully written story, the setting can bring your book alive.

### **Is the setting evocative?**

How many of you have read a book set in Paris and can visualise the Eiffel Tower, the Place de la Concorde, Montmartre? A Roman book, with the Colosseum, the

Spanish Steps? Venice with its charming waterways and gondolas?

Mention a city in the world and anyone will have an instant mental image of what that place looks like. Why stop there? If you can layer in sounds, smells and the 'feel' of a place, you'll really bring your story alive.

That's what I hoped to evoke with my current release, *A TRIP WITH THE TYCOON* (Harlequin Sweet). Set predominantly in India, I didn't settle for one city. I wanted to bring this magical, mystical country alive, so I deliberately took my readers on a journey. A train journey in particular, on the luxurious Palace on Wheels travelling through Rajasthan, visiting exotic destinations like Jaipur (the Pink City), Udaipur (with its famous Lake Palace) and Agra (home of the Taj Mahal). Throw in an extended stay in Goa, and readers are guaranteed a satisfying armchair travel.

I also layered the story with sights, sounds, aromas and foods, a good way to enhance the setting.

### **Here are two examples:**

"Prawns today, Missie?"

Smiling, she stopped at one of the many food vendors scattered along the roadside leading to Colva Beach. She'd been starving when she'd arrived here her first day and the tantalising aromas of seafood sizzling in garlic and tumeric had led her straight here.

"Two please."

**Contd page 4**

### In this issue...

1. Stellar Settings  
by **Nicola Marsh**
2. RWNZ contacts  
Editors' Desk
3. **President Abby**
6. Short Story Contest  
**Winners' Stories**
10. Karlene  
Blakemore-Monte  
by **Kylie Griffin**
12. The Upside of not  
selling  
by **Trish Morey**
15. Industry News  
by **Soraya Nicholas**
16. RWNZ Contest  
Update  
by **Ellie Huse**
17. Member Successes  
and Releases
18. International  
Contest News
19. RWNZ Regional  
News
20. Bits & Pieces &  
Web Surfing

**President:** Abby Gaines

[abby@abbygaines.co.nz](mailto:abby@abbygaines.co.nz)

**Vice president:** Iona Jones

[iona.jones@xtra.co.nz](mailto:iona.jones@xtra.co.nz)

**Secretary:** Louise Groarke

[louise@wlg.net.nz](mailto:louise@wlg.net.nz)

**Treasurer:** Miriam Paxie

[Miriam.paxie@gmail.com](mailto:Miriam.paxie@gmail.com)

**Membership:** Kris Pearson

[kris.p@paradise.net.nz](mailto:kris.p@paradise.net.nz)

**Publicity:** Jackie Coates

[jackiec@paradise.net.nz](mailto:jackiec@paradise.net.nz)

**Immediate past president:**

Pat Snellgrove

[pat.snellgrove@xtra.co.nz](mailto:pat.snellgrove@xtra.co.nz)

**H2H editors:**

Soraya Nicholas

[sorayanicholas@yahoo.com](mailto:sorayanicholas@yahoo.com)

Suzanne Perazzini

[suzanne.perazzini@orcon.net.nz](mailto:suzanne.perazzini@orcon.net.nz)

**Website content coordinator:**

Kamy Chetty

[kamychetty@yahoo.com](mailto:kamychetty@yahoo.com)

**Principal contest coordinator:**

Viv Constable

[vconstable@xtra.co.nz](mailto:vconstable@xtra.co.nz)

**Judging enquiries:**

Kamy Chetty

[kamychetty@yahoo.com](mailto:kamychetty@yahoo.com)

**Founder:** Jean Drew

(RWNZ was founded in Sept 1990)

**Contact details:**

Romance Writers of New Zealand, Inc., P O Box 10264, Dominion Road, Auckland

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

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

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@yahoogroups.com](mailto:NZromance-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) or contact [gstanners@xtra.co.nz](mailto:gstanners@xtra.co.nz) for information about the loop.

## EDITORS' DESK

In this issue of Heart to Heart, we have a great line up of reading for you to enjoy. From craft articles to an interview with a brand new author, and even two exceptionally good short stories written by talented RWNZ members – we have it all covered!

With Christmas fast approaching, and this being the November newsletter, it means there is only one more issue to go before the end of the year. This also coincides with us passing the editor duties over to a new team, who we will introduce next month. As part of our final issue for the year, we will be looking at the goals of our published and unpublished members for 2011, so if you'd like to put yours forward, please email Soraya. Many of us have busy jobs and family lives, but it's amazing to read about the goals and achievements of so many of our talented authors. We are excited to end the year with interviews, achievements for the year and goals, to spur us all into action for the New Year.

Until next time.

Soraya & Suzanne

### NEW MEMBERS

Kathryn Fergusson, Porirua  
Shirley Lyford, Otago  
Kirsty Cameron, Auckland  
Carole Brungar, Palmerston North  
Andrea Manuel, Auckland  
Fenella Nevill, Marton  
Yvonne Meinke, Auckland  
Sherilee Wakelin, Taumarunui  
Bridget Ransome, South Australia

## 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](mailto:applycritpartners@romanceaustralia.com). Alternatively, email [applycritpartners@romanceaustralia.com](mailto:applycritpartners@romanceaustralia.com) and ask for an application form.

# PRESIDENT ABBY



A highlight of the past month for me has been Bob Mayer's Warrior Writer workshop, which RWNZ offered to members online in October. Bob is an inspiration, both in terms of his own experience of battling and surviving as a published author, and in the way he converts his personal experience to valuable lessons the rest of us can reflect on and use.

As fiction writers, published or not, our work is so deeply personal, so much a part of us, that it can be hard to stand back and ask, am I going about this the best way? Most people's work is important to them, of course, but I can attest that I am a lot more emotional (read paranoid or ecstatic, hopeful or despairing, depending on how a particular day is going) than I ever was as a journalist. Or as a PR consultant or an IT sales / marketing person or whatever.

So while on the one hand we're incredibly lucky to be doing work that has potential to be so enriching and fulfilling, the higher emotional investment makes it much harder to say "Have I used my intelligence as well as my emotion in the decisions I've made," or "I made a mistake," or "This isn't good enough," or "I need a new direction."

Bob Mayer has encouraged me to ask some of those questions, scary as they are. I don't have all the answers yet, but I'm working on it! One thing I have figured out though—and Debbie Macomber's visit to our conference a few years ago gave a useful prod in this direction—is that having specific goals, and strategies / tactics for meeting those goals—can make you more likely to get where you want to. Of course, there are times when you just get lucky...but never as many of those as we'd like!

Going by the feedback on the workshop loop, many of the 100 or so of you who enrolled for the workshop found it equally valuable. So, huge thanks to Bob for making time in his busy schedule to teach us.

One other thing I've learned from this workshop is that we need more online workshops ☺. So watch out for announcements in the months to come of workshops that will either be free or every cheap to RWNZ members. Ideally I'd like to see us run a couple of these each year. If you have any suggestions for presenters you're keen to learn from, let me know on [abby@abbygaines.com](mailto:abby@abbygaines.com). I can't guarantee we'll get that instructor, but we'll take everything under consideration.

You'll have received this month's issue of *Heart to Heart* a little later than usual – my fault entirely, I'm afraid. I said last month that I planned to report on the post-conference survey this issue, but even though the survey was fully automated, pulling together the results from three different surveys (Friday-only attendees, whole conference attendees and non-attendees) has taken longer than expected and produced too much info for the space our long-suffering newsletter editors had allocated to this column. So, next month, definitely! Congratulations to Joanne Graves, who won the book vouchers draw for the non-attendees' survey.

Look out for next year's contest schedule in this issue of *Heart to Heart* – RWNZ contests remain a highly effective way for members to bypass the slush pile and get their work into the hands of editors and agents. And remember, the future of the Clendon Award depends on the support of volunteers to make this unique-in-the-world full manuscript contest a goer. If you're keen to volunteer, please contact Barbara Clendon on [reading@barbarasbooks.co.nz](mailto:reading@barbarasbooks.co.nz) as soon as possible.  
Abby Gaines, **RWNZ President**

## Continued from page 1

She held up two fingers for reinforcement, knowing the wizened old man would give her four, just like he had the previous times she'd stopped here. Not that she was complaining but the waistbands of her skirts sure were. His wide, toothless grin warmed her heart as she handed over the rupees and juggled the hot prawns, waving the skewer around and blowing on them before biting into the delicious, crispy flesh, savouring the freshness of the seafood drenched in spicy masala.

She devoured the first prawn in two bites, saliva pooling in her mouth at the anticipatory bite of the next as she strolled past another vendor selling a fiery fish vindaloo that smelled as good as the prawns.

Using the taste and smell of food particular to this region enhances this scene. Packs more punch than: "Hungry, Tamara stopped at a roadside vendor, bought her usual favourite prawns and continued on her way."

### Here's another example:

"I thought Goa was settled by the Portuguese?"

Tamara nodded, browsing the market stall's brightly coloured powders for the Holi festival tomorrow. "It was. That's why you see so many Portuguese inspired buildings and a lot of the population are Catholic. Apparently thousands of people make the pilgrimage to see St. Francis Xavier's body at the basilica here every five years."

Ethan trailed his fingers through a mound of sunshine yellow powder and earned a frown from the vendor for his trouble.

"If it's predominantly Catholic, what's with this Holi festival? Isn't that Hindu?"

"Uh-huh. But like most of India, there are so many different religions and castes living side by side that everyone's pretty tolerant of the different festivals." She pointed to several piles of powder, smiling at the vendor who began shovelling mini mountains of the stuff into clear plastic bags. "I think it's fabulous everyone gets involved. It's such a joyous occasion that you can't help but get swept up in the fun. At least, that's what mum told me."

He nodded, pointing to the bags being thrust into her hands. "So tell me about it. All I know is everyone goes berserk and throws colour on everyone else."

Upon hearing this, the vendor frowned again and shook his head, while she handed him rupees and laughed. "Come on, I'll enlighten you over a cup of masala chai."

"Sounds good."

He held out his hand for her carry-all and she gratefully gave it to him. Choosing every colour of the rainbow for Holi mightn't be such a great idea if she had to lug all those kilos back to the hut.

"Do the colours mean anything?"

She nodded, instantly transported back to the first time she'd heard about Holi, sitting on her mum's knee. She'd just learned to make her first chapatti that same day, and had had so much fun rolling the balls of dough into flat breads, standing on a stool next to the stove as her mum fried them.

She'd been five at the time and her dad had come home after work, scoffed three with jam and pronounced them better than her mum's.

It'd been a magical day, one of those days where her mum was reminiscing about India, eager to tell stories and she'd lapped it up. Yet another thing she missed.

"Green's for vitality, red is purity, blue is calmness and yellow is piety."

He squinted through the bag. "So what happens when you mix the lot together?"

"You'll find out."

She could hardly wait. Ever since she'd first learned of the festival of colour, she'd been entranced. The freedom to play and dance and sing like a kid, flinging coloured powders and water balloons over anyone and everyone, visiting friends, exchanging gifts and sweets, all sounded like a good time.

"Let's have a cuppa here."

They stopped at a roadside café, ordered masala chais and relaxed, watching the passing procession of people gearing up for Holi, each weighed down with vibrant magentas, daffodil yellows, peacock blues, dazzling emeralds and vivid crimsons.

Weaving a local festival, using description of the event, the colours, etc...in dialogue brings this scene alive, and avoids a chunky exposition of information I needed to get across.

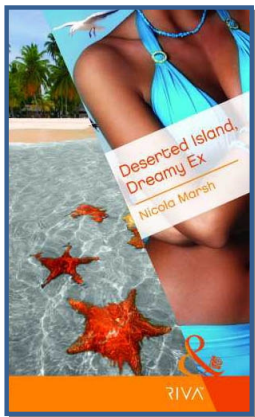
Here's an example closer to home, from *THREE TIMES A BRIDESMAID* (Harlequin Romance May 2010)

Stepping into the lofty open plan room serving as lounge, dining and entertaining area, her mouth fell open as she took in the black sheer drapes framing the floor to ceiling windows and the giant chandelier hanging from an ornate ceiling, the leopard print furniture, the black marble floors and the eclectic mix of candelabras, African animal figurines and coloured glass bottles.

A few dimmed down lights reflected off the ebony marble floors, shimmering like an oil slick beneath her feet while Melbourne's city skyline glittered through the sheer black chiffon like jewels scattered against an ermine cape.

The overall effect was surreal, sophisticated and decadent. A bit like the man himself, the man she'd first glimpsed in that photo accompanying the article online: suave, confident, a guy on top of his game, a guy ready to take on the world and win.





Bryce's apartment was very James Bond while her home in a quiet South Yarra street channelled Little House on the Prairie, from its green and cream checkered sofas to its soft honey oak polished boards, its antique fireplace to the lemon walls.

The two places were worlds apart.

Standing in his apartment reinforced what she'd always thought, always known: they were two very different people.

She'd been kidding herself.

Seeing the apartment through the heroine Eve's eyes, having her mentally compare it to her own, gives us a good contrast between trendy inner city Melbourne and her suburban home.

#### Is first-hand research essential?

I set the bulk of my novels in Melbourne, which makes for easy first-hand research. No prizes for guessing why I've set books in Acland Street (St. Kilda), Lygon St. (Carlton) and the Docklands...food research a must for authenticity!

So did I travel to India? Unfortunately not, but I lived vicariously through relatives who had just returned from the Palace on Wheels trip. Their finer details and photos enabled me to layer in a richness I might've had lacking using the Internet alone.

If you've chosen a setting you've never visited, it pays to put in a little extra groundwork.

- \* Contact people who live in the area to gather details and give your setting authenticity. People who live in an area can give you specifics, such as weather in a certain month, names of local newspapers, local slang.

- \* Ask friends/family for referrals to local people from that country/city. Talking to people from an area can help bring it alive. My grandmother was partially raised in Goa and hearing her food stories helped me layer that richness in my story.

- \* Read reference books written by people living in the area. Look for sensory details, local language to describe events and places.

- \* The Internet is every author's friend when it comes to research. But a word of warning: sites can be inaccurate, so choose wisely. Blogs from locals living in an area can be particularly useful. Web cams are also useful for seeing what an area looks like: weather, traffic, cars people drive, etc...

- \* Tourist information bureaus are a wealth of local knowledge, and are particularly good for adding local flavour (eg. things to do, yearly festivities, etc...)

#### Is it okay to use your imagination?

Writers invent settings all the time. World building of a place, imagined or otherwise, can suck a reader into a book and make them crave the sequel.

If you've chosen a real setting, using your imagination to layer in details of smell, taste, feel, can only enhance the picture you're painting for your reader.

In *A TRIP WITH THE TYCOON*, Tamara buys spicy prawns from a street vendor along a Goan beach and as she takes a bite, the aroma from a fiery fish vindaloo hits her too.

Goan is famous for its seafood and while I haven't been there, I imagined street vendors selling a variety of spicy seafood dishes.

#### Is accuracy important?

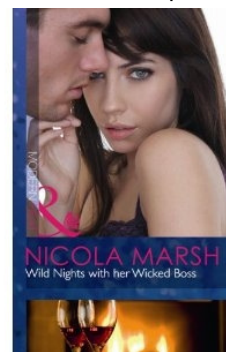
If your setting is front and centre (eg. historicals), how you portray a setting is crucial. Nothing yanks a reader out of a story more than an incongruous detail that doesn't fit a specific time period. So check historical timelines, fashions, foods, whether a building existed or an event happened, topography of the land, etc...to ensure authenticity.

I love choosing settings for my books. The perfect setting adds a richness to the story, the perfect backdrop a canvas for your strongly motivated characters to strut their stuff.

Check facts. Be inventive. Most of all, have fun creating your vibrant setting.

**Nicola writes for both Harlequin Romance (Sweet) and M&B Modern Heat, although in the UK her books will all be published under the new RIVA imprint. You can visit her on-line [www.nicolamarsh.com](http://www.nicolamarsh.com)**

**Nicola's upcoming releases include *Wild Nights with her Wicked Boss* (Harlequin Modern Heat, UK Dec, USA May 2011), *Deserted Island, Dreamy Ex!* (Harlequin RIVA launch title, UK Jan 2011) and *Sex, Gossip and Rock & Roll* (Harlequin RIVA, May 2011)**



# *NELSON SHORT STORY CONTEST*

## *WINNERS' STORIES*

The recent Nelson Short Story contest resulted in Yvonne Walus taking out the top spot, followed closely by runner-up Susan England and third place getter Adrienne Frater. In this issue we have published the top two entries, and hope to publish Adrienne's in December.

### **Speed Dating in the Cold by Yvonne Walus**

I hunch up and hug my arms. Still freezing. Whoever said Invercargill gets more sunshine than Auckland ought to get shot. Or forced to move here permanently, with no vacation rights in warmer parts of the world such as, say Fiji, the Sahara Desert or even... yeah, even Auckland.

Here I am, Sarah Hadfield, age 28, born and bred Aucklander, exposed to the icy whips of the Antarctic winds. A whim? A hunch? Following a dream?

Wikipedia puts Invercargill's temperatures between zero in the winter up to toasty eighteen degrees in summer, but if that's zero degrees, I'm Anna Paquin.

"Allow me."

Woollen bliss wraps around my shoulders. It smells of fresh pinewood chippings.

"Thanks," I mumble into the lining. "Where are you heading?" A cursory civility on my part, for no matter where this stranger was going with his wonderfully warm jacket, he's now coming to the museum with me. At least his jacket is.

He must have read my mind. "I'll just follow you."

OK, this is going to be awkward. Maybe. People accuse me of acting first and thinking later. Best to get it over and done with.

"I'm on my way to the museum." No need to say which museum, Invercargill has only the one. "They have a speed dating evening in their café."

"The Artwork Café? Cosy."

Oh, I hope so. The longer I stay in the jacket's embrace, the more I loathe the idea of ever being cold again.

"So why Invercargill?" His voice has a radio-announcer quality to it, self-assured and caring. You want to trust his voice.

He doesn't ask why speed dating. Brownie points for originality.

The wool tickles my nose and I suppress a sneeze. "Point form OK for you?"

"I like lists. Shoot."

I want to catch a glimpse of him, but the squall gusting through the street forces my eyes into blind slits. "One: Invercargill has more eligible bachelors than any other New Zealand city. Two: Auckland men are too busy polishing their image to make good husbands. And three: I need a change."

"What are you running away from?" He asks it, just like that. Must be a Southern thing.

The pyramid shape of the museum saves me from replying.

"Thanks for the jacket," I say in the foyer.

"No worries."

His hair is cut too short, his lips are too pronounced, his cheeks - while not chubby - still haven't lost their puppy fat.

I can't help wondering. "How old are you?"

"Of legal age," one of his dark eyebrows goes up, "and then some."

We're on the same wavelength, all right. Before I can stop him, though, he's gone.

"Here for the Speed Dating Evening?" The guy who welcomes me has hair that's not too short and lips that aren't too prominent and perfectly chiselled cheeks. When he leans in, I catch a whiff of aftershave too gorgeous to be cheap. I fill in the paperwork while my subconscious longs for fresh pine. Stupid. Where would I look for him?

"Let's get started."

About time, too. Nobody in Invercargill obeys the clock. They think that's a good thing.

"Remember the rules, folks. Girls remain at their tables. Boys rotate clockwise when the melody sounds."

My first bachelor is the organiser.

"Are you just making up the numbers?" If he's available, I want to know, even if he looks nothing like my jacket-bearing stranger.

"I'm not just making up the numbers. Tell me what movies you like."

We talk movies and books and holiday destinations. He enjoyed Inception, which I found too cerebral. He doesn't read fiction. We both wish we could be in Fiji right now, though.

"I hate Invercargill," he minces the word like a piece of offal.

I change tack. "What do you do for work?"

We do the other twenty-one questions straight off the website titled "The 25 Best Speed Dating Questions You Can Ask A Prospective Date." He must have Googled them too, for his answers are ice-smooth.

All too soon, the switchover song chimes. Snow Patrol. Apt.

Bachelor Number Two has the fashion sense of a computer geek, and he is indeed more into flash drives than flash personalities. Still, we have a nice enough time until -

"I want to get out of this dump."

"Invercargill?" I have to make sure.

"Yeah. I'm glad you're from Auckland. Auckland has prospects."

I don't want to sound uncharitable, but speed dating is unromantic enough without being seen as somebody's ticket out "of this dump".

*Those three words*

*Are said too much*

*They're not enough*

Thank goodness for the switchover. The next bachelor... oh, whom am I kidding?

"I'm sorry," I say to the man who could have been Mister Right, only I won't give him a chance. "It's terribly rude, but I have to go."

The organiser hunk says something about the rules. Damn. His Pierre Cardin or Versace assaults my nostrils. Not that I have a chance in hell of following the smell of fresh pine chips, but the contrast is just too much. I push past him into the foyer.

"Your jacket, ma'am."

I can't believe it. He waited.

"I'm not running away from anything," I answer the question he asked an hour ago. "I'm running towards."

His eyebrow lifts. "Shall I give you a list?" Gosh, I love the way his chin dimples on the right when he smiles. Up close, he looks more my age.

I mirror his smile. "I like lists."

"One," he says as he takes my hand and folds my thumb, "houses are cheaper in Invercargill than in Auckland. Actually affordable."

His touch is sending hot shivers straight into my belly. I can't move.

"Two, our slower-paced, village-like atmosphere is ideal for raising a family. And three," he lifts my hand to his mouth and my heart stops, "people are mighty friendly in these parts."

I find my voice. "Friendly," I rasp.

If that's friendly, I can't wait to see him flirty.

## **Puppy Love** **by Susan England**

The basket with its faded yellow blanket was still by the window seat. I should move it but it felt like betrayal. Soon. Instead I gazed out at the clouds gathering over the distant mountaintops and wondered if the southerly would bring rain or possibly snow. I needed some exercise to clear the cobwebs while it remained dry and the time had come to make that walk along the beach.

The wind was keen and choppy waves hissed over the rough sand. Head bent low and snuggled within my downy jacket, hands buried deep in the pockets I trudged along crunching shells where they'd been scattered on retreating tides. I was lost in the salt-whipped air, tears stinging my eyes remembering how Copper loved to chase on days like these.

'Hey, watch out.'

A warning shout brought me to my senses and I hurriedly wiped the tears from my cheeks with the back of my hand. I was about to walk into a fishing line, so absorbed with my memories that I'd failed to notice the solitary angler.

'I know, crazy day to be fishing,' he said cheerfully. 'I'll cook you lunch if I catch one.'

He laughed, knowing it was impossible, and I had to smile at his optimism.

'I need to walk some more, but good luck.'

I ducked under the taut line and continued, scuffing wet sand and picking up broken paua rainbows until I reached the driftwood sculpture. Time to head back.

'Hi again,' he said. 'You're one very lucky lady.'

'Why, have you caught something?'

'Nope, not a sausage so you're saved from my cooking. It's terrible.'

His throaty laugh was infectious so when he invited me for coffee instead I found myself glad to accept.

'That hut just up there. Here let me help you.'

It was surprisingly warm and cosy, a paraffin burner glowing in the corner and a couple of old armchairs. He made coffee and it steamed comfortingly in battered tin mugs.

'I'm Jake,' he said and shook my hand.

A friendly grip, warm and strong. I felt my stomach flip.

'Beth,' I replied and met his gaze.

Something about his big brown eyes and his loose-limbed ease made me relax and trust this man. I found myself pouring my heart out about my beautiful spaniel Copper, how much I missed her now she was gone.

'She was old. I'd had her from a pup. Just died in her sleep.'



Jake didn't interrupt, just inclined forward slightly full of encouragement and let me share all my pain and sadness.

'Whoa,' he said when I finally finished, 'She sounds like some dog.'

'She was, the best.'

Pent up emotion threatened to engulf me and I could feel my eyes brimful with tears. I looked down, embarrassed. Jake reached forward, tipped up my chin and gently pushed the hair back from my face. He wiped away the tears with his thumbs, a touch as soft as feathers and my stomach flipped again. Goosebumps shivered down my spine.

'What you need Beth is a dose of Uncle George.'

'Uncle George?' I snuffled.

'Yup, Uncle George. I won't take no for an answer. Come on, my car's round the corner. We'll be there in next to no time.'

As Jake drove us to his uncle's farm in the Motueka Valley I was able to observe him more closely and wonder at our chance encounter. He filled the space behind the steering wheel, tall and athletic. Dark hair curled around his ears and the stubble on his chin was several days old. It suited him. His jeans were frayed and worn, his chunky fleece likewise but he had the air of a man comfortable in his own skin. He smelled of the outdoors. I liked it. His hands manoeuvred the car expertly and I flushed thinking of those strong hands manoeuvring me.

George was a sweetie. George also had a litter of unwanted puppies and when I saw them scampering around their patient mother in the barn I was hopelessly smitten.

'Take your pick, Love, you'll be doing us all a favour.'

I looked at Jake for confirmation. He nodded. 'That one in the straw looks smart, don't you reckon?'

I did reckon. A shimmer of pale silk. I already knew her name. Silver.

George wanted no money for the pup, just a big hug, and Jake and I left the farm with the tiny creature nestled in my arms.

'Oh! Jake. You were right, I did need Uncle George.'

It was mid afternoon under a heavy sky by the time Jake turned the car off the highway and into my street. A few drops of chill rain spattered on the windscreen.

'That house there Jake, number four. Come on, let's get in before we get soaked.'

Silver was so excited sniffing at her new surroundings and chasing me around the sofa as I shut the curtains against the wintry weather. But she was a wee thing and soon exhausted. And there was Copper's basket waiting for her. She collapsed, a small curl of puppy in a faded yellow blanket.

'Hey Jake, will you light the fire and I'll make us some tea?'

We sat on cushions on the floor in front of the blazing fire. No lights, just the flicker of the flames. The empty tea tray was pushed to one side and I stretched like a contented kitten.

'It has been an incredible day,' I began.

Jake propped himself on one elbow and looked at me, a smile flickering at the corner of his mouth. He said nothing. I was mesmerised by the fullness of his lips. And flustered.

'What?' I said. 'What are you thinking?'

'I'm thinking that this incredible day is about to get even better.'

Jake pulled me towards him, held me tightly against his chest. I could hear his heart beating. Mine was pounding as his delicious lips found mine in our first lingering and tender kiss.

## NEWBIE AUTHOR

*Karlene Blakemore-Mowle (Wild Rose Press/ Eternal Press/Allen & Unwin)  
interviewed by Kylie Griffin*



**Please share a little bit about yourself and your writing.**

I live on the Mid North Coast of NSW, I'm married with four children and I work part time as a pathology collector. I'm a full time writer—I write every day. My first two novels were Romantic Suspense, but I have recently begun writing contemporary rural fiction.

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

My first 'Call' was a few weeks after I'd returned from my very first RWA conference in Brisbane last year. I'd returned home, pumped and ready to start submitting my manuscripts. I submitted a Romantic Suspense to The Wild Rose Press, an American e-publisher, and received an email within a few weeks saying *congratulations- it's a*

*contract!* (I did have to re-read the email a few times to make sure I hadn't skipped any important words like 'sorry to inform you, or lovely story but...')

It was a fantastic feeling and a day that can still bring a smile to my face.

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

I don't have an agent. I had a fantastic editor at TWRP.

**Can you tell us about your latest book due for release?**

My current release is THE CATTLEMAN'S RUNAWAY BRIDE with Eternal Press - the first in my rural romance line. It's the story of Rilee Henderson, a young woman whose dream is to one-day return to her family property, but is torn when love pops up in her path—altering her course.

**THE CATTLEMAN'S RUNAWAY BRIDE** blurb

*Rilee Henderson~ Her heart belonged to the land.*

*Her destiny - to a man who had already touched her past...was there any hope for their future?*

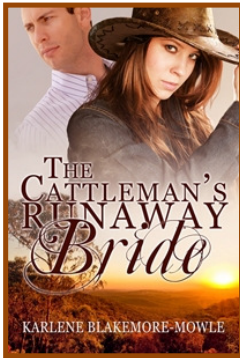
*Trey Delacourt~ He was a man who knew what he wanted- and what he wanted was Rilee Henderson.*

*Could he make her see past the lies and betrayal to see the truth inside his heart?*

**FALLOUT** is an action based romance set in far north Queensland and centres on a female detective on the run from a dangerous criminal she was due to testify against.

**OPERATION SUMMER STORM** takes Australian nurse, Summer Sheldon, out of her comfort zone when her photojournalist sister is kidnapped while on assignment in Cambodia. This book is due for release in October.

I also have a book with Allen & Unwin, due out early next year, which I am very excited about and you can go to my website at <http://karlenelane.webs.com/> to hear more about that as I get the details.



**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 have to say my biggest challenge is impatience! I don't plot out my stories. I have a vague idea where it's heading when I start, but I always find that I reach about the 30-40K mark and come to an abrupt halt. I'm still trying to figure out the right 'system' for me and trying out different plotting methods.

**Is it fair to say getting published takes you on a steep learning curve in the next stage of your career as a writer?**

Very steep learning curve. I remember thinking writing the story was the hard bit—I don't think even when I would dream about the big first sale, that it ever truly seemed real enough to envision all the other stuff that comes with publication.

There's a web page to set up, there's promotion to try and figure out, editing, and at the moment with the onset of a major publishing house—the anti is well and truly upped! I have to start thinking about interviews with TV and radio. It's very daunting to someone who has never had to do any of this before.

**What's something you've learnt since getting THE CALL?**

That dreams really do come true!

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

I'd like to mention my e-publishing beginnings. E- published writers in the past seemed to get looked down upon by the major publishing lines with the general census of e-publishing being the easy route to publication.

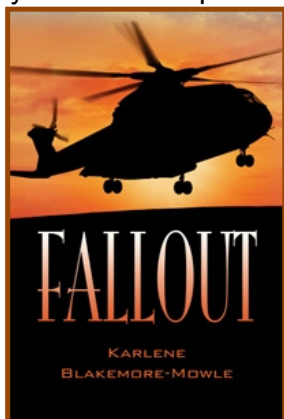
This is changing rapidly now that the major publishing houses are realising e-publishers are now a real and serious competitor in the profit stakes. I'd just like to encourage new writers who are submitting, to give e-publication a try. There is nothing easy about it - unless you consider e-mailing publications instead of snail mailing (and paying a small fortune for the privilege) the easy route. And make no mistake you can just as easily get rejected by an e-pub. editor so make sure your manuscript is the best you can make it. The experience you gain with editing and learning how

to deal with the publishing industry is, in my opinion, invaluable. Research your publisher, ask questions and give them a go.

**Karly, thanks for your time and for sharing your story.**

Thank you so much for having me.

**For more information about Karly, check out her websites - <http://karlenelane.webs.com/> and <http://www.karlybm.webs.com/>**



# *THE UPSIDE OF NOT SELLING...*

## *...OR AT LEAST, NOT SELLING AS QUICKLY AS YOU'D HOPED*

### *By Trish Morey*

How many of us have been there - desperately working towards getting that call, deep in the umpteenth work in progress, buoyed by a myriad of people telling us after a clutch of contest wins or finals that we're "soooooooo close" or that "you're next", and believing with all your heart that \*this\* manuscript will be the one that the editors can't help but snap up - and what happens? Some joany-come-lately sells in a two-book deal to the line you're targeting - with maybe their very first book or after they've been writing for an entire ten minutes!!

Well, if it hasn't happened to you yet, don't be surprised when it does. Because, like rejections, it happens. A lot more often than we'd like.

And while you will no doubt slap a smile on your face and join in the round of public congratulations, because you truly are sincerely happy for them, it's enough to make you chuck your keyboard at the wall. I mean, you've been at this for years and it's just not fair!

Well hey, I've got news for you, life's not fair!

But I'm going to tell you that it's not necessarily a bad thing to take a long time to sell, not necessarily a bad thing at all.

In fact there are a lot of positives for taking your time - (and hey, I should know).

#### **Apprenticeship**

Yes, we're all desperate to be published, but do you really want to sell that first manuscript and realize years later how bad it really was? **Alison Stuart**, whose journey to publication took 13 years, had this to say - "My first manuscript gained a lot of interest from publishers as well as being shortlisted for the Catherine Cookson Transworld Fiction Prize, coming 2nd in the EDA and getting me an agent! I really believed that publication was right around the corner.

"I've just finished a total rewrite of that first manuscript. My toes curled when I shook the dust off it and I realised how much I have learned in the years since I first wrote 'The End' with such confidence in immediate publication. Imagine if it had been published....!!!"

You see, those years spent in what feels like the unpublished wilderness aren't wasted. On the contrary, all that time you're waiting to make that breakthrough, you're learning your craft. It's just like an apprenticeship! And if we accept that a plumber or builder or heaven help us, a brain surgeon needs a few years of study and practicals before we trust them enough to be let loose on society, what is it about writing that makes people believe they have a divine right to publication without doing the hard yards first?

And as far as apprenticeships go, we have a good one. Admittedly the pay is crap, but what you do learn is pure gold dust. Because you're reading the books that are being published right now, you're reading how-to books and letting their gems work their way into your psyche, you're reading articles and magazine stories that will spark off a lightbulb somewhere in the back of your brain for use sometime, you're attending conferences and/or participating on supportive e-loops and you're listening and studying, and all that while you're doing the best thing you can possibly do by continuing to write and practice your craft.

You'll learn how to work with editors during revisions and maybe revisions on revisions. You learn that it's not about you, but it's all about the book. It's about the story.

And believe me, you'll learn how to cope with rejection and develop a thick skin.

**Yvonne Lindsay**, who took thirteen years from putting fingers to keyboard to selling her first book to *Silhouette Desire*, says this of her long lead time to sale - "I think it gives you some distance and perhaps even a thicker veneer of professionalism when you do sell. You've done the yards and you know exactly what you're capable of."

### **The Industry**

What happens during all those years reading and writing and soaking up knowledge? You don't just improve your writing skills, you also get to know about and understand your genre and the industry that supports it. If you're writing romance, you learn the differences between category and single title and whether you really need an agent and how to get one if you do. You learn the difference between the category lines - what does "Sexy" mean and how does that differ from say, a *Desire* or a *Sweet*? You learn about the different publishers and what they want. You learn to understand your own voice, and where it fits. You learn how to write a query letter and synopsis and a whiz bang opening chapter and you have time and the contests to practice it! You learn (somewhat sadly) that writing for publication is by no means a get rich quick scheme.

In fact, keep your eyes open and you can't help but learn all about this crazy publishing industry we're so keen to be part of!

### **The Best Friends You'll Ever Make**

I may be mentioning this last, but it's by no means least. In any profession you can make friends, good friends and sometimes even friends for life. But I've never known a profession where it is possible to meet so many wonderfully positive and upbeat people all over the world. Nowhere will you meet nicer, more generous people. Nowhere will you find a support network like that which your fellow romance writers provide.

**Maxine Sullivan**, who worked doggedly away for 20 years before getting the call, had this to say - "One of the best things about not selling for a long time is the wonderfully supportive friendships you make with other writers over the years - friendships that stand the test of time."

What a bonus! The longer it takes you to get published, the more conferences you attend, the more you get involved, then the more friends you'll make, and the stronger those bonds you'll forge with those going through the same struggles, experiencing the same highs and suffering the same setbacks.

Truly, the best friends you'll ever make.

### **The Pay Off**

You've practiced your craft, you've learned about the industry, and it might be 5, it might be 10 or 15 or even 20 years down the track from when you started, but when that magical call comes, you've got a big advantage over someone who sold their first manuscript within ten minutes of deciding to become a writer. Why? Because after that call it's a completely new ball game and you're going to need all the time you have in establishing your writing career and not on playing catch up with how the industry works.

You've worked at your craft and built your confidence in your own writing abilities and you've learned what you have to do to stay published. Plus you've built a support crew around you for the hard times - because there's no doubt you'll still need a shoulder to cry on from time to time.



And the very best thing about it all is that as soon as you get that call, your career is set to take off like a firecracker!

Yvonne Lindsay and Maxine Sullivan are now both multi-published authors with Silhouette Desire and both have been #1 Borders Group Bestsellers.

**And my story?** It took me 11 years of writing and submitting before that first sale in June 2003. Since then I've sold nine books to Presents with two more contracted, the first two US releases becoming Waldenbooks #1 Bestsellers and my third book winning the 2006 RWA Romantic Book of the Year. Was that 11 year apprenticeship a waste of time? What do you reckon?

So don't feel disheartened if that call is proving elusive. Don't let yourself feel bad about your writing if other writers sell before you do. And whatever you do, don't underestimate the value of that time spent while unpublished. It's not wasted - not if you use that time productively to develop your writing and voice, to learn about the industry, and to build up networks and friendships. And then hold onto your hats, because when you do sell, you and your career are set to go straight into orbit.

(This article appeared first in [RWAustralia's](#) Hearts Talk newsletter - October 2006)

Trish Morey is a USA Today and Borders Group Bestselling Author for Harlequin Mills & Boon. For details about Trish or her books, visit her on-line [www.trishmorey.com](http://www.trishmorey.com)

## *INDUSTRY NEWS – AGENTS & EDITORS*

### *Compiled by Soraya Nicholas*

#### **Ever Wondered What the Slush Pile is Really Like for an Agent?**

•Agent **Steve Laube** of The Steve Laube Agency posted a blog titled “The Slush Pile: Enter at Your Own Risk”. He takes a humorous look at what agents have to deal with every day, although he does commend authors on their bravery in submitting work and says he would never be brave enough to have the self-confidence to do so himself. “I only wish some would spend a little more time to determine if their project is a good fit for a particular agency and learn how to best write a quality pitch.” <http://www.stevelaube.com/the-slush-pile-enter-at-your-own-risk/>

Other agents blogging on slush piles include **Rachelle Gardner**, “Why Oh Why Did I Get Rejected” – a simple look at why agents simply cannot provide feedback with their rejection letters - <http://cba-ramblings.blogspot.com/2010/09/why-oh-why-did-i-get-rejected.html>

Also head to **Rachel Funari's** “Escaping the Slush Pile” <http://www.poewar.com/slush/>, Katherine Rosman's “The Death of the Slush Pile” <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703414504575001271351446274.html>, and The Rejectionist's “A Good Author is Hard to Find” <http://www.thestranger.com/seattle/a-good-author-is-hard-to-find/Content?oid=2820559>

•Recently, agent **Rachelle Gardner** talked about why agents would love to be talent scouts and talent developers, if they had the time to do so. She also discussed how to spot a bad agent, requested material limbo and why agents are so busy. <http://cba-ramblings.blogspot.com/2010/10/agentfail.html>

•If you're searching for an agent, decide on your top ten and look for them on Twitter. It can be a great place to see what agents are looking for from new authors, and to read industry news via their regular tweets and links to blogs.

# RWNZ CONTEST UPDATE

By Ellie Huse

Viv Constable has kindly volunteered to take over the role of RWNZ Contests Coordinator, and will be ably assisted by Kamy Chetty as Assistant Contests Coordinator. Kamy will be maintaining the judges' register and will organise judges for each contest.

For contest enquiries, you can contact Viv at [vconstable@xtra.co.nz](mailto:vconstable@xtra.co.nz) and, for judging enquiries, Kamy at [kamychetty@yahoo.com](mailto:kamychetty@yahoo.com)

*Editor Note: On behalf of RWNZ, we all need to say a huge thank you to Ellie, who has filled the position of Contest Coordinator for a long time. Thanks for all your hard work Ellie. You've done a great job!*

## RWNZ CONTEST SCHEDULE 2011

Chapter Short Story Contest: Closes Friday, 25 March 2011  
HMB Great Beginnings Contest: Closes Friday, 15 April 2011  
Strictly Single Contest: Closes Friday, 23 September 2011

(Final judges will be announced in due course.)

\*\*\*

## UPDATE: STRICTLY SINGLE CONTEST

30 entries were received this year and are currently with first-round judges. Finalists are expected to be announced by mid-November.

## CHAPTER SHORT STORY CONTEST 2010 CONTEST REPORT

The twenty-seven entries in this year's *Chapter* Short Story Contest provided judges with a selection of entertaining stories on a variety of themes.

Julie Redlich, Fiction Editor of *Woman's Day* (Australia), and final judge of the seven finalist entries, made particular mention of the unusual settings and situations that sparked her interest from the outset. Those two qualities, she said, are "part of the secret of success". Julie added that: "There is also a welcome sense of humour in many of the stories that adds a lot of humanity to both characters and plots. What a valuable commodity laughter is. And so many of the people in these stories were strongly drawn and sometimes slightly flawed, which makes them so much more believable."

The *Chapter* Short Story Contest challenges contestants to write a romantic interlude, with all the necessary qualities of a great hook, an original plot focused on two memorable characters, and a satisfying ending, in only 1500 words. While the higher-scoring stories (and not only those that finalised) succeeded in doing so, feedback from the first-round judges indicated that the plot in several entries was more suited to a full-length novel. Some were also a little short on romance. Get your hero and heroine together as soon as possible; don't leave it until the last paragraph or two to introduce romance into your story.

Below is a summary of the score sheet feedback:

- Make every word count; there's no room for rambling set-ups, meaningless chit chat and lengthy descriptions of clothing, scenery, etc.
- Coincidences don't work.
- Make good use of dialogue. Too much narrative doesn't show characters' emotions effectively.
- Keep secondary characters to a minimum and don't waste too many of those 1500 words on them.
- Punctuation, grammar and spelling ARE important. Take time to proofread (or have someone else do it for you.)
- Read your story out loud—it helps to pinpoint clumsy dialogue, over-long sentences, confusing POV, problems with pacing, etc.
- Finish well; some entries lacked an ending, which left judges with unanswered questions. Avoid predictable endings.

The following points featured in the highest-scoring entries:

- A great hook/opening.
- Originality.
- Good use of humour.
- Memorable, well-drawn characters (and not too many).
- Clever use of dialogue.
- Excellent pacing (keep the story moving).
- A satisfying conclusion (it helps if there's a twist in it).

Congratulations to the three winners—Lisa Anderson, Kris Pearson and Yvonne Eve Walus—whose stories were purchased by Woman's Day, and also to finalists Kendra Delugar and Cathryn Hein (all three of Cathryn's entries made the cut!).

***Many thanks to Frances Loo of Chapter for her generous sponsorship of this contest, to final judge, Julie Redlich of Woman's Day, and to the first-round judges.***

Ellie Huse  
Contest Manager

### THE KARA SCHOOL OF WRITING

The Kara School of Writing is thrilled to be offering weekend romance writing courses again! 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 publishers.

Two places are available for an Advanced Course on the 12-14th November - please email Daphne [daphne@daphneclair.com](mailto:daphne@daphneclair.com) or write to Kara School of Writing, PO Box 105, Maungatapere, Northland 0152.

# OFFICIAL RELEASES & MEMBER SUCCESSES

## Official November Releases

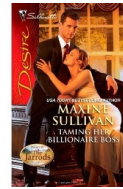
A Traitor's Heart by **Jane Beckenham**

Powerful Greek, Housekeeper Wife by **Robyn Donald**

Their Marriage Miracle by **Sue Mackay**

Taming her Billionaire Boss by **Maxine Sullivan**

That Christmas Feeling (anthology) featuring a story by **Karina Bliss**



## Member Successes - Competitions and Accolades

### Awards and Competitions

**Susanna Rogers** came 1st and 3rd in **The Heart of The Rockies Contest** for two entries in the mainstream with romantic elements category.

TEMPT THE DEVIL by **Anna Campbell** finalised in the historical category of the **Heart of Denver Romance Writers 2010 Aspen Gold Award**.

**Bronwyn Evans** RWNZ Short Story entry, NO MATTER WHAT (thanks to the feedback from the contest) got second in the **Australian Literary Review Short Story contest** judged by English author Sohie King.

**Yvonne Eve Walus** came 1<sup>st</sup> place in the **Nelson Romance Writers' Short Story Competition** for *SPEED DATING IN THE COLD*

### Harlequin M&B New Voices competition

**Leah Clapton** made the TOP TEN with her manuscript *Secrets & Speed Dating*!! Her second chapter was posted for judging at [www.romanceisnotdead.com](http://www.romanceisnotdead.com)

**Sally Anders** & **Sue Knight** made the list of 45 authors M&B want to read more from! Out of 800+ entries we might add!!

**Yvonne Lindsay's** current US release, *FOR THE SAKE OF THE SECRET CHILD*, entered the **Borders Series Bestseller list** at #3! Yvonne is also thrilled to announce her new two-book contract, and her last month's **USA TODAY Bestseller** placing at #78. That book, *STAND-IN BRIDE'S SEDUCTION*, had two weeks at #6 with Borders Series Bestsellers!!

### Sold

**Pat Snellgrove** w/a Ann Patrick sold *ENDURING LOVE* to **Whiskey Creek Press** for publication.

**Cathryn Heins** sold in a two-book deal to **Penguin** and signed with agent **Clare Forster** of Curtis Brown Australia (read her 'call story' on the loop)

**Breaking News!!** As we went to print, **Leah's** entry in the **Mills & Boon New Voices competition** made the final four! Huge congrats to Leah, our fingers are firmly crossed for you.

Email Tyree at [rocker.t@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rocker.t@xtra.co.nz) with you successes.

[www.romancewriters.co.nz](http://www.romancewriters.co.nz)

November 2010

# INTERNATIONAL CONTEST NEWS

*Compiled by Lisa Elkind-Gardiner*

## Romance Writers of America (RWA) RITA Award

**Enter:** 5 copies of your romance novel or novella published with original copyright date of 2010. **Deadline:** Register by 5 pm CST Dec 1, 2010. Books must be received by 5 pm. CST Jan 4, 2011. **Eligibility:** **Published** Romance Novel or Novella with original copyright date of 2010. **Fee:** \$40 US for RWA members; \$140 US for non-members. **Prize:** Winner receives a Rita statue. <http://www.rwanational.org/cs/home>

## Women on Writing (WOW) Flash Fiction Contest

**Enter:** 250 words min to 750 words max fictional story (title not included in count) **Deadline:** Nov 30, 2010. Capped at 300 entries. **Eligibility:** Anyone **Fee:** \$10 US (extra \$10 if you want a critique) **Prizes:** 1st Place: \$250.00 cash. <http://www.wow-womenonwriting.com/contest.php>

## Oklahoma Romance Writers of America National Readers' Choice Awards

**Enter:** 5 copies of your **published** romance novel with copyright date of 2010 **Deadline:** Register by Dec 1, 2010; books received by Jan 15, 2011 **Eligibility:** Published romance novel with copyright date of 2010 **Fee:** \$25 US. <http://www.okrwa.com/NRCA/nrca.htm>

## North Texas Romance Writers of America Great Expectations

**Enter:** 1st 25 pgs plus query letter **Deadline:** Dec 30, 2010. **Eligibility:** Must be unpublished and uncontracted in book-length romantic fiction. **Fee:** \$30 US **Prize:** \$50 US All finalists receive certificates. <http://www.ntrwa.org/contest/contest.aspx>

## Colorado Romance Writers of America Award of Excellence

**Enter:** Published Romance Novels with original copyright in 2010 **Deadline:** Received by Jan 7, 2011 **Eligibility:** **Published** Novels with original copyright in 2010; e-books accepted. **Fee:** \$20 US **Prize:** Winners will receive a trophy. All finalists will receive a certificate. <http://coloradoromancewriters.org/aoe.html>

# INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

*Compiled by PDR Lindsay-Salmon, aka Patrika Salmon*

## The Short Story Radio Romance Award 2011

Short Story Radio is excited to announce the Short Story Radio Romance Award 2011. Now in its second year, this writing competition offers romantic fiction writers the chance to have their work recorded and broadcast, as well as to receive a cash prize. No more than 4,000 words, similar to the type of romance story you will find in a women's magazine. The deadline is November 15th 2010. [http://www.shortstoryradio.com/short\\_story\\_competitions\\_romance.htm](http://www.shortstoryradio.com/short_story_competitions_romance.htm)

## JMS Books LLC

JMS Books LLC is a new small press publishing in both electronic and print formats. Fiction under 30,000 words is electronically published, longer works are published in print as well. JMS Books LLC will accept previously published work if the author holds the electronic and print rights. <http://www.jms-books.com>

## Evernight Publishing

Evernight Publishing is another new digital publisher specialising in romance, erotic romance, and urban fantasy. Seeking submissions in 'all sub-genres of romance, erotic romance, and urban fantasy.' Length is anything from 10,000 to 80,000 words. <http://www.evernightpublishing.com>

## Blue Leaf Publications

Blue Leaf Publications is a well established small press publishing 'two to six print and/or electronic titles per year. Seeking romance including science fiction/futuristic, and paranormal/werewolf. 30,000 to 90,000 words, 'strong female characters' favoured. <http://www.blueleafpub.com>

[www.romancewriters.co.nz](http://www.romancewriters.co.nz)

November 2010



# RWNZ NEWS AROUND THE REGIONS

## Regional convenor contacts

AUCKLAND – Frances Housden  
email: [fhousden@xtra.co.nz](mailto:fhousden@xtra.co.nz)

CHRISTCHURCH – Jill Scott  
email: [scotts@snap.net.nz](mailto:scotts@snap.net.nz)

HAWKE'S BAY – Ginny Suckling  
email: [ginny.suckling@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ginny.suckling@xtra.co.nz)

NELSON – Annika Ohlson-Smith  
email: [allan-annika@xtra.co.nz](mailto:allan-annika@xtra.co.nz)

CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND – Sarah  
Saunders email:  
[rainbowpt@vodafone.co.nz](mailto:rainbowpt@vodafone.co.nz)

OTAGO - Viv Adams, email:  
[whitecliffodge@xtra.co.nz](mailto:whitecliffodge@xtra.co.nz)

WELLINGTON – Giovanna Lee  
Email: [giovanna@xtra.co.nz](mailto:giovanna@xtra.co.nz)



## AUCKLAND

The November meeting will be held on Saturday the sixth and the speaker will be Gracie O'Neil, advising us on Ways to have a Presence on the Web. As most of you know Gracie runs a website course and is well to the fore of matters concerning websites etc. As usual the meeting will take place at the Three Kings Tennis Pavilion on the corner of Mt Albert and Mt Eden Roads at 12.30 pm on the 6th of November. Bring a small plate for a shared lunch. News about the Christmas lunch will be given at the meeting. See you there.

## WELLINGTON

Because Gracie Stanners was visiting Wellington we brought our October meeting forward to late September and enjoyed her workshop "Finding Your Voice". This led to a fascinating discussion on the jobs we'd trained for versus the jobs we'd really wanted to do. Some of us have had some pretty extreme life and career changes! It was a great way to get to know each other better. Next meeting - Saturday November 6<sup>th</sup> at Meryl's. Everyone to bring the first two pages of your manuscript. These will all be read out anonymously, and then we'll discuss proper formatting.

## CENTRAL NORTH

Well, the changeable spring weather got the better of us last month. The storm ended what promised to be an excellent meeting at Gaylene's in the heart of the Waikato. The scenery around her place is fabulous but as such is way in the 'wop-wops' and any downed trees or slips could have been big trouble so in the end, for safety's sake, we decided to cancel the meeting. Gaylene sent out her notes for the meeting which covered her impressions of the conference which made very good reading. Our thoughts go out to our Christchurch sisters for a speedy recovery. Good writing everyone.

## HAWKES BAY

After nine months away I'm back in New Zealand for a brief visit and this week I caught up with one of the Hawke's Bay members. We met at my home in Napier. Unfortunately Sally Rigby couldn't join us for our coffee morning but Christine Thomas came over from Havelock North. We spent a pleasant couple of hours getting to know each other as we hadn't met before. We chatted about our writing plans and goals and Christine said how much she had enjoyed her first RWNZ conference this year. She found the workshops and just talking to attendees a great help and boost to her future writing career. The same could be said for the Kara Course which she also attended. We aim to keep in touch by email and will meet up again when I'm back in New Zealand next year. If there's anyone else in the Hawke's Bay area who would like to join us please contact me at [ginny.suckling@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ginny.suckling@xtra.co.nz).

## NELSON

This month we decided to combine our meeting with a celebration dinner, a girls' night out. The celebration was of course the success of our 'Winter Warmer Romance Short Story Competition'. The winning story is published in this issue of H2H. We started with pink bubbly drinks at a pub in town where we crashed a party of two on a date for the sake of getting seats indoors. The male part of the 'date' was not only Irish, but in awe of being surrounded by seven romance writers, as bubbly as their drinks. Eventually we strolled across the road to have our fill of Indian food. A good choice and appropriate as we discovered the menu contained a dish with the same name as the third prize winning story 'Vindaloo'. Not until we were on our way home did we realize we hadn't mentioned any of the points on our meeting agenda yet. Let's say it was a long fun evening with a short meeting at the end. Our next meeting will be Saturday 13 November at 2pm, Annika's place as usual.

## OTAGO

On Saturday the 9th of October we welcomed Shirley Lyford from Hampden into our group with a yummy pot luck lunch at Rosalie's home, and with everyone offering writing for critiquing, we enjoyed another lively, supportive, and inspiring session. We find meeting at 10.45 am on Saturday suits best but as we've yet to pin down which Saturday in November please contact Viv for details: [whitecliffodge@xtra.co.nz](mailto:whitecliffodge@xtra.co.nz); 034822685.

## CHRISTCHURCH

Due to the earthquake most people agreed their writing achievement level was zero as we had lost our focus on writing. Instead the Chch meeting started with a book swap and a discussion about steampunk. We then went on to studying competition scoring sheets and talked about how hard it was to get perfect scores. Finally we discussed our own writing and decided the group was working. Next meeting : Monday 1 Nov, 7pm - please contact Jill for further details.

# WEB SURFING

Compiled by Nalini Singh

Agent **Rachelle Gardner** gives us a glimpse "Behind the Scenes" of two possible scenarios at an acquisitions meeting at a publishing house: <http://tinyurl.com/298nrjm>

**Sherrilyn Kenyon** recently released a "Vook". According the Vook.Com website: "A vook is a new innovation in reading that blends a well-written book, high-quality video and the power of the Internet into a single, complete story. You can read your book, watch videos that enhance the story and connect with authors and your friends through social media all on one screen, without switching between platforms."

**Bob Mayer** talks about "Self-Publishing Realities" at Genreality: <http://tinyurl.com/24s8228>  
Ever wanted to experience Shakespeare "in the original Klingon"? Well now you can! <http://tinyurl.com/39f3ou2>

# BITS AND PIECES

Compiled by Soraya Nicholas

Debbie Macomber changes publishing houses! Starting in 2012, Macomber will be releasing six new novels with Ballantine Bantam Dell. Random House Publishing Group chief Gina Centrello, along with Ballantine publisher Libby McGuire and editor in chief Jennifer Hershey announced they had won an auction for Macomber's next six books, which will see her leave Harlequin. The deal was reportedly a seven-figure sum for each book. Random House were competing with Grand Central and Simon & Schuster. Macomber has written over 100 books so far, and has sold more than 130 million copies of her works. This is the second significant female author they have secured, after they acquired Janet Evanovich earlier this year.

Harlequin Mills & Boon Senior Editor Joanne Grant (London office) has said that, "To fulfil our publishing program, our editors need to acquire four books a day". She also noted that they are still actively looking to acquire Medical Romances.

November is officially NaNoWriMo time! NaNoWriMo stands for National Novel Writing Month, which begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November. The goal is to write a 50-000 word novel within the month of November. Head to <http://www.nanowrimo.org> to find out more.

Harlequin has announced that as of Spring 2011 (USA), all Harlequin and Silhouette lines will carry the Harlequin imprint. No announcement of editorial changes has been made.