

HEART TO HEART

ROBYN GRADY

Interviewed by Soraya Nicholas



We all love a good call story. Robyn, take us back in time and walk us through your path to publication (including the call!)

I began writing ten years ago and won a contract with a new Australian publisher that went belly up. That's when I set my heart on Harlequin or nothing. When our third daughter was born I had an 18 month break and started again in 2004. A partial garnered interest from a Temptation/Blaze editor. When she left I tried for the new flirty line within Sweet at the time – Tango.

2005, Kimberley Young from the London office rang! If it hadn't been for that gorgeous accent I'd have thought it was some cruel joke. They liked my manuscript but for a new line, Modern Extra. We spoke about revisions, I sent them off and then....waited. Eight months later I wrote

and suggested another manuscript. Kimberley rang again. I just needed to do a couple of revisions, she said. Although Kim made clear this wasn't an offer to buy, I knew I was super close. I handed in the revisions and...waited. Again I wrote and suggested yet another story. This time I received revisions that equated to a complete rewrite. I worked frantically with no cooking, no kids, no sleep, but I missed the deadline she'd suggested. That's when I started looking for a noose. But blessed Fate stepped in.

A New Zealand mate rang and suggested I contact her agent. Ha! No way would a New York literary agent be interested in me, but one eye was twitching and I knew I had nothing to lose. I dashed off an email detailing my history with London and the fact I was a finalist in 13 US contests that year (I so recommend contests!) The agent emailed straight back. Three weeks later I was represented. Two weeks more, on December 5, 2006, I opened my inbox to find three emails. The first said that London was interested. The next said New York was interested too. The final message said that Melissa Jeglinski wanted to buy my book!

And, yes, an email was just as thrilling as a call. ☺

Did you ever consider giving up in your pre-published years?

Toward the end I began to question whether I'd ever be able to give the editors what they wanted. I seemed to lack that special magic ingredient. I thought about all the time I'd put into accomplishing my dream – hours each day, the crazy late nights, for years on end! Would it amount to nothing? But my husband was one hundred per cent supportive. He believed in me if ever I fell into a self-doubting heap. And in my heart, I knew I couldn't give up. I was close. It was a matter of sucking it up and sticking it out.

Contd page 4

In this issue...

1. Robyn Grady
by **Soraya Nicholas**
2. RWNZ contacts
Editors' Desk
3. **President Abby**
5. Setting Workshop
by **Beth Heywood**
7. CC Coburn
by **Kylie Short**
9. Business Tools to
Boost your Book
by **Joanne Graves**
11. Easy Peasy Promotion
by **Jane Beckenham**
13. Conference Coverage
17. Member successes and
Releases
18. International News &
Contest News
19. RWNZ regional news
20. Cartoons by **Nalini
Singh** & Bits and Pieces
by **Soraya Nicholas**

President: Abby Gaines
email: rwnzpresident@xtra.co.nz

Vice president: Sara Hantz
email: sallymrigby@hotmail.com

Secretary: Sandra Hyatt
email: SHYDES@xtra.co.nz

Treasurer: Pat Snellgrove
email:
rwnz.treasurer@xtra.co.nz

Membership: Kris Pearson
email: kris.p@paradise.net.nz

Publicity: Sue Knight
email: sueknight@ihug.co.nz

Immediate past president:
Pat Snellgrove
email: pat.snellgrove@xtra.co.nz

H2H editors:
Soraya Nicholas
sorayanicholas@yahoo.com
Suzanne Perazzini
suzanne.perazzini@orcon.net.nz

Website content coordinator:
Kamy Chetty
email: kamychetty@yahoo.com

Principal contest coordinator:
Ellie Huse
email: elliehuse@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@yahooogroups.com or contact giovanna@xtra.co.nz for information about the loop.

EDITORS' DESK

This is our first Heart to Heart since the conference – the last one was sent out just before the big weekend. And what a wonderful weekend it was! This month, we have a superb selection of photos provided by Clare Scott, official RWNZ Conference photographer, so those of you who didn't attend can see what we were up to. All in all, it was pretty incredible. Mary-Jo Putney, Mary-Theresa Hussey and Melissa Jeglinski were all great, as were the New Zealand and Australian authors who attended and presented workshops.

In this issue, we also bring you Mills & Boon author Robyn Grady as well as brand new Harlequin American author CC Coburn, along with interesting craft articles by Jane Beckenham, Beth Heywood and Joanne Graves.

If you would like to submit an article to Heart to Heart for consideration, we would love to hear from you. Craft articles are very much sought after, and any submissions are welcome! Please query Soraya for guidelines.

Until next time.

Soraya & Suzanne

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

Congratulations to our members who've finalled in or won writing contests both here and in Australia and the USA over the past couple of months. What a talented bunch you are! There's been so much good news on the RWNZ email loop, I can't keep track of it all, but there two sets of winners of whom I'd like to make special mention.

First, the Clendon Award. The results of RWNZ's most prestigious contest (in fact, it's the world's most prestigious romance writing contest, and I defy anyone to convince me otherwise!), were announced at our conference in August. Congratulations to winner Kylie Short, Wendy Vella (2nd) and Kris Pearson (3rd). To do so well in a contest based on a full manuscript is a major achievement. RWNZ's heartfelt thanks go to Peter and Barbara Clendon for their ongoing support of the Clendon Award, both financially and in terms of the mountain of effort involved. I know that having to "finish the damn book" to enter the Clendon was key to incenting me to complete the manuscripts I wrote before I sold my first book, and I don't doubt it provides the same incentive to many others.

The other people I want to congratulate are those members invited to submit their manuscripts to Mills & Boon in London as a result of our email pitches, held pre-conference. Diana Holmes, Soraya Nicholas, Sharyn Barrett and Kamy Chetty were all selected on the basis of their pitches/proposals to submit to the editors, thus short-cutting that awful wait the rest of us must endure. Yay!

At the risk of sounding like a stuck record (showing my age, yikes!), can I point out that each of those four writers has been very active in their service to RWNZ? Diana was on our conference committee this year, acting as registrar, Soraya edits this newsletter, Sharyn has put in years of service on the executive, and Kamy looks after our website. As I mentioned in last month's column, I truly believe that something about committing your time to RWNZ helps you raise your game / your attitude / your goodness knows what, and moves you further along the road to publication. So do consider volunteering!

RWNZ will be actively recruiting new memberships in the coming months. In the past we've found the organisation has greater synergy, stronger economies of scale and can offer its members the most benefit at around the 350 member level. We've dropped quite a bit below that the past couple of years, no doubt a symptom of everyone's increasing busy-ness and the difficult economy. We'd love your support as we seek to grow our numbers again – if you know anyone who's writing romance-related fiction but isn't a member, or someone who'd love to get started, why not invite them to join RWNZ? At \$55 a year, plus a \$20 joining fee, membership is great value. You could even consider giving a membership as a perhaps extravagant but doubtless exciting gift to someone you love. If you do want to give a gift subscription, contact Kris Pearson, our hardworking membership secretary, on membership@romancewriters.co.nz. She'll arrange for a gift certificate for you to give to your friend / relative / fellow writer.

If you haven't renewed your own RWNZ membership subscription yet, you're running dangerously close to the November 1 cutoff point. And that would be a shame, because we have some exciting plans for the next 12 months and beyond. You can look forward to some changes to our contests to make them easier to enter, new initiatives at both regional and national level to help ensure our members get the maximum benefit of their RWNZ membership, and an extraordinary lineup for the 2010 conference, which is our 20th anniversary year.

If you can't find your renewal form, you can download it from the RWNZ website – www.romancewriters.co.nz – or email Kris Pearson at the address above.

See you next month – happy writing!

Abby Gaines, RWNZ President

Few authors manage to sell to one publisher, let alone two! Is it hard balancing your Silhouette Desire and Harlequin Presents commitments?

It's a challenge! But a labour of pure love. No one can prepare you for the incredible ride once you've sold. The exhilaration. The emails. The deadlines! There's revisions, copy edits, line edits, Art Fact Sheets, dedications, readers letters, times **two**. Then you have all the other business associated with being a writer – website maintenance, blogs, contests, interviews ☺ The first year I was running on adrenaline. Second year I learned to pace myself more. Third year...well, I think I might have it together. I'll have five releases in the US in 2009, but that isn't without the support of my editors and agent. It's about being professional and pulling together to make sure everything happens the way it should. Being able to go without sleep helps too ☺

What is the main difference between your Desire and Presents stories? What sets them apart?

I write for Modern Heat (Sexy Sensation) which comes under the Presents umbrella in the US. Harlequin wanted to broaden the incredible appeal Presents has around the world. They were eager to capture a younger demographic while still delivering to the established fans of the line. The Modern Heat conflicts, which stem from the set ups, are character driven, believable, but perhaps most of all, relevant, and don't necessarily dwell on tragic or traumatic pasts. We're talking "upbeat" with a genuine emotional core. There's plenty of sparky dialogue and clever subtext that keep the pages flying. Think urban, fast-paced, sexy, girl-about-town flavour.

Desire has its own tone and level of emotion. They're intense...but real. Intense conflict, powerful characterisation, sizzling passion and compelling drama, all delivered in a convincing, involving style. One of the best pieces of advice I received from an editor was, "Find the heart of your story then bring it out." I think that's especially true for Desire. The relationship between a Desire couple has a more traditional slant than Sexy Sensation. That's not to say that Desires aren't contemporary reads, or that the hero and heroine aren't equally matched. It's more about the unique promise of each line. I sometimes think of it as Pretty Woman versus An Officer and a Gentleman. Thank goodness we don't have to choose.

And there's lots of room for different voices in both lines so get your submissions in!

Would you recommend an agent for pre-published authors wanting to write category? How has having an agent helped you? It's really a personal choice. It's well known that a writer doesn't need an agent to sell to Harlequin. Some published category authors have the skills to negotiate contracts and other details of their career without an agent keeping an eye on every ball. Although I would have sold to London in January 07, I often shake my head at how circumstances played out those last few months. Firstly my agent got my work on the editor's desk pronto. We had an answer with what I considered to be, at the time, lightning speed! Without an agent most likely I'd have had to choose one line.

The agency that took me on, in my humble opinion, is one of the best if you want representation for category work. I can concentrate on writing the best story I can while Jenn (Jennifer Schober from Spencerhill Assoc) will be my advocate as well as give advice on my work and the industry.

You write very alpha heroes, yet on your website bio, I see you were originally targeting the 'Sweet' category. Did you sell quite soon after changing your direction to more 'sexy' stories?

Interesting question! You know, I think it was more about finding and accepting my voice. When the gun was put to my head and I had to rewrite that story in two weeks, my writing instinct had to take over. All the years I'd spent - learning, listening, writing, reading, writing more and more - came together like the ingredients of a cake finally blending without too many lumps. Although I love reading Sexys (Presents), I don't naturally have that traditional Presents voice. I'm a bit too naughty to fit into Sweet. To my mind Desire and Sexy Sensation live somewhere in between.

What can we expect to see out on the shelves from you in the next year, and what are you working on at the moment?

My first Sexy Sensation Downunder release next year is **Fired Waitress: Hired Mistress**. The story's set on Australia's most exclusive island resort but along with the fun and the glitz and the glamour is a note which relates to the harder times many folk are facing now.

I'm also excited about my outback baby book! Fabulous fellow Desireables – Maxine Sullivan and Paula Roe – have their outback books either side of mine. Honestly, I was biting my nails over delivering a story about a sheep station. I'm a coast girl! But both sets of grandparents were farmers, so maybe it's in the genes, because the more research I did, the more I fell in love with the rural setting, developing story and characters who have so many valid reasons not to become involved and yet who are so obviously meant to be together. The hero, Jack Prescott, is my favourite so far.

And finally, give us the blurb of your next release downunder!

The Billionaire's Fake Engagement - Desire this October...

A scandal threatened one of Australia's most powerful bachelor billionaires. The solution? A proposal. Alexander Ramirez was committed to the idea of family, and Natalie Wilder certainly brought the right assets to his bedroom. The engagement that he'd intended as a media distraction soon became a real possibility. As one obstacle after another got in the way of his plans, Alex became more determined than ever to keep Natalie in his bed. And he always got what he wanted. Romantic Times says...**Readers will empathize with Natalie's heartbreak and sigh as the perennial playboy finds his dream woman.** Visit Robyn at www.robyngrady.com

SETTING WORKSHOP

by Beth Heywood

When choosing a setting for your story, a good question to ask is 'Where would I like to take my friends (or readers in this case) for the best romantic experience I can give them? The most obvious locations come to mind immediately; the luxury of a Greek Island cruise or perhaps the exotic country of an Eastern European prince.

Imagine where YOU would like to go, then decide how best to share it. Your friends (readers) will view the scenery, meet the locals, hear the bird-song, smell the flowers and shrubs, touch the fabric of the hero's clothes, not to mention his skin, (we all know the scent of aroused male, don't we?), taste the local food and wine, and don't forget the sixth sense, which you can translate into 'ambience.' Putting all this on paper for your readers will transport them into a world of sensual delights.

Ideas for settings can be taken from anywhere or made up from your own imagination. In my novel 'Cherished', Damnation Island is taken from Tristan da Cunha and Ascension Islands in the South Atlantic Ocean. I had to research the weather patterns, the tides, and the local flora and fauna. And yes, although the South Atlantic Ocean is very inhospitable, you can still have a romance set there.

But setting is not merely the physical backdrop of the tale. It may include the historical background and cultural attitudes of a given time and place, the mood of the time, and how the characters talk. Such details as the author's style, a period's transitions, and the kind of story the writer wishes to relate are closely tied to setting. These factors must dovetail properly with the story's plot, its characters, the theme and the desired general emotional tone of the piece if the finished fiction is to 'work' for the reader.

Consider DeFoe's 'Robinson Crusoe', Dickens's 'A Christmas Carol' – would these work half so well without the setting?

When choosing your setting, you had better choose it wisely and well, because the very choice defines – and circumscribes -- your story's possibilities. The setting of a story can affect the author's wording - e.g. compare Daphne du Maurier's 'Rebecca', a gothic-baroque romance with that of a contemporary thriller like 'Darker Than Amber' by Jack MacDonald. Rebecca begins,

'Last night I dreamed I went to Manderley again. It seemed to me I stood by the iron gate leading to the drive, and for a while I could not enter, for the way was barred to me...'

'Darker Than Amber' begins: 'We were about to give up and call it a night when somebody dropped the girl off the bridge.'

The romantic backdrop of 'Rebecca' fits perfectly with the dreamy, cadenced quality of its prose – a style which would not fit at all in a John MacDonald novel. The opposite, of

course, is also true. In both cases, the setting dictated style as well as many other story factors.

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SETTING

Setting provides:

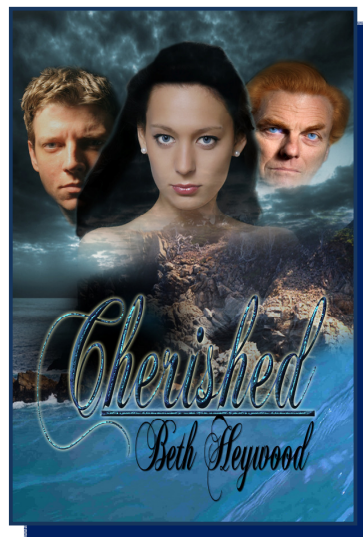
- intensification of reader involvement
- enhancement of story unity
- tightening of plot structure
- motivation or explanation of character
- clarification of these
- excitement of the writer's own imagination

In some instances, the setting may even become a protagonist, as Edgar Allen Poe crafted in his memorable work 'The Fall of the House of Usher'.

The plot can be advanced and complicated by a setting. For example, suppose your tale is about a wagon master who is leading a train of Conestogas across the prairie towards distant mountains. Your descriptions of the subtly changing scenery as the mountains become nearer act as a physical 'score card' showing how the story is advancing towards its ultimate conclusion. If the reader knows that hostile Indians await in the mountain pass ahead, your repetitive mention of the mountains will become a drumbeat of suspense.

In summary, attention to detail in choosing your setting is every bit as important, and every bit as much fun as choosing your characters carefully, giving them great snappy dialogue, and a high level of sexual tension throughout your story.

Now, back to your desks and have fun with those settings!



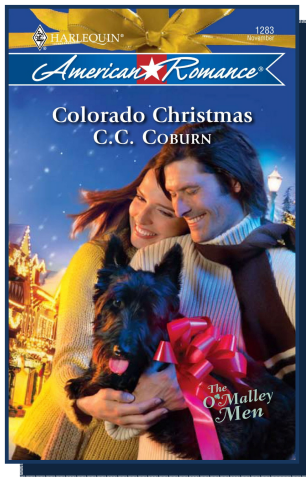
New Members - Welcome

Amanda Wilson, Epsom
Tricia Ruffer-Cook, Torbay
Diane Campbell, Te Aroha
Gilly Noon, Arkles Bay
Karley Campbell, Auckland
Trudi Caffell, Auckland
Michelle de Rooy, Queensland
Angie Trianta, Victoria
Charis Stein, NSW
Christine Anne Thomas, Havelock North
Brian Luby, Dunedin

Jan Eriksen, Thames
Linda Braid, Thames
Felicity Hutcheson, Wellington
Kathy Gallimore, Karaka
Katherine Brown, Whangarei
Catherine McNamara, Whangarei
Erin Kuhne (O'Hara), NSW
Christine Taylor, NSW
Jillian Britnell, NSW
Kate Fraser, Christchurch

NEWBIE AUTHOR

C.C Coburn (Harlequin American Romance) interviewed by Kylie Short



A little bit about myself...

I live on the Gold Coast with my husband, three adult children (who I wish would leave home!) a Labrador and three cats. I also live part of the year in the glorious Colorado Rockies, minus the Lab and cats.

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

About 20 years I wrote an adventure thriller set in far North Queensland while recovering from a broken toe. I'd been told to put my feet up for six weeks – yeah, easy with 2 young daughters and a baby on the way! I'd never written anything before and was amazed how the story leapt out of my head and onto the computer screen. The creation process was fascinating, especially discovering all sorts of things I didn't know were happening in the plot until they appeared on the screen! One day I was

on such a roll, I wrote 15,000 words. I finished the book—all 120K of it and sent it off to an Australian publisher, positive I was going to receive a contract by return post but instead received a polite rejection letter by return post. I was crushed. But I'd also caught the writing bug.

I started reading romances and was drawn to the light-hearted style of Harlequin's Temptation line, featuring humour, engaging characters and sometimes raunchy sex. A plot kept playing in my head and I gave into “temptation” J and started writing. Two weeks later, I'd completed my first romance ms.

I sent the partial off and had it rejected. Discouraged and too lazy to fix the book—after all, I didn't think there was anything wrong with it—I wrote another story, then another, then several more, all aimed at Temptation. I sent off a couple more partials, got rejections and then stopped submitting altogether.

Rejection ended up being the biggest hurdle I had to overcome in my writing career.

In 1996 I commenced a BA in Creative Arts at Griffith University majoring in Writing and Visual Arts, believing this would improve my writing and get me published at last. But after three years, during which I also completed a BA in Communications, I was disillusioned. Griffith hadn't taught me anything about writing, about structuring a novel, absolutely nothing useful that would get me published! I never once heard the words we members of RWA and RWNZ are so familiar with: Goal, Motivation & Conflict; The Hero's Journey, Archetypes...

After graduating, I started on a new story about a small town Colorado sheriff who rescues a woman in labour. Re-energised about getting back to writing after wasting three precious years at Griffith, I found *The Sheriff and the Baby* flowed beautifully.

However while writing Matt's story, I discovered he had 4 brothers and they also wanted their stories told! The most insistent was Will, Matt's personality opposite. I won't go into details here as I discuss this in the exegesis I've written to accompany my *Masters in Writing* from Queensland Institute of Technology this year. The exegesis will be available on my website: www.cccoburn.com

I joined RWAustralia and entered the love scene from *The Sheriff and the Baby* in their Love Scene contest. It placed 3rd. After entering a scene from another O'Malley brother, Jack's, story—*Jack O'Malley-29 Year Old Virgin* into the following year's First Kiss contest and winning, I was stoked! These early successes on the contest circuit were validation that perhaps I could write.

The moral of the story? Listen to industry feedback. Don't strangle your voice through fear. And don't ever give up.

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?

As I said earlier, I stopped submitting, calling my condition, Submissaphobia. In 2001 I entered the RWNZ Opening Chapter contest with Judge Becky and the Scoundrel. Birgit Davis-Todd from Harlequin Temptation was advertised as the final judge and I thought this would be the perfect opportunity to jump the slush pile straight into the Temptation line. After receiving glowing feedback from the earlier rounds' judges, I was convinced I'd win, then was devastated when it placed 6th overall. Birgit didn't end up being the final judge, that job was given to another editor at Harlequin. I was pretty pissed and was sure had Birgit judged it, I'd be signing a contract that very moment. Oh, the hubris! (this is all detailed in the exegesis too J.)

I gave up writing for a long time but eventually got over my dummy spit. I also couldn't keep away from creating stories. I eventually started entering contests again, had some successes and in 2006 entered the inaugural Emerald Award with a single title romantic comedy. I was so sure Careful What You Wish For, wouldn't make it past the first round, that I didn't finish the book.

The title proved prophetic when told I'd advanced to the next round and they wanted the full ms within ten days! With the help of my critique partner, Kelly Hunter, I wrote furiously. She was so determined I was going to finish the book. And win! J I wasn't so sure but it was wonderful to have someone on my back giving constant feedback.

I made the deadline then got involved with organizing the 2006 Gold Coast RWA conference and intended pitching Careful What You Wish For to Paula Eykelhof from Harlequin Toronto, our guest editor.

However, Careful won the Emmy that year (much to my shock and delight). The final judge was interested in it so instead, I pitched Judge Becky to Paula. She wanted to see the synopsis and partial, believing Judge Becky would be suitable for the Harlequin American Romance line.

So began a two-year email relationship, where Paula carefully guided me through taming my recalcitrant, decidedly UN-alpha hero and getting Judge Becky to publishing standard. It was so wonderful to work with an editor of Paula's caliber and get her detailed feedback.

This time, I tried to keep a lid on my expectations and in July 2008 attended RWAmerica's San Francisco conference and met up with Paula and Kathleen Scheibling, Editor of Harlequin American Romance. I couldn't believe it when they said they wanted to buy my book!

Paula wanted to change the title. I asked for opinions on ROMAUS, saying it needed a Christmas theme. The suggestions ranged from the bizarre to the ridiculous. My favourite is the contribution of my Masters supervisor, Dr. Glen Thomas: The Jingle Bell Judge. J

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

Judge Becky and the Scoundrel became Colorado Christmas, and is my Masters thesis and my first published novel. It will be released by Harlequin American Romance in November, 2009.

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

The most exciting is discovering things about my characters I had no idea about when I started writing their story.

The most boring? Having to make dinner! Until that book is in my family's hot little hands, they won't believe mummy has a career that doesn't revolve around them!

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

No, I think I've talked too much already. J My Masters exegesis discusses in depth the journey of Colorado Christmas. Called, From Competition Failure to Publication, I hope it will act as a guide to so-far unpublished writers and help them realize their dreams too. It will be on my website

www.cccoburn.com

Thanks for your time, Catherine!

BUSINESS TOOLS TO BOOST YOUR BOOK

by Joanne Graves

There are a host of tools that managers use to push their businesses ahead – which got me thinking – how can we writers hijack some of them to help boost our writing careers? I look at a few of them that could be useful in planning your writing career.

SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT is simply an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Businesses use this for analysis to help identify where they're at and where they should be heading.

The strengths and weaknesses are internal; the opportunities and threats come from external sources.

In the example below, Jodie is an aspiring writer, a member of RWNZ, has written several manuscripts, and she's targeting romantic suspense lines. Here is what she might use in her own SWOT analysis. You can, of course, have as many entries as you need under each heading.

<i>Jodie's Strengths</i>	<i>How to Maximise</i>
Desire to get published	Jodie could go on line and research agents who represent romantic suspense, and multiple query them all.
Loves history and research	Maybe historical suspense is something she could consider with her next book.
<i>Jodie's Weaknesses</i>	
Bad at grammar	Sign up to an on line writing class – ask RWNZ loop for recommendations of such.
Can't write a synopsis	Research and enter contests where a synopsis is judged for feedback. Look at on line resources, eg e-Harlequin.
<i>Opportunities</i>	
Opportunities to get work in front of editors and agents eg RWNZ contests if I final	Read H2H and diarise contest deadlines – eg Strictly Single.
Opportunities to pitch to editors or agents at conferences.	Start saving for the RWNZ conference. If you can afford it, research other conferences that have agents or editors you want to meet – eg Australia, America.
<i>Threats</i>	
Family don't give me time to write	Negotiate for time – eg I'll do this for you, but you give me an several hours a day uninterrupted. Ask RWNZ members how they would deal with this without heading to divorce.
Can't justify the expenses of postage and contest entry fees, and membership subs.	Try selling clothes and books (Recycle Boutiques, Trade Me) for extra money

As you can see, it's just a way of putting in front of you any potential problems you are facing, and gets you thinking about ways to tackle them. By thinking about your strengths (eg Jodie is writing suspense but loves history) maybe she should change gears and go for historicals or combine the two. She can't afford to enter all the contests – but can she come up with extra money from somewhere to pay the subs?

GANT CHART

Invented in the early 1900s by a chap called Henry Gant, these are effectively bar graphs that are used in business for planning and scheduling. They show what you have to do and by when. In this chart, our heroine has a contest deadline of six weeks - and she hasn't even started The Kiwi Spinster's Aussie Billionaire Bridegroom yet! Her GANT chart might look like this:

If she prints it out and sticks it on the wall it's easy to look at to monitor if she's on track – or not....

The Kiwi Spinster's Aussie Billionaire Bridegroom	WEEK One	Week Two	Week Three	Week Four	Week Five	Week Six	Contest deadline
Detailed Outline							
Chaps 1-2							
Chaps 3-4							
Chaps 5-6							
Chaps 7-8							
Chap 9							
Edit book							
Print out							
Post it!!							

GOAL SETTING

Goal setting isn't just confined to losing weight for the high school reunion. Goals provide the direction for management decisions and actions. In fact, all businesses need goals and you are your own business. So set some!¹

The following are the characteristics of well designed goals base on the SMART acronym – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time:

- 1) *They should be written in terms of outcomes not actions* - that is, it is the end result that is important. It might be "Write a Desire in four months."
- 2) *It should be measurable and quantifiable* ie – how do you know you have achieved your goal? Having a goal of two finished novels at the end of the year is measurable. This is where a Gant chart could be useful in measuring your progress, too.
- 3) *The time frame must be clear.* Maybe your goal is to enter the Clendon in 2010 with two novels. That's a good clear, time frame.
- 4) *It should be challenging yet attainable.* Being number one on the NYT by next August is challenging to published writers – but pretty much unattainable if you haven't even sold. Entering the Clendon is challenging if it's December and you haven't finished chapter one - but is certainly attainable with tons of hard work.
- 5) *Your goal should be written down.* Writing down your goals forces you to think them through when you come to planning.
- 6) *It should be communicated to organisation members who need to know.* Your "organisation" is most likely your family or people you live with. For example, if you have a goal that requires you use the computer every night in peace and quiet, then they should be made aware of this so that they will (hopefully!) leave you alone to get on with it.

Next month, we look at more ways a writer might go about setting a goal, and some tips to get you thinking about developing a writing/business plan with the New Year just around the corner.

EASY PEASY PROMOTION

by Jane Beckenham

You've got your first sale; maybe it's even your tenth. But these days, publishing houses don't do the grand book tours – at least not very often – and you will be expected to get your name out there as much as possible. Remember, it all helps to build 'branding'. There is one area of promotion you can undertake that costs zip, and you can do it still dressed in your jammies at home. Online promotion.

Firstly, you need to create about 5-7 excerpts for each book. In your word processing part of the computer, create a folder for each book for your promotion. That folder should hold a number of excerpts. This is what the headers of my promo excerpts look like.



Perfume...Paradise...and Passion...

THE SHEIKH'S PROPOSAL

Author: Jane Beckenham
Publisher: www.redrosepublishing.com
ISBN: 978-1-60435-080-7
ISBN: 1 60435 080 6

EXCERPT: ...And then comes the excerpt

Other things you can/should do.

- Create a tag at the bottom
- Make sure your website is clearly visible
- Place a review as an opener.
- Create different signature lines for each book

Now where to send these excerpts:

Go to www.yahooglegroups.com

You'll need to be a member, so look for either the sign in/register icon and click on that, **following through the instructions to create your yahoo profile/email etc.** Once signed in, you'll see a box that says Web Search. What sort of groups are you looking to join?

Romance readers Romance Writers Erotic Historical Promotion

This morning I searched on the yahoo groups for Romance Readers and it came up with 730 groups! Now you don't have to belong to all, but I do suggest this is where you invest some time and go through and read about these groups. Which offers the most exposure? Some will be specific and say promo only on certain days (**make a note of what day**), or they may only have a few members. A rule I make for myself: the **group has to have at least a hundred members. You can check this on their message history which you can find at bottom of each group's home page.** This message history table shows the amount of traffic/messages and when it's busy/not busy. This can be helpful in planning promo for an upcoming release – when you can get best exposure, when they are likely to read your excerpts etc.

So you've found a bunch of groups you want to join – select digest form - that way you don't get a stack of emails in your inbox.

I use Microsoft outlook for my email programme.

- Create sub folders under the inbox labeled, Mon, Tue.
- When the digest emails come, create a rule (click organise) and the digest emails will go directly to the specific day of the week that promo is 'allowed' at that group.

So you've joined a hundred groups. **Digest emails will be coming to your inbox and automatically moving into the day of the week folder you've created for that group.**

With your excerpts all set up, copy the excerpt you're going to promote for the day and email the address of the loops for that day.

I usually work on promoting a different book each day.

So, let's say it's Monday here – that's Sunday in the USA. Go to your Sunday folder. Who has promo that day?

For example - Sunday for me is:

Erotic Romance Writers	Romance Junkies
Samhain	The Romance Room

Now I send off four emails – putting in my excerpt etc.) But I also have an **Any Day file** – that is groups that don't mind you promoting any day of the week.

In my Anyday file is:

Alternative Reads	Book-Romance
Cupids Library	Enchanters
Ebook Chatter...	and about 20 more.

But you get the idea. Because they are **ANY DAY** these groups get a different book each day.

It takes a bit of time to organise, but for me it has worked. This really only takes me about 15 minutes a day.

However, there is another way too - you can belong to a couple of promo groups that send out lists each day of where you can promote that day.

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Promotion_Loop_Schedule/

Also, your publisher might have someone that sends out a daily list too as we do at [Red Rose Publishing](#)

But beware, it may not be the types of groups where your book would do best. So check them out.

Find out more about Jane and her books at www.janebeckenham.com

TIME TO RENEW YOUR RWNZ MEMBERSHIP

Print off the form at romancewriters.co.nz if you've lost the copy from the August newsletter, and post it to Membership Secretary Kris. Pay your annual sub by cheque, credit card or internet banking. It's due **RIGHT NOW**.

CONFERENCE COVERAGE

The 2009 Conference in Auckland – A Romantic Retreat – was an incredible weekend of learning and catching up with fellow writers. Mary Jo Putney was an incredible keynote speaker, and agent, Melissa Jeglinski and editor, Mary-Theresa Hussey were fantastic to listen to also.

Writers attend the yearly conference for many different reasons. Some to meet other like-minded people, some to pitch their work, others to learn about their craft, and plenty for all three reasons. But nearly every author there also goes because of the sense of comradeship. Writing can be a very solitary business, and this once a year sojourn stops us from feeling alone!

Photographer Clare Scott was kind enough to take snaps of the occasion, as well as talk to those she was photographing. A huge thank you to Clare for the photos published in H2H this month.

Purchasing Photos

Official photographer Clare took nearly 200 shots - from the Friday Lace and Leather cocktail party, through all the Saturday and Sunday workshops, and of course the Awards Dinner. A disk of these can be yours for only \$10, including packing and postage. Oops - \$11 if you're an Aussie.

Send your cash, cheque, or credit card info, along with your name and address of course, to Diana Holmes, 145 Rawhiti Road, Pukerua Bay, Wellington. Once she's recovered from being our super-efficient registrar she'll copy you the whole conference so you can re-live the occasion - or check out what you missed.



CONFERENCE QUOTES

Compiled by Clare Scott

It's nice to be around other romance writers and be proud of what we do! **Soraya Nicholas**



Wonderful content, amazing info, especially for a newbie. Everyone is so friendly and encouraging and empathetic and... etc etc etc... Insert thesaurus here.
Karly Campbell



Another wonderful conference. This one was special to me because I got to catch up face-to-face with Tyree, and got my own hero to step into my other life.
Kamy Chetty

The RWNZ conference has given me the chance to meet our vibrant and successful authors – and to meet those who may well be signed in the near future! Keep up the good work, RWNZ! Yours is essential work for the health and relevance of romance.

Haylee Kerans – Publishing Co-ordinator – Harlequin Mills and Boon

The illumination of Fiona Brand's suspense techniques have immediate applicability to my current WIP.
Pamela Gervai



This is my Berocca! I come back every year to give my muse a hit.
Tyree Bidgood



My brain is really stretched and wrung out. Again! In the best possible way...
Kylie Griffin (Short)

Great to see the love of romance alive and kicking in New Zealand.
Christina Lee – Harlequin Mills and Boon Australia

Fantastic conference!
Giovanna Lee

I enjoyed meeting the people in my chapter. It was fabulous being treated like a real friend.
Cushla Jarvis

You're not going to make us write, are you?
Frances Housden (during a workshop)

The information was scintillating and enjoyable as ever.
Glenda Leader



It was a FABULOUS trip. I'm so glad to have had this opportunity. I hope you enjoyed the conference, too!
Mary Jo Putney

Totally inspiring!
Viv Adams



ENERGY-SAVER LIGHTBULB MOMENTS

from our Guest Speakers



Daphne Clair

*Don't use weasel words which don't convey anything (eg – just, maybe, was)



Mary Jo Putney

- *You must have a fondness for torturing your heroes.
- *Your heroes need to have been loved. If they have never been loved they are like feral dogs. We want heroes that are fixable.
- *Heroes are the ones who run towards the fire, not away.
- *Doctors are heroes because they confront death on a daily basis.
- *Heroes who are capable of being loyal and loving to their friends are capable of being loyal and loving to their women.
- *Women are nurturers, caring and sensitive.
- *Love is the burning point.
- *Reading is an act of co-creation.
- *Readers are more tolerant of imperfect men than imperfect women.
- *The heroine acts the way she does because of who she is.
- *The love relationship is the soul of romance.
- *If they don't make love there will be emotional haemorrhages right now.
- *External events cause internal reactions.
- *If characters aren't growing and changing there is no story.
- *Men get their entertainment jollies by watching sport but women get theirs by reading romance.
- *We women are the ones who buy books to rejuvenate our souls.
- *Genre books are repositories for honourable values.
- *Easy writing makes hard reading, hard writing makes easy reading.
- *Great storytelling means something always happening or about to happen to someone you care about.
- *Women tend to be self-denying of own needs.
- *Make creative dates with yourself.
- *It's easy to get nibbled to death by ducks.
- *How do I cope? Basically I just get frantic!
- *Just tell the damn story!

Robyn Donald

- *Why do women read romance? To make them feel warm and fuzzy.
- *The 1st rule of fiction is 'Thou shalt not write a boring book'.



MORE CONFERENCE PHOTOS



As always, great company.
Kris Pearson



A chance to reinvigorate the
creative juices once more.
Jane Beckenham



A lot of really useful practical tips.
The guests were very generous
with their suggestions.
Shirley Megget



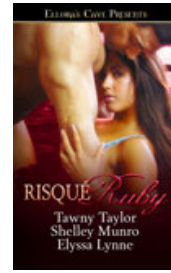
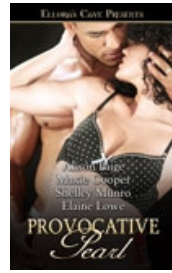
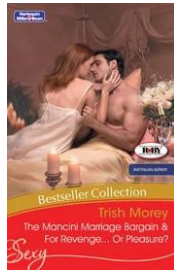
MEMBER SUCCESSES

Compiled by Tyree Bidgood

Official Releases

October New Releases

Rich, Ruthless & Secretly Royal by **Robyn Donald**
Trish Morey Bestseller Collection by **Trish Morey**
The Billionaire's Fake Engagement by **Robyn Grady**
Her So Called Fiancé by **Abby Gaines**
Provocative Pearl by **Shelley Munro** (Ellora's Cave – print)
Risque Ruby by **Shelley Munro** (Ellora's Cave – print)
House of the Cat by **Shelley Munro** (Ellora's Cave – ebook)
Shadowfae by **Erica Hayes**



Member Successes - Competitions and Accolades

The Harlequin Mills & Boon on-line pitch winners, as chosen by Senior Editor Kimberley Young, are:

Soraya Nicholas
Diana Holmes
Kamy Chetty
Sharyn Barratt

The Clendon Award results, as announced at the Conference by Barbara & Peter Clendon.

1st **Kylie Short**
2nd **Wendy Vella** (Readers Choice)
3rd **Kris Pearson**

Emerald Award Single Title - 2nd & 3rd place = **Kylie Short**

Valerie Parv Award - 1st = **Kylie Short**

Lynne Wilding Meritorious Service Award winner = **Anne Gracie**

Honorary Life Membership Award for Romance Writers of Australia = **Trish Morey**

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Compiled by PDR Lindsay-Salmon, aka Patrika Salmon

'Electric Literature' bimonthly anthology of short stories

www.electricliterature.com

Novel competition - Red Telephone Books

-Dec 31st deadline.

<http://theredtelephone.co.uk/competition.aspx>

Audio book erotica, Speak Only to Me web publishers

-Short stories wanted

www.speakonlytome.com

Poolbeg Press

-Publish Romance

www.poolbeg.com

Piatkus Books

-Publish romance

INTERNATIONAL CONTEST NEWS

Compiled by Lisa Elkind-Gardiner

Writer's Digest Popular Fiction Awards

Enter: 4000 word short stories (as many as you want.)

Deadline: Nov 2, 2009 **Eligibility:** Anyone **Fee:** \$15.00 US

Cash prizes

<http://www.writersdigest.com/competitions>

The HARLEQUIN "I HEART PRESENTS" WRITING COMPETITION 2009

Enter: The competition entry must consist of either the first chapter and synopsis of a Harlequin Presents or Modern Heat novel.

Deadline: November 2nd **Fee:** None **Prize:** The services of a Harlequin Mills & Boon editor for one year! (Two runners up will win an editorial consultation!)

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

Silicon Valley RWA GOTCHA! Contest

Enter: 1st 15 pp of ms

Deadline is Nov 4, 2009

Eligibility: Unpublished in category entered

Fee: \$25 US

<http://www.svrwa.com/gotcha>

North Texas RW Great Expectations Contest

Enter: 1st 25 pp plus query letter

Deadline: Dec 31, 2009

Eligibility: Unpublished in category entered

Fee: \$30 US

<http://www.ntrwa.org/contest/contest.aspx>

www.romancewriters.co.nz

October 2009

18

RWNZ NEWS AROUND THE REGIONS

Regional convenor contacts

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

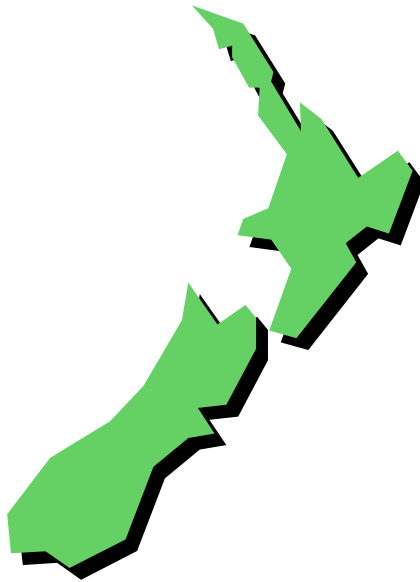
CHRISTCHURCH – Sue Knight
email: sueknight@ihug.co.nz

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

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

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

WELLINGTON – Ellie Huse
email: elliehuse@yahoo.com



Wellington

At our September meeting we talked about the following; Bron had driven Mary Teresa Hussey (our visiting Harlequin Editor) from Waipuna to Wellington, and picked her brain about contests worth entering. Matrice spoke favourably about the Orange County Chapter contests, especially their annual Orange Rose for unpublished authors. Others which got a tick were the Maggie, the Hearts through History, the Molly, the Emily, and the Great Expectations.

Diana has had a full requested from the Harlequin on-line pitch, and Rachel a partial. Ellie has finalled in the Golden Stiletto. Meryl and Kris have entered the Arthritis NZ short story contest.

For our next meeting, please bring the first sentence of several favourite novels (any author, any genre) – and come prepared to brainstorm. This will be at 1pm on Saturday October 3rd. Turn into Airlie Road off SH1, 4kms north of Plimmerton. Go over the one-way bridge and it's the second entrance on the left – Homelands Kennels. It's the house at the very top of the driveway.

Nelson

Our September meeting was on Saturday 12th at Annika's place in Tahuna. We were only three to share the heart shaped banana & cinnamon cake with chocolate icing that Annika had made, as two members were overseas (UK & New Plymouth, NI), one stayed home with a sore throat and others for misc. reasons. Disappointing in one way, but in another more cake for us!

We started with catching up on each other's writing and then had a good writing exercise. Annika, a keen crossword puzzler, had printed out the words from a code cracker and we used these words as inspiration to write a story for 15 minutes. Three completely different romantic stories came out of that. Interestingly though we all had used the word 'vicar'!

Then we brainstormed ideas of how to dress our Romance Christmas Tree for the exhibition in the Cathedral in December. Probably our November meeting will be entirely for creating the heart shaped decorations.

Next meeting will be on Saturday October 10th and Jacqui invited us to her place in Rai Valley for that meeting. Details will be emailed to us all later on.

Christchurch

Our small critique group met on a lovely spring evening and followed up on contest advice. The Canterbury/Otago's first brainstorming meeting is planned for mid-October - if you are interested please email Jill, scotts@snap.net.nz . For info email Sue, sueknight@ihug.co.nz

Auckland

We had quite a crowd in September for Annie Featherstone's workshop on Layering and as it was the day after RWNZ's 19th birthday we had a lovely cake. At the October meeting Peta Mobberly will be running a workshop, PERSONALITY PLUS using the Briggs Myers system. As usual the October 3rd meeting will be held in the Three Kings Tennis Pavilion, corner Mt Albert and Mt Eden Roads at 12.30 pm. Bring a small plate for a shared lunch.

CARTOONS

Compiled by Nalini Singh



His deadline looming, Wilbur was willing to try anything to cure his writers' block.

INKYGIRL.COM: Daily Diversions For Writers. Copyright©2008 Debbie Ohi.



"Yes, yes, I'll be there soon. Y'know, this having to hibernate six months out of the year really makes it hard to establish my freelance writing career."

Copyright©2007 Debbie Ridpath Ohi. INKYGIRL.COM.



It was that second misplaced apostrophe that finally pushed Dan over the edge...

Copyright©2007 Debbie Ridpath Ohi. INKYGIRL.COM: Daily Diversions For Writers



"I thought you were joking when you said you wrote your entire novel on a Blackberry..."

INKYGIRL: Daily Diversions For Writers
Copyright©2007 Debbie Ridpath Ohi



INKYGIRL.COM

Copyright ©2004 Debbie Ridpath Ohi.

Hey, I was going to write a children's book, too. Maybe this weekend, after I've cleaned the eavestroughs. I was going to get my niece to draw the pictures: she's really good. Say, maybe I could get you to look at it when it's done...



WHAT NOT TO SAY TO A CHILDREN'S BOOK WRITER ON A FIRST DATE

INKYGIRL.COM: Daily Diversions For Writers. Copyright©2008 Debbie Ohi.

Copyright Debbie Ridpath Ohi www.inkygirl.com

BITS AND PIECES

Compiled by Soraya Nicholas

Did you know . . .

international romance super author Debbie Macomber rises at 4am to reflect, write in her journal, read and organise her schedule. At 6am she swims in her Olympic size swimming pool, and by 7:30am she's already working on writing her current novel.

To celebrate one year of offering e-books, Harlequin Mills & Boon are giving 10 books away! Just head to <http://www.everyonesreading.com/> and download all 10!

Dreaming of a multi-book contract? Best selling author James Patterson has just signed a – wait for it – 17 book contract with Hachette Book Group. 11 of the books will be for adult readers, and 6 will be for young readers. This is expected to keep him busy until 2012 . . .