

HEART TO HEART

H2H S-O-S

Temporary editor(s) required!

Due to professional demands, Heart to Heart editor Kate Gordon has resigned from the editor's position earlier than planned. RWNZ therefore needs someone – or several people – to step in and take over the newsletter until February when Soraya Nicholas is scheduled to start her stint as newsletter editor.

Kate Gordon explains....

First of all, I do apologise to all members that a newsletter hasn't been published since the August issue. That's not what you expect from your RWNZ membership which specifies 11 issues of H2H a year, so a January issue will be produced instead.

As you've probably gathered, my professional commitments have meant a distinct lack of meaningful time available for volunteer roles such as editing H2H and the most honest thing to do was say 'sorry, I simply can't manage this job'. So President Pat has put out the call and hopefully one or more of you fantastic people will lend a hand for three months.

It's not a difficult job – involving a little bit of time and thought, but the current situation makes me think about how many other people contribute to making RWNZ what it is and the hours that are put into things like processing membership applications and renewals, collating H2H, organising competitions, workshops and conference. With most of us busy with 'life' – family, work, friends – and writing, it seems sensible to be continually looking at the roles needed for RWNZ's efficient and professional operation and how these roles might be broken down into smaller, bite-size chunks.

For example, H2H could be done by two or three people. When I took on the editor's job for the first time (thanks to Barbara, the expert arm-twister), it involved the collating/layout and the physical mail-out. We soon split the mail-out job off. Until recently Iona Jones has done this and now Joanne Graves takes over – thanks to them both.

If H2H had one person organising the feature articles, such as interviews with authors, editors and agents and the 'how to' and genre-specific stories, another to coordinate contributions from the regional convenors, contest information, etc. and a third person to lay it all out, each of these people would spend less than 10 hours a month.

It doesn't seem too onerous when you break it down like that – if only I'd thought of it sooner! If you haven't volunteered to help RWNZ before, please give it some thought. Hopefully a few of you lovely people will contact Pat to help with H2H for just three months so there will be a fresh-looking H2H in your post or email in good time for November.

Signing off..... Kate Gordon

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President's desk

Well, the conference is well and truly over for another year. What a fabulous time we all had. The speakers were awesome!

Margie Lawson's Friday workshop was fantastic. Such a nice lady so full of fun, so knowledgeable and so helpful. My brain is fried with all the info that was imparted. Can't wait to get stuck into finishing my current work in progress and then starting on the editing. I usually hate editing – in fact, it is probably my pet hate – but with Margie's method it sounds like fun! And the gift that Margie presented to Gracie and I showed her sense of fun. A bear who proudly displays "chocolate makes me happy" on his shirt, and who sings "I feel good". He wriggles his bottom and shakes his whole body. He was our mascot for the conference and will definitely be making his appearance at future conferences and at all our conference planning meetings.



President Pat Snellgrove, vice-president Gracie Stanners and keynote speaker Margie Lawson

Jenny Hutton, from Harlequin Mills & Boon London, was great and all her presentations were very informative. Her speech at the HMB Let's do Lunch on clichés was hilarious. And this was followed by a game which had people devising stories from cue cards. Boy, some of you have weird imaginations... The laughter was so loud as these stories were read out by their presenters that I am sure everyone in the hotel must have heard and wondered what was going on.

Cindy Hwang from Berkley was charming and again the information that she imparted was very informative. I'm sure it had everyone thinking how they can get their manuscripts to her at Berkley and have her accept their submission.

Angela James and Chrissy Brashear from Samhain Publishing gave inspiring talks, told us a lot about e-publishing and just what Samhain was looking for in their authors.

Cheryl Wright from The Wild Rose Press told us a little about the company, and how to submit to them.

The local members – by that I mean Australian and New Zealanders – who gave workshops or were on our panel were awesome. Thank you, ladies, for stepping up to the plate and taking on this task for us. I know everyone who attended the workshops came away fired up to go home and get stuck into their work in progress or start something new.

President's desk cont.

Waipuna, as always, was a great venue. The staff went out of their way to be helpful and even when slight hitches occurred they were soon sorted out. And the food... it was fantastic. There was so much of it, we all could have had several helpings and you wouldn't have seen where we had been. The restaurant really went overboard for the people who were on special diets; instead of just giving them boring old salad they had a variety of really nice looking food.

To all those who travelled a great distance to join us in Auckland, thank you for making the effort. I hope that you enjoyed yourselves. To the first timers; I hope you enjoyed your first conference and will come back again.

To the executive and the conference committee I would like to publically record my thanks. Ladies, you were so great to work with. You all worked hard to make sure that this conference was great. Without your input none of it would have happened. Roll on 2009 and the Wellington conference.

Australian Conference

It was my privilege to represent RWNZ at the Romance Writers of Australia conference the week after our event.

Their line-up of speakers included some that we had: Margie Lawson, Jenny Hutton, Cindy Hwang, Angela James and Chrissy Brashear and Anne Gracie, but they also had several others. Among these were Barbara Samuel and Jo Beverley. I did not attend any of Jo Beverley's workshops but was told by those who did that she was fantastic. As usual Barbara Samuels' workshops were great and her "Taking care of the girls in the basement" workshop was one I thoroughly enjoyed.

Friday was a similar format to ours but attendees had the option of attending either "Learning to Hear your Own Voice" with Barbara Samuel or "Empowering Characters' Emotions" with Margie Lawson. As I had attended Margie's workshop in New Zealand, I decided to attend Barbara's one. I learnt so much from this wonderful lady, and came away from it inspired to get out my computer and write.

Saturday and Sunday's events started at 8.45am with a welcome either from Anne Gracie or Trish Morey and then at 9am the speakers got underway. The days ended around 5pm and by this time we were exhausted but stimulated by what we had learned.

Of the workshops that I attended over the three days the one that was the most fun and had all of us who attended it laugh so hard we were crying was "Spellbound by Storytelling" with Imelda Evans. This lady is a fabulous storyteller and had us improvising a fable until it sounded nothing like the original. Her final act of the workshop was to tell the story of "The Three Little Pigs" with our input. What we had to do was throw words at her and she would weave them into the story. They could be any words, the sillier the better. How Imelda managed to continue the story without a break, incorporating these words in I will never know. It was the funniest narrative I have heard in a long time. I pity the people in the workshop next door because I am sure that they would not have been able to hear their speaker. I think that we should try and get Imelda over to our conference. She is well worth listening to and participating in her workshop - something for next year's conference committee to think about.

The themed cocktail party was a blaze of colour and imagination. Some of the costumes were so elaborate they must have taken the wearers hours to assemble them and to get into them. The awards dinner was glittery and glamorous with everyone dressing up in their best finery. The evening went off well, but unfortunately none of our New Zealand writers picked up awards. Better luck next year. The conference ended on Sunday afternoon with a short talk on the 2009 conference which will be held in Brisbane. More details on this will follow later.

All in all, it was a wonderful experience and one I thoroughly enjoyed. Thank you RWNZ for allowing me to represent you all.

Now it's onto planning our next conference in Wellington. If you have any ideas of who you would like to have as a speaker, or what workshops you would like to have, please do not hesitate to contact any of the executive or conference committee (Diana Holmes, Giovanna Lee, Rachel Collins, Gracie Stanners, Pat Snellgrove, Bronwen Evans and Kris Pearson).

Welcome to our new executive member Karen Browning who takes over from the admirable Sally Rigby as secretary, and our sincere thanks to Sally for her excellent contributions over the past four years.

'Til next time,

Pat Snellgrove, RWNZ President (rwnzpresident@xtra.co.nz)

REMINDER: Don't forget membership subscriptions are now due.

Comments and photos from Conference 2008 – A Romantic Interlude

With thanks to Clare Scott for the great photography and comment collection

Margie Lawson (USA): An amazing gathering of friends and talent. I love the camaraderie. I wish I lived here so I could be a member. I just had the best time...

Cheryl Wright (Australia): I found it really good, especially the smaller numbers. It was very, very friendly and I didn't feel so rushed (just jetlagged!)

Cindy Hwang (USA): This conference has been fabulous. Brimming with fresh ideas. No wonder so many wonderful writers come from New Zealand.

Jenny Hutton (London M&B), while judging the 'original' stories at Sunday's lunch: I'm going to buy them all!



Giovanna Lee, Fiona Brand, Margie Lawson (main speaker USA), Jenny Hutton (M&B editor London), Nalini Singh, Cindy Hwang (Berkley editor USA)



Kylie Short with Nalini Singh

Kylie Short (Australia): Every year I pick up another skill that I can add to my bag of tools on my journey to becoming a published author.

Eunice Stott (Auckland): Everyone is so focussed. It's great to be with such a group, so passionate about their craft. I learnt that rejection is not an obstacle; it's a gateway to success.

Mig Wright (Wellington): Fabulous! Exciting! There's so much to learn that it's overload all the time. Everything is relevant.

Allison Withers (Australia): Opportunities have opened up to me that wouldn't have otherwise if I hadn't attended. It was great meeting people and putting faces to names. I've loved all those 'face-light-up' moments!

Anne Gracie (Australia, RWA President): It's been a lovely conference and it's been fabulous connecting with old friends and new. I'll be back!

Barb Jeffcott-Geris (Blenheim): Supportive and energising as usual. My favourite quote? Every kick is a boost!

Pat Snellgrove (Carterton, RWNZ President): Unbiased opinion from me – great. Just great! Food especially was fantastic, and apart from a few minor glitches, everything's gone very well.



Anne Gracie at the CAT-e-gory cocktail party

Comments and photos from Conference 2008 – A Romantic Interlude cont.



(L-R) Allison Withers, Diana Holmes, Cathy Sneyd, Rachel Collins, Mig Wright enjoying the dress-up

Ellie Huse (Paraparaumu): The special camaraderie that is an integral part of the RWNZ community was again reflected at this year's conference - that's always a major highlight for me. Congratulations to the conference committee for a fantastic weekend of fun and friendship, and for bringing us the amazing Margie Lawson.

Anne Hine (Wanganui): Meeting my critique partners face-to-face for the first time is what made it for me.

Karen Browning (Christchurch): POV from the new kid on the block (cliché alert!) – motivating, moving and 'mazing. The muse has come to life!

Soraya Nicholas (Christchurch): Out of three conferences, this would have to be the best one, though I'm very sad I missed Friday. Margie has been amazing!

Gracie Stanners: I thoroughly enjoyed it, especially being on the committee.

Nalini Singh: This conference had a really good feel to it. Everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves and it's nice to catch up with them all.

Beverley Eikli (Australia): It's been brilliant. I'm on a mission to spread the word to up NZ memberships. Conference MUST be every year; it would be a tragedy if it was pulled back to two-yearly. There's more variety through New Zealand.



Christina Brashear (CEO, Samhain Publishing), Angela James (Exec Editor, Samhain), Jenny Hutton (Editor, M&B London)



Celebrating the loop's 10th birthday



MEMBER SUCCESSES

FOR SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER



PLEASE SEND YOUR SUCCESSES TO TYREE BY THE 15TH OF EACH MONTH TO rocker.t@xtra.co.nz

"Do your work with your whole heart and you will succeed--there is so little competition." *Elbert Hubbard*

SOLD

Sandra Hyde has made a first sale to Diana Ventimiglia at Desire. Her book, In the Arms of a Stranger will be due for release in September 2009. (She got "the call" while at the RWA conference in San Francisco!)

Rachel Robinson has also sold to Desire with the book due out in 2010. Well done, Rachel!

Jane Beckenham is happy to announce her 9th sale, and third to Red Rose Publishing - *Desperately Seeking Santa*, a flirty and sensual novella.

Norah has been busy! Writing as N. D. Hansen-Hill, Fractals went to Cyberwizard Productions and Crystal Dreams went to The Lotus Circle, and writing as Melody Knight (romance), Star Fire and À la Wolf to Red Rose Publishing. Noble Romance has offered her a contract for Art & Soul, a paranormal romance novel.

Lisa (Elkind) Gardiner, writing as Lisa Whitefern, sold a historical paranormal novella Waking the Witch to Freya's Bower. She also sold a short story to a print anthology Fairy Tales Come True - Best Erotic Fairy Tales.

Beverley Eikli has just sold her first book Lady Sarah's Redemption to Robert Hale. It's the third book since she started writing seriously ten years ago.

COMPETITIONS

Anna Campbell's news this month is that CLAIMING THE COURTESAN won the long historical category in the 2008 Booksellers Best Awards run by the Greater Detroit Romance Writers of America. Also UNTOUCHED finalled in the historical section of the Aspen Gold Awards, run by the Heart of Denver Romance Writers.

Lisa (Elkind) Gardiner writing as Lisa Whitefern placed third in the Magnolia State Dixie First Chapter contest.

Karen Browning achieved third place in the Writelink (UK) Great Beginnings Contest.

Maree Anderson has finalled in the Utah RWA Heart of the West Competition - Paranormal Section. Fingers crossed Maree for the final judging.

Three members **Maree Anderson** (Paranormal), **Sue MacKay** (Medical) and **Deborah Shattock** (Romantic Suspense) have separately finalled in the From The Heart Romance Writers 'Golden Gateway' contest - good luck Maree (for both of the contests you are presently finalled in!)

Karen Browning reports she got third place in a UK writing competition, Great Beginnings through Writelink. She had to submit the first chapter, up to 2500 words, plus a 500 word synopsis. As the judge didn't really like chick lit, Karen was doubly pleased to have placed with a chick lit entry.

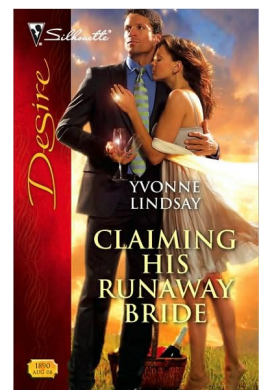
OFFICIALLY RELEASED

Nalini Singh's Hostage To Pleasure hit the New York Times Bestseller list at #20, and the USA Today Bestseller list at 115! The book was also a top pick in *Romantic Times* for the September review. We're looking forward to watching her meteoric climb.

Clare Scott's Egghead has been released with Walker Books, Australia.

Jane Beckenham's Love in Waiting has been released with Cerridwen Press.

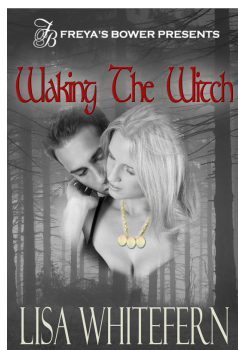
Yvonne Lindsay's August US release (September down-under) Claiming His Runaway Bride spent two weeks on the Waldenbooks/Borders bestseller list.



MEMBER SUCCESSES cont.

OFFICIALLY RELEASED cont.

Waking the Witch by **Lisa Gardiner**, writing as Lisa Whitefern, will be available from Freya's Bower for Halloween.



From inside the stunning opal necklace, a haunting voice whispered, "Make love to him, Faith. Do it now!"

Faith Abbot is a good Puritan woman, but the magic inside an opal necklace begins to torment her with lustful thoughts.

For years her heart and body have craved handsome James Parris, a man twelve years her junior, a man she thinks should be courting women his own age. But now the magic of a ghost trapped in a jewel breaks down all her inhibitions.

When she and James surrender to the fierce erotic tension that pulses between them, her heart fills with joy. But who is the angry female ghost that dwells within the necklace, wanting revenge? And when Faith is accused of performing witchcraft in Salem Village, can James' love save her from the hangman's noose?

REQUESTS

Kylie Short pitched to Bernadette Foley of Hachette Livre at the RWAust conference – Bernadette requested a partial and now has requested a full of the manuscript. Turnaround time in between sending the partial and getting the full request was four days. Woohoo! 'Atta girl, Kylie!

Apologies if we've missed anyone... send your news to Tyree for inclusion in the November issue if so :-)

More conference comments: RWA National

The Romance Writers of America national conference was held in San Francisco this year, a location that attracted several RWNZ members from New Zealand and Australia. Is it worth it? See what two of our members think.

Abby Gaines:

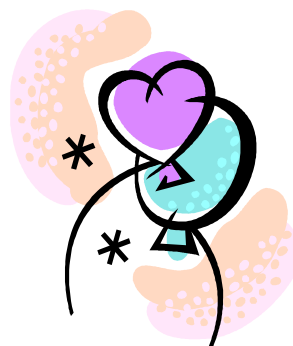
I've been to the RW America conference four years running now—it sounds extravagant, and it is, but I'm lucky that I've been able to use DH's airpoints for the flight component each time. However, I would still go every year, even if I had to pay for the flights.

I'm not sure I'd have sold my first book as soon as I did (and that wasn't very soon at all) if I hadn't been to the conference in Reno. That trip gave me a perspective on the scale of the industry. I encountered so many good writers (I know they were good because I went to workshops where their work was read out), that for the first time I understood what editors meant when they rejected my work with the comment that "I really enjoyed this, but it just didn't stand out". That conference showed me how to lift my game.

Going to my fourth conference this year, I feared I couldn't possibly get as much out of it as I have the last three. My fears were ungrounded. I attended four

workshops that between them were worth the entire conference fee, plus a whole lot of others, all of which taught me something. I talked to other writers about their careers, and I talked to editors about what they were looking for and pitched them my ideas. Those opportunities are priceless.

But perhaps best of all, in San Francisco, I got to listen in when Sandra Hyatt got The Call!



RWA National cont.

Karina Bliss:

What's great about RWA? For me, it's the opportunity to meet and listen to workshops by the industry's biggest selling names like Susan Elizabeth Philips, Linda Howard, Nora Roberts... this year while waiting in a queue for concierge information, Abby and I found ourselves chatting to Mary Jo Putney.

How does it feel to be there? Take the atmosphere of the NZ conference and amplify it by 100. One thousand delegates generate a lot of excitement.

You can pitch and chat to editors of all the main romance houses and attend publisher spotlights to get the very latest info on trends.

And how about those workshops - every hour brings an agonising choice between four or five on topics as diverse as career, writer's life and craft.

If you can't justify the expense of conference, you can still buy the workshops CD. It's US\$100 but totally work the investment. Here's the link to the company recording RWA sessions. www.billspro.com



Sandra Hyde:

The benefits for me of attending RWA in San Francisco fall under three categories, creative, professional and personal.

Creatively – I attended some fantastic workshops including Eric Maisel on creativity and Blake Snyder, a screen writer, on structure (his Save the Cat workshop was very helpful).

Professionally – I got to meet my agent in person and confirm that I liked her as much in person as I have in dealing solely through emails. I also got to meet editors from my new publishing house, and I met authors whose work I enjoy, and caught up with friends from loops I'm on.

Personally – to be amongst so many writers who totally 'got' it when I got the call, and none of whom asked me 5 minutes later what was for dinner or where their homework was. And there's that same buzz (but bigger) you get from attending RWNZ conferences of being amongst people who love books – the writing and the reading of them. It's a whole three days devoted entirely to my passion. Of course the fact that it was in San Francisco and walking distance away from some fantastic shops was no hardship either.



More images from *A Romantic Interlude*, courtesy of Karina Bliss

Sandra Hyatt (right) at her first Harlequin authors' lunch with Robyn Donald



The *New York Times* bestselling author Nalini Singh with RWNZ president Pat Snellgrove



The Waiting Game

by Andrea Lawrence

Congratulations – you’ve done it.

You’ve mailed off your baby, be it a query, a partial or a full manuscript. Somewhere an agent or editor has it in their hot little hands and I’m sure they just can’t wait to call you and tell you they want to buy it.

Er...or not. Odds are, even if it’s the best book they’ve ever read, you’re not going to hear back for a while. First you have to wait in line. Then, they’ll read it. They’ll have staff readers or assistants read it again. Then maybe a senior editor or agent will read it. If you’re lucky, they will put together revision suggestions (because although you might disagree, you aren’t perfect) or you’ll get the dreaded “R” back in your SASE.

Generally, unless you get a magical three minute response to your query (e-submissions have made it possible to get rejected even faster) you’re going to have time to kill. What do you do with the three, six, even twelve months or more it might take before you hear back? Sitting around thinking about it will make you crazy.

Here are Andrea’s top ten things to do while you’re waiting:

1. Write another book. This is important. You can’t just sit around for months waiting for the book you’ve sent out to sell. You have to let go, move onto the next project. If you get rejected, you need the reassurance of having another book to get out there to pull you out of your funk. If you sell, you’ll need to have some book ideas to pitch to your editor or agent. They don’t want to buy a one hit wonder. Besides, the more you write, the better you get at it. Whether you get a rejection or a sale call, it never hurts to work at being a better writer.

2. Clean up the manuscript. This is really only in the case of queries or partials (if you’ve sent the full, it’s a little late for all this). Take the time to really scrub your work and this time, beyond the first three chapters. How many people out there have won a million contests, but never sell? That’s because they can write an awesome chapter or two. Once you get to chapter twelve, there are issues. Don’t be that person. There is nothing more heart-wrenching than to get a request for a full off a partial, then to get rejected because the rest of the book doesn’t meet the expectations they had for it. (Trust me, I know.)

3. Brainstorm. If you already have a good idea, by all means, go straight to number one and get to writing. If not, take

some time to come up with some new book plots. If you keep a file of ideas, go through those. Sit quietly and write down anything that comes to mind, even if it seems silly. Ask yourself “what if...?” Meet with some fellow writing friends and toss around ideas. Even the slightest offhand comment can trigger an idea. Go from there and see what you come up with. I know I always feel better when I have a full idea file.

4. Read for Research. Editors always ask that people read and research the lines and publishers they are targeting. If you think your next project might be a Harlequin Blaze or a St. Martin’s paranormal, now is the time to hit the book-stores. Read what they’re publishing (i.e. buying) and get an idea for the feel of the line. A great book that doesn’t fit the house you’re targeting will not sell. Simple as that.

5. Read for FUN. I can’t stress how important this is. Take the time to rejuvenate your love for the written word (not the ones you agonize over). Grab a few of your favourite author’s latest releases and enjoy them. Also take the time to read some books outside of your chosen writing genre. Sometimes getting your head out of say, erotica-mode, for a while and enjoying a romantic comedy or an urban fantasy can be a refreshing break. It may also inspire you to bring some humour or fantasy back to your writing.

6. Clear your head. Get away from your computer. Do something else for a while. You may just need the mental time away to reorganize your thoughts and start fresh on your next project. Perhaps cleaning out your closet works for you. Maybe going on a cooking or baking binge. Some of us live on take-out while we work and an actual home-cooked meal might be a rare treat. If you have another hobby, like painting or gardening, get out there and enjoy it. You might even find that digging in the dirt is a great way to work out the plot of the next book.

7. Have some “me” time. Some very smart people have always pressed upon me the importance of “filling the well.” If you have nothing coming in to inspire you, you’ll run out of inspired words to come out. This could be something simple like taking a hot bubble bath or going to see a movie. Get a massage or a pedicure. You could take a weekend getaway to the beach or the mountains. Go back to number five and six if you enjoy what you’re doing. Heck, spend an entire day doing nothing but watching a Law and Order marathon. Whatever helps you relax and rejuvenate. Most important, though, is to not feel guilty about it. You need this time.

The Waiting Game cont.

8. Clean up your workspace. I know. I said the “c-word.” I only say it out of love. I don’t know about you, but if I am seriously working, my desk and office space (along with the rest of my house, honestly) goes to hell. If I pull my focus away from my monitor for a moment, I am horrified by the food wrappers, empty soda cans, scribbled sheets of paper, unopened mail, seven back issues of the RWR, books I’m supposed to read, and who-knows-what-else that is stacking up, threatening to bury me. I have an uncanny ability to ignore all of this unless it starts to smell. So, take a moment (or an afternoon as the case may be) to clear off your desk. Straighten up your space. File or throw things away. You’ll start your new project off fresh and you might even find it’s easier to think (especially if you’re a visual learner and your brain gets clogged up by the clutter.)

9. Take a workshop or online class. In between projects is a great time to learn something new. Maybe you’ve always wanted to write a suspense plot, but wouldn’t know a six-shooter from an AK47. I’m willing to bet there’s a class for that. In addition to the plethora of workshops offered at the annual RWA conference, there are several regional conferences and monthly RWA chapter meetings that can offer learning opportunities. Many chapters are now offering online workshops as well. Kiss of Death (<http://www.rwamysterysuspense.org/>) features a monthly

workshop for suspense writers. Hearts through History (<http://heartsthroughhistory.com/class.htm>) is the place to go for historical research. Chapters like Heart of Dixie (<http://www.heartofdixie.org/onlineworkshops.html>) or Heart of Carolina (<http://heartofcarolina.org/>) Romance Writers offer a variety of workshops on different topics. Sign up for one and see what you can incorporate into your next book.

10. Give back. Get involved in your local RWA chapter or with the National RWA organization. If you find you’ve got a little free time on your hands, there are always opportunities to serve the group that does so much to support you. It doesn’t take much to make an impact – write an article for your newsletter, donate research materials to the library, or help plan an event. Contact your RWA regional board members to see if they need volunteers for a committee. Your board will be more than willing (and grateful) to find something you can help with.

So, there you go – my top ten things to do while you wait. If you take the time to do even a few or all things on the list, you might even forget (for an hour or two, at least) that you have a book out there. You’ll pass the time, be productive, and be fully prepared to tackle the next writing challenge ahead.

Andrea Laurence lives in Huntsville, Alabama and is a member of Heart of Dixie RWA and The Writing Playground (www.writingplayground.com). She has spent many sleepless nights worrying about her submissions and is willing to go as far as to plan elaborate and unnecessary parties to avoid confronting plot problems. This article first appeared in the May 2008 The Heart Monitor, the newsletter of the Heart of Dixie Chapter.

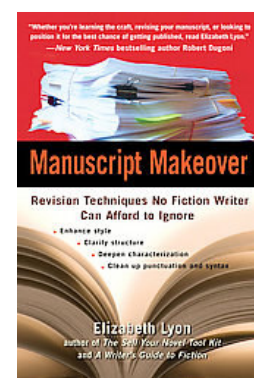
REVIEW

Manuscript Makeover, a new book by Elizabeth Lyon, author of *The Sell Your Novel Tool Kit* and *A Writer’s Guide to Fiction*, is possibly the most comprehensive guide to manuscript revision you’ll find. 340 pages of smallish print ensure the author has covered every aspect of revision, from making sure your story fits its target genre or subgenre, through structure, pacing, characterization, beginnings and viewpoint...ending with tips for copyediting and getting your synopsis right.

With so much detail in the book, the author sensibly gives a guide at the start of each chapter as to what you’ll get out of it, so you can choose whether to delve in or move on. *Manuscript Makeover* describes common manuscript problems and provides a range of solutions - helpfully, it lists the advantages and disadvantages of each solution.

While some topics, such as viewpoint, should have already been mastered by all but beginner writers, others, such as linking story structure to the hero’s journey, or character-driven narration, might provide food for thought at all levels of expertise.

Manuscript Makeover is unlikely to be a book you’ll read from cover to cover - its sheer denseness precludes it. But as a tool for identifying and addressing problem areas, its checklists, clearly divided chapters and practical commentary are likely to provide something for every writer, published or not.



Reviewed by Abby Gaines

EXPLORING E-HARLEQUIN

FOR BEGINNERS

BY KRIS PEARSON

If you're a new member, or (clears throat loudly) an older, not-very-computer-literate person like me, here's something you really ought to try.

If you've never thought that category novels were what you wanted to write, give me five minutes of your time anyway – because you might discover surprising and useful things. And if you're just plain looking for a fascinating place to explore, come along for the ride!

Those of you who already zip around the Harlequin website with ease, please turn the page....



Starting off

Google eHARLEQUIN.com. The very first entry gives you eight choices to click on to start your exploration. Today we're going to Writing Guidelines. Please click on that. OK – you now have a world of possibilities to check out.

It says 'new writing opportunities' near the top. If they're actively seeking, your chances are better – right? Some of these new lines are short e-books from only 5000 words. Maybe you'd like to start small? Click on each of these in turn, going to your backspace arrow in the top left corner to get between each. (See – I said this was for beginners – it took me months to find out you could do this!) Perhaps erotic Spice Briefs or paranormal Nocturne Bites aren't your thing? They're not mine either, but keep going...

You can check out the Manuscript Critiquing Service if you like – but be warned that it's only for North American residents. The prices are interesting though. And you absolutely must read (and print out?) the next four sections: How to Format your Manuscript; How to Submit your Novel; List of Editorial Office Addresses; and Frequently Asked Editorial Questions.

Getting all the details

Now investigate every one of the other lines. A quick skim will let you see if you'd be interested in writing for them. But it's good to know a little about each without having to buy them all; then when they crop up in conversation you can nod along with a wise expression.

Blaze, for instance. "The Blaze line of red-hot reads features sensuous highly-romantic innovative stories that are sexy in premise and execution... with fully described love scenes."

If the thought of that is enough to make you blush, maybe a Mills & Boon Historical is more your thing? If you love history and research, you could write a romance set anywhere from ancient civilisations right up to, and including, the Second World War. Or if you've worked in any area of medicine, your specialist knowledge might catapult you into a great Mills & Boon Medical plot. (I'm sure you know Harlequin, Mills and Boon and Silhouette are all brands of the same parent company?)

If you fancy writing diamonds and designer clothes and dashing men, then Harlequin Presents – the ones we know here as the red Sexys – are looking for "fast-paced stories that are essentially escapist romantic fantasies". By contrast, Harlequin Romance needs "stories with a lower sensuality level that are contemporary and 100% relevant to today's woman".

Silhouette Desire has bought several down-under authors in the last few years – Yvonne Lindsay, Jan Colley and Tessa Radley to name just three. So they like Kiwi voices. Maybe they'd like yours? Do you want to write a book that's "filled to the brim with strong intense storylines"?

Need an agent?

You'll see that HQN and MIRA books are longer single titles. Currently they're accepting only submissions from agents, but they say you can query HQN with a letter to ask if they'd be willing to read your work.

And this brings us to a very interesting point; for the short category lines, and LUNA, you don't need an agent. When you hear the stories our members tell about trying to find someone suitable to represent them, this is a big plus! You can post these submissions direct.

Something different – and maybe unexpected

The Kimani Press targets African American readers, so you're probably not going to be aiming at them – but have a read anyway because their guidelines are interesting.

EXPLORING E-HARLEQUIN FOR BEGINNERS CONT.

And for a total contrast, read the Steeple Hill sections. These are described as "wholesome Christian entertainment" and your main characters may not indulge in alcohol consumption, dancing, card-playing, raffles, sex before marriage, etc, etc. If faith plays a strong part in your life you might be very keen to try writing one of these Inspirational Romances.

See the books

Once you've sorted out what you're most interested in, you can see some of the current titles available by roaming along the grey-blue squares at the top of the page above 'learn to write'. There are many, many more than I've mentioned in this short summary. These are their books which are for sale right now. For instance, choose Harlequin and click on NASCAR – and there's Abby Gaines' August release. Or choose Silhouette and click on Desire. Yup – Yvonne Lindsay has a story listed among the August titles. By the time this item appears

in Heart to Heart I expect October's selection will be up, but you get the idea?

Here's a magic bit: beside some covers there's a "Browse the Book" symbol. Click on this, then wait, and choose the little red arrow. You can often read the first chapter free to compare the writing styles that have most recently found favour with editors. Go on – play!

Once you become accustomed to the site, you can roam far and wide, log on and take part in their on-line discussions and get answers from editors and authors, enter contests and enjoy the weekly serial-type free reads and craft articles. It's far too complicated to describe it all here. And be warned – hours of perfectly good writing time will drift by...

 eHARLEQUIN.com

Technical tip:

Intro to Word 2007

Okay, if you are a first time Word user, you may not find Word 2007 all that difficult to navigate. But if you are used to Word 2003 or earlier, it might be a different story.

Word 2007 is quite different from its previous incarnations and if you're used to earlier versions, it can be a bit tricky finding where everything is. So, this is the first in what may prove to be an ongoing series of Word 2007 tips.

First of all, terminology. Across the top of the screen is what Word calls the 'Ribbon'. This operates like the menus on previous editions of Word, with everything in like groups. There are seven Ribbons: **Home**, **Insert**, **Page Layout**, **References**, **Mailings**, **Review** and **View**.

In addition to the Ribbon, at the very top left of the page you'll also see the Office 2007 symbol. This is called the **Office Button**. If you hover your mouse above the Office Button, a little window will appear telling you what it does. The Office Button contains all the functions regarding saving and printing, and you'll find the properties of your document here too. You can also open a new document or send a document by email. In addition, you'll find the 'Word Options' button, which lets you change the various different Word options – more on that later.

And no, the Help menu hasn't disappeared. Instead, at the top right hand of your screen, you will see a tiny question mark surrounded by a blue circle. That is now the Help button. Alternatively, you can press F1.

That's it for my introduction – not many tips so far eh? Can't do much with 300 words! For an introduction to the Home Ribbon, see next month's Heart to Heart.

Jackie

Getting to know the RWNZ Executive & what they do

Vice President: Gracie Stanners

What does the Vice President do? Well, according to Article Seven of the Rules of RWNZ Inc., the Vice President has to

- assume the duties of the President in the event she becomes temporarily incapacitated or otherwise unable to perform
- act as Chapter Liaison
- assume other duties and fulfil other obligations as the Executive requires.

In other words--as Pat said at the Conference--I'm a General Dogbody. Which, as I have two dogs and know precisely how much fun they have, is a pretty good description.

All I have to do is to periodically growl and woof at Pat (to keep her away from **anything** which will render her incapacitated and therefore force me to do some **real** work), be a sounding board for ideas, a listening ear, and occasionally a broad shoulder.

As Chapter Liaison I get to go to various meetings. That means I get to ride in the C-A-R a lot. My favourite thing! Sometimes I get to ride in other people's C-A-Rs too, and that's always much more fun. We have some great chapter meetings in the North Island. I'm only sorry I haven't managed to get to every one yet... and none in the South Island at all. Sorry ladies. Maybe in 2009?

And then there's the Exec. They're a great bunch. ☺ They love to play. When they come to a decision about something they toss me the B-A-L-L to chase! My favourite thing!

Then I dash off after it, and--when it's beaten into submission--bring it back (covered in drool) for them to tell me I'm a clever girl.

Or to take the messy thing away, wash it, and bring it back.

Or that I've left behind the rope that was attached to it.

Or that the ball was blue and I've brought back a red one.

Sigh.

But eventually I get it right. Then they pat me on the head, and tell me I'm a good girl and I can go and sleep on the couch for a while!

My favourite thing!!

Oh yeah, it's a dog's life all right.

The Writers' Coach by Katey Coffing, Ph.D.

Applying Velcro to the Writer's Chair

A novelist's goal is to create a tale that will enthrall her readers. Sometimes the process of creating the story engrosses the author, too, and the novel practically types itself. Unfortunately, much of the time it doesn't, and we have to painstakingly assemble the words. Sometimes writing feels like volunteering to get run over by a squad of bulldozers. Most of us have figured out some tricks to keep ourselves going, even when the fun-seeking kid within us is shouting, "Noooo, I don't wanna!" In my years as a coach for women writers, I've come across many of these handy tricks, and I'd like to share a few with you.

REWARDS: Promise yourself a nice reward after sitting down and getting something done, whether that something is a scene, a page, or even a paragraph. Make the reward match the amount you get done (or how hard it was for you to do it). Rewards for different levels could include ten minutes to check your email or read blogs, half an hour of enjoying a favourite author's latest book, buying a new CD, or getting a shoulder and neck massage to soothe those typing aches. (If a massage therapist isn't in the budget, consider a mutual "massage reward" agreement with your spouse, a friend, or critique partner.)

WRITE OUT OF ORDER: Who says you have to do Scene 5 before Scene 6, or even before Scene 27? If Scene 5 is driving you crazy, skip ahead to something that isn't. In the process of writing what comes before and after the problem section, you'll often discover the solution.

DEADLINES ARE YOUR FRIEND: Tell a critique partner or friend (or several of them) what you want to get done that day--and ask them to hold you to it. If you blog, report your goals and results there. The potential embarrassment of reporting in empty-handed will get words flowing.

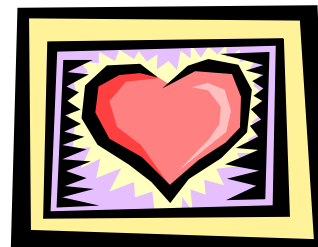
TIMER MAGIC: A simple kitchen timer can do wonders for your determination. Set it and challenge yourself to write a certain number of words during that time. For more about how a timer can get your fingers cruising over the keyboard, see this: <http://www.women-ink.com/timer-magic.htm>

DIALOGUE: If you dread filling a blank page, try writing the dialogue first. You'll end up with the bare bones of a scene you can flesh out afterwards. Plus, dialogue created this way is often snappier than what's produced during a slower, more thorough scene draft.

Writers, what else have you done to keep yourself going even after you just don't wanna? Discuss what's worked for you with your friends. And don't limit this discussion to just your writing circle. People who aren't writers still have "don't wanna" things to do, so you may have some great ideas for them--and vice versa. Happy sharing!

Goalmeister Katey Coffing, Ph.D. is a certified life coach who specialises in guiding women writers to success. Discover more at Women-Ink.com

ROMANCE WRITING MARKETS & PUBLISHING INDUSTRY NEWS



**SOURCES INCLUDE PATRIKA SALMON. CINDI MYERS MARKET
NEWSLETTER & PUBLISHERS WEEKLY**

Cindi Myers recently attended the Colorado Gold conference, hosted by Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers (<http://www.rmfw.org>). This year's editor guests were Ben LeRoy from Bleak House Books, Daniela Rapp from St. Martin's Press, Denise Little from Tekno Books/Five Star and Faith Black from Avalon Books.

Benjamin LeRoy founded **Bleak House Books** in 1995. The Madison, Wisconsin-based company publishes approximately 20 titles a year, focusing on crime fiction and dark literary fiction. These are character-driven stories featuring flawed protagonists. Several Bleak House titles have been nominated for Edgar awards. The company will consider un-agented submissions, though they want to see a query only at first. Detailed submission guidelines -- be sure to follow them -- are available at <http://www.bleakhousebooks.com/submissions.htm> Also, check out the blog and some of their upcoming titles to get a feel for what they're looking for.

Daniela Rapp is an Editor at **St. Martin's Press**, where she acquires thrillers, mysteries, literary fiction and upmarket women's fiction, as well as narrative non-fiction. St. Martin's press accepts only agented submissions.

Faith Black is an Associate Editor at **Avalon Books**. Avalon publishes romance, mystery and westerns, in hardcover, primarily for the library market. Avalon stories contain no graphic violence, no swearing and no sex -- "good stories and wholesome entertainment." The books are short -- 40,000 to 60,000 words. Avalon accepts un-agented material. See their submission guidelines at <http://avalonbooks.com/wrtgdl.html>. They also have an FAQ page with a lot of useful information.

Denise Little, Executive Editor at **Tekno Books** has worked in almost every aspect of the publishing industry. She was the national book buyer for Barnes and Noble before she joined Kensington Publishing in 1993, where she oversaw her own romance imprint, Denise Little Presents. She has been executive editor at Tekno Books since 1997. Tekno is a book packager. A packager acquires and oversees projects which are then sold to various publishers. Tekno acquires titles for **Five Star Books**. Like Avalon, Five Star publishes hardcover titles, primarily for the library market. Five Star Expressions is the company's romance and women's fiction line. They're looking for 75,000-100,000 word manuscripts in any sub-genre of romance, including contemporary, historical, inspirational, sweet romance, romantic comedy, romantic suspense, time travel, and paranormal and gothic romance. They also consider chick lit. They also publish women's fiction. Five Star also publishes mysteries of 75,000-100,000 words. They are interested in cozies,

private detectives, hard-boiled mystery, suspense, techno-thrillers and historical mystery. They pay a \$1000 advance against royalties. They accept un-agented submissions, but not simultaneous submissions. They accept email submissions only. For guidelines and more information, email Rosalind Greenberg at tekno@new.rr.com

Mystery Writers of America and St Martin's Minotaur is sponsoring a **Best First Crime Novel competition**. The grand prize is a \$10,000 advance and publishing contract with St Martin's Minotaur. The contest is open to any writer who has not previously published a novel. You must submit a manuscript of at least 60,000 words in which a crime is at the heart of the story. Entries must be postmarked by November 30, 2008. Details at http://us.macmillan.com/Content.aspx?publisher=smpm_inotaur&id=4933#bestcrime or <http://tinyurl.com/63499z> (Last year this contest received only 400+ entries. So far this year, submissions are down, so your odds are good.)

Melissa Jeglinski has left Harlequin/Silhouette to become a literary agent. **Krista Stroever** has assumed MJ's position, overseeing Silhouette Desire. **Keyren Gerlach** has been promoted to associate editor for Silhouette Romantic Suspense.

Ravenous Romance is a new online publisher of erotic romance. The brainchild of Hollan Publishing's principals Holly Schmidt and Allan Penn and literary agent Lori Perkins, Ravenous Romance launches December 1, 2008 with will publish daily novel-length erotic romances, as well as lunchtime Hot Fling™ short stories in e-book and downloadable MP3 format. According to their press release: "Ravenous Romance™ will offer erotic romance stories with strong plots and character development, but with steamy sex scenes and explicit descriptions of sexual encounters. The stories will feature strong, passionate heroines and plots that express a broad range of fantasies. Ravenous Romance will be a destination site for women, with erotica that celebrates female sexuality, and strong Web 2.0 community-building features."

At the Ravenous Romance website <http://ravenousromance.com/index.php> readers can download a free Hot Fling short story. The company is currently accepting queries for 50,000 word erotic romance novels and 2,500 to 6,250-word short stories. They are seeking a wide variety of stories in all sub-genres. Detailed writers' guidelines are available at <http://ravenousromance.com/submission.html>

ROMANCE WRITING MARKETS & PUBLISHING

INDUSTRY NEWS CONT.

It's not easy competing with Harry Potter as **Scholastic's** results for the first quarter, ended August 31, show. Without the \$240 million contribution from last July's *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, revenue plunged 46%, to \$285 million, and the company had a net loss from continuing operations of \$44.7 million compared to earnings of \$3.3 million in last quarter's first quarter.

Dystel & Goderich Literary Management has made some personnel changes. It has promoted two agents, Michael Bourret and Lauren Abramo; Bourret is now vice president, and Abramo is now subsidiary rights director. Both Bourret and Abramo began their publishing careers at DGLM. Additionally, agent Jessica Papin will be rejoining the firm following a three-year stint in international rights sales for the American University in Cairo.

The agency's recent bestsellers include *The Food You Crave* by Food Network star Ellie Krieger and *Joy Bauer's Food Cures* by nutritionist Joy Bauer. It is also having success in the YA market: *Story of a Girl* by debut novelist Sara Zarr was a 2007 NBA finalist.

Brisingsr (Knopf), the long-awaited third volume in Christopher Paolini's Inheritance cycle, arrived last Friday night, September 20, at midnight. In a record for **Random House Children's Books**, the book sold 550,000 copies in its first day.

Random had printed 2.5 million copies of *Brisingsr*, the largest-ever first printing for the division. First-day sales for the title were four times that of *Eldest*, second in the cycle, which pubbed in August 2005.

Oprah Winfrey revealed her 62nd book club selection Friday: *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*, Ecco's runaway summer bestseller. The debut novel by **David Wroblewski** hit stores in June, was an instant bestseller, and has 300,000 copies in print, said director of publicity Michael McKenzie. Following Winfrey's announcement, Ecco is going back to press for an additional 750,000 copies. Of her choice, Winfrey said, "I think this book is right up there with the greatest American novels ever written."

Wroblewski, who spent 10 years writing the novel, will participate in a live, one-time only interactive Q&A [webcast session](#) with Winfrey and book club members. The book was a Barnes & Noble Discover pick and an IndieBound July #1 pick, and was included among Amazon's "Significant 7" books in June.

Bestselling chick lit author **Meg Cabot** announced that she will donate her worldwide proceeds (advances and royalties) for her next book, *Ransom My Heart*, to Greenpeace. Avon A will release the book, which is part of

Cabot's bestselling Princess Diaries series, on January 6, 2009. The book is actually authored by the series' heroine, Her Royal Highness, The Princess Mia Thermopolis, who Cabot says has always been an outspoken animal rights activist and committed environmentalist. "Though Mia will not, as she once dreamed, be spending her gap year working for Greenpeace manning a rubber dinghy, keeping whales from getting harpooned, income generated from this book will help someone else do so," said Cabot.

With interest in **Agatha Christie** back in the publishing news following the announcement that 13 and-a-half hours of previously unknown tape recordings of Christie have been uncovered, **Phoenix Books** has acquired a biography on the mystery maven from bestselling author Richard Hack. Michael Viner and Henrietta Tiefertaler of Phoenix acquired world rights to Hack's *The Duchess of Death*. The biography will draw on more than 5,000 previously unpublished letters, notes and documents, and a June 2009 pub date is planned. Hack has written several previous biographies, including *Hughes: The Private Diaries, Letters, and Memos*, which was a bestseller.

Harlequin has announced a 300,000-copy first printing for *Love Matters: Remarkable Stories That Touch the Heart and Nourish the Soul* by night-time radio host Delilah, the first book in the company's new nonfiction imprint. The nonfiction imprint, originally announced late last year, will feature a mix of subjects, ranging from memoir to self-help. Eight titles are set for 2009, including a cookbook by bestselling romance author Debbie Macomber, whose *The Cedar Cove Cookbook* is inspired from her bestselling Cedar Cove series. Deb Brody is executive editor of the imprint.

Sex and the City author **Candace Bushnell** has signed with **HarperCollins** to write her first teen novels for the new Balzer & Bray imprint of HC's children's division. The two-book deal, for world rights, was negotiated by Alessandra Balzer, co-publisher of Balzer & Bray, with Heather Schroder at ICM. The first book, *The Carrie Diaries*, is scheduled for global publication in fall 2010. The first novel, according to HarperCollins, will look at main character Carrie Bradshaw's formative high school years. "Teenagers are rabid fans of the *Sex and the City* book and show," said Balzer. "I can't wait to see what happens when Candace turns her sharp eye for social commentary to the other competitive jungle that is high school." Bushnell's fifth novel, *One Fifth Avenue*, is due out this month from Hyperion's Voice imprint.



RWNZ Contest News

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

RWNZ CONTEST SCHEDULE 2009

The Clendon Award

Closing Date: 27 February 2009***

Chapter Short Story Contest

Closing Date: 27 March 2009

Great Beginnings Contest

Closing Date: 24 April 2009

Strictly Single Contest

Closing Date: 25 September 2009

***The continuation of The Clendon Award is dependent on the assistance of volunteers.

The **Second Chance Contest** will not be offered in 2009. This contest was introduced, as its name implies, to give finalists in RWNZ, RWAus and RWAmerica contests another opportunity to get their work in front of an editor. However, low entry numbers over the past three years point to a lack of interest and it is therefore no longer considered beneficial to run this contest.

The **Meet the Editor/Agent Contest** will also not be run in 2009. The planning and organisation of contests requires a significant commitment of time by coordinators and judges and the running of five annual contests (not including the Clendon Award) stretches the resources of our relatively small organisation.

The contests listed in the above schedule cater for all interests and, from results over the past few years, have been shown to deliver the most benefit to our members — the Chapter Short Story, the Great Beginnings (category), the Strictly Single (single title) and the Clendon Award (full manuscript).



Meet the Editor Contest 2008

Final Judge: Cindy Hwang, Executive Editor, Berkley Publishing

1st Cathryn Hein
2nd Pamela Mariko
3rd Bronwen Evans

Congratulations, we hope your editor meetings went well!

Other Contest News

November contests submitted by Lisa Elkind-Gardiner, aka Lisa Whitefern

The 20th Emily Contest

Deadline: October 7, 2008

<http://whrwa.com/emily/>

The mission of The Emily is to professionally support writers and guide them toward a path to publication.

Each entry should include the first thirty-five pages of your manuscript, including a prologue if applicable.

Electronic entries and paypal payment acceptable.

Fee \$30 US.

Categories

Contemporary Single Title: 90,000 + words, marketed as a single title book.

Final Judges: Larsen-Pomada Literary Agents and Kerry Donovan, NAL

Contemporary Series: Under 75,000 words, marketed as a series book.

Final Judges: Steele-Perkins Literary Agency and Silhouette Historical: All types and length.

Final Judges: Folio Literary Management and Avon Paranormal: 50,000+ words.

Final Judges: Denise Marcil Literary Agency and Berkley

The Best of the Best manuscript: The winner will be awarded a detailed critique of the first three chapters and synopsis by **Leis Pederson of Berkley**

Open to those not published in the category entered.

The Tapestry of Bronze Poetry Contest

<http://www.tapestryofbronze.com/OdeForm.html>

Deadline: 15 November 2008

The Tapestry of Bronze is sponsoring a series of poetry contests to celebrate Greek and Roman mythology and the Olympian gods in honour of the Olympics. The subject of the second contest is Hera (also known as Juno), the Queen of the Gods. Each poem may be no longer than 30 lines.

Winner will receive \$50. Entry is free - one entry per person only. E-mail your poem (no more than 30 lines) to the following address: tapestryofbronze@yahoo.com

Mid-Michigan Romance Writers "Happily Ever After" Contest

<http://midmichiganrwa.org/contest.html>

Deadline: 1 November

Open to all unpublished authors of novel length romantic fiction (40,000 words+) and to published authors of novel length romantic fiction in genres in which they have not had a new novel released for at least three (3) years.

Fee: \$30US for non RWA members (subject to change)

Final Judges (all subject to change)

Short/Long Contemporary Series — Silhouette

Single Title/Mainstream with Romantic Elements including

YA - 3 Seas Literary Agency

Romantic Suspense - Irene Goodman Literary Agency

Historical - Kensington Publishing

Paranormal (shapeshifters, fantasy, sci-fi, time travel, etc.) -

Bradford Literary Agency

Inspirational - Steeple Hill

Erotica/Sensual Romance - Red Sage Publishing

2009 Pikes Peak Writers Fiction Contest

<http://www.ppwc.net/>

Deadline: November 1, 2008

Final Judges

Children's Fiction - Dragonfly Publishing, Inc.

Historical Fiction - agent Nathan Bransford

Mainstream - Ashley Grayson Literary Agency

Mystery/Suspense/Intrigue - Bond Literary Agency

Romance - Sourcebooks

Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror - Cherry Weiner Literary Agency

Short Stories - Tekno Books

Young Adult - Andrea Brown Literary Agency

Eligibility: This contest is for **unpublished writers** of short stories and book-length fiction. Anyone who has received monetary compensation for a shorter fictional work (short story, novella, novelette, etc.) is ineligible for the short story category but may be eligible for the book-length categories. \$40 US for non members.

WD Popular Fiction Short Story Awards

Deadline: 3 November 2008

The WD Popular Fiction Awards is now accepting entries.

Compete and Win in all 5 Categories! The Grand Prize-Winner will receive \$2,500 cash. \$100 worth of Writer's Digest Books and the 2009 Novel & Short Story Writer's market. Enter stories no more than 4000 words long.

* Romance

* Mystery/Crime Fiction

* Science Fiction/Fantasy

* Thriller/Suspense

* Horror

Entry Fee: \$12.50 per short story

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

RWA's Silicon Valley 11th annual GOTCHA! Contest

Now ALL electronic!

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

Deadline: 12 November

Eligibility: Not published in the category entered within the past five years.

Enter first 15 manuscript pages. Top 4 winners in each category are sent to an editor. Winners have 2 weeks to revise the 15-page entry prior to editorial review.

All Major romance categories except erotic romance.

Separate category for all Regencies - sweet to spicy.

Inspirational romance category especially needs entries.

Fee \$25 US



RWNZ NEWS AROUND THE REGIONS

Regional convenor contacts

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

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

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

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

WAIKATO, BAY OF PLENTY & KING
COUNTRY – Liz Heywood
email: liz.heywood@gmail.com
phone: (09) 2351404

WELLINGTON – Ellie Huse
email: elliehuse@yahoo.com



Don't see your region listed here? If you're interested in helping to start a local RWNZ group in your area, please contact RWNZ president Pat Snellgrove via email rwnzpresident@xtra.co.nz or our membership secretary Rachel Collins on rachel_collins@xtra.co.nz

AUCKLAND

Due to several members heading off to San Francisco, not to mention the freezing weather, the August meeting had a very low attendance - only eleven members. Our three Clendon finalists - Maree, Sandra and Rowena - were AWOL, but we got the good news from America that Sandra had sold to Desire, in time for the meeting. The group discussed web resources - see The Naked Writer for some of the good ones. And many thanks to Miriam Paxie who has volunteered to take over the tea and coffee job - make sure she gets a good welcome come September.

The next meeting will be held on 1 November at the Three Kings Tennis pavilion, corner of Mt Albert and Mt Eden Roads at 12.30 pm. Bring a small plate for a shared lunch and of course be prepared to buy raffle tickets.

Frances Housden

HAWKE'S BAY

Four of us met on 6 September at Missionview Gardens in Napier. Even though the garden centre was deserted, the café was warm and welcoming with lots of scrummy cakes to eat.

In between lots of chitchat we heard all about Sally and Amanda's trip to the RWA conference in San Francisco. It was interesting to hear about the various parties and meetings they attended. From what they said, a good time was had by all. Then they told us about their workshops at the RWNZ conference. Another successful time for them. They both complimented Margie Lawson on her Friday workshop. It sounded like a very worthwhile master class.

We finished off the meeting by deciding when to see each other again. It's likely to be the Christmas get-together as I am heading off to Australia for a few months. If anyone wants to find out information about the Hawke's Bay group they can contact me on ginny.suckling@xtra.co.nz

Ginny Suckling

WELLINGTON

We had a very select group at the Wellington meeting in August. Just five of us met at Joan's home to discuss the upcoming conference, navigating eHarlequin.com, and the requirements of their different categories. Being a smaller meeting than usual, we were able to share aspects of our personal lives and their impact on our writing.

Ah – September! We arrived in pouring rain - and talked so much that we discovered we'd way over-run our time. No-one noticed it had cleared up, and the sunny evening tricked us. We discussed the conference of course. Diana, Rachel, Bron and Kris are all bundling up requested partials to send off – and Bron and Ellie have fulls due as well. North American contests on-line were covered – and useful courses. Sharon Donnelley's "Showing and Telling" was recommended. Then we swung round to the NaNoWriMo – National Novel Writers' Month, and tackled 'plotters' versus 'pantsers'. It seems we have plenty of both.

And this brought us to a lively discussion on assorted books and movies – and the proof that what one person finds fascinating is a total bore to another. So what did we learn there? That one editor may not connect with our work in the least – and the next one might fall head-over-heels with it. So keep on submitting, people! One rejection means nothing.

Our next meeting will have been on 4 October. More next month.

Kris Pearson

RWNZ NEWS AROUND THE REGIONS

CHRISTCHURCH

Huge thanks to the Committee for the best Conference yet – those of us who went LOVED it.

In September we chipped away at the dreaded Synopsis and in October we will be empowering our characters to leap off the page and grab the reader by the heartstrings. Tea and cakes to accompany all that hard work.

Our monthly workshops will now be held on the last Sunday of each month at 2.30pm. All welcome. For local info contact sueknight@ihug.co.nz

Sue Knight

NELSON

Our August meeting was choco-licious with a dash of spice in the form of therapy. Give a bunch of girls a box of chocolates and they're up for anything! - well, almost. Seriously though, hilarity ensued when we analysed each person's choice of chocolate, according to shape and flavour, with the aid of the 'Chocolate Therapy' book.

That was the easy bit. Then came the writing exercise. But everyone showed their talent by building a story from these sentences: 'It looked like chocolate. It smelt like chocolate. But they knew it was really...'

Contact Cherie or Sally for details on future meetings.

Cherie Skinner

WAIKATO, BAY OF PLENTY & KING COUNTRY

We held our July meeting at Shirley Wine's home in Waihi, and had a wonderful interactive workshop delivered by Barbara Clendon. Thank you, Shirley, for your lovely hospitality, and to Barbara for an awesome workshop.

We held our September meeting at Catherine Johnson's home in Waiuku. Catherine has been a visitor and is moving to Canada in October, so farewell Catherine, it's been lovely to know you.

It was good to see so many of us at conference this year. Tyree Bidgood, a new member this year, entered the Short Story Competition, won it, and sold the story to Woman's Day. And Jenny Hutton from M & B in London has asked Tyree for three chapters and a synopsis. Fantastic job, Tyree, it will be interesting to watch your writing career! Shirley Wine got two highly commendeds for her Clendon entries. Well done Shirley. These are two awesome ladies to watch!

This year at conference we also welcomed a new member, Michelle Holman. Michelle has recently joined us and this was her very first conference. Nice to have you aboard Michelle. We look forward to seeing you at our meetings and wish you all the best with your writing.

Liz Heywood



Getting to know our regional convenors

Ginny Suckling

Hi, I'm Ginny and I've been the convenor in Hawke's Bay for the past few years. June Clarke and I are the only original members of the group but we now have three published authors, Amanda Ashby, Sally Rigby and Deborah Burnside as the other members.

In 1980 I left the UK and have lived in Napier with my twin sister, Vickie, and husband, Barry, for most of those twenty eight years.

I've always enjoyed writing stories and first attended an RWNZ conference in 1998. It was the best thing I ever did. For the past ten years I've entered short story competitions in New Zealand and Australia and have been published in the Liaisons magazine and Little Gems Anthology.

With a nursing background my preferred genre used to be Medical Romance but lately I've tried writing for Intimate Romantic Suspense. I entered a manuscript in the Clendon and received good feedback so I'm now sending it to the New York office.

Barry is a retired GP and has worked in the Sudan, PNG and Ethiopia. I was lucky enough to go with him to Bougainville, and for the next few months, I'll be with him in Northern Territory, Australia.

THE NAKED WRITER

BARING ALL IN THE WORLD OF ROMANCE AND WRITING

Is the Naked Writer an idiot? Quite possibly. A while ago someone gave me the supposedly new Whitcoulls Top 100. "Sorry chum," I said, "but this is the old one. I've just seen the new one. I wrote a column about it." Well, turns out, the one I mentioned last month was the current one for back then – there is indeed a new one out.

The August meeting of the Auckland chapter was a hoot. The lowest attendance since records began, I suspect. Several of our members were in San Francisco, and others may have been practicing their pitches, but the rest of us got together to discuss great things. We had a workshop on Writers Resources and what follows are just a few that may be of interest...

If Google is getting you down, try this <http://cuil.com>. It is said to be "bigger and better than Google." If you're wanting an agent, and want to see what the editors are buying, kill two birds with one stone. Visit Karen A. Fox's website, www.karenafox.com. She does a monthly round up – spot the odd Kiwi in there. Sandra Hyatt's in the current bunch. It will list a brief blurb about the book, and the name of the editor who bought and agent who sold. Good for market research. She also has lists of agents and editors acquiring romance, but as with anything, it may not have been updated so do some more research. On the subject of agents – Melissa Jeglinski, the senior editor for the Silhouette Desire line, has left the company for Knight Agency, which represents Nalini, Abby and Melissa James. I wonder if the new Senior editor will bring about changes, a la when Patience Smith took over Silhouette Romantic Suspense formerly known as Intimate Moments...

For other writers' resources, www.romantictimes.com has lists of agents and editors and craft articles. Always, always double check. They still list Karen Solem as being an agent with Writers House when she left them several years ago. For all things Harlequin, you can not do without www.eharlequin.com for the guidelines. There are even podcasts on the site – real editors talking about what they want for their lines. For links to nearly everything to do with writing, masses of links can be found on www.paularoe.com. For wonderful articles on emotional punch, www.melissajames.net. She is updating her site, but when I just checked, it re-directed me to her old site. Melissa does real dramatic emotion. www.hollylisle.com has tons of craft articles. And for lots of info on publishers,

especially if you are writing fantasy, the website of author Piers Anthony is highly recommended.

Speaking of the internet, Barbara Samuel reckons she has tripled her word count since severely limiting her online time. In the recent *April Romance Writers Report*, Barbara addressed just this issue in "Taming the Internet Monster." She makes the astute observation that "the danger of being online can make it feel like work, and often delivers a more satisfying payoff than actually plugging away at the current work in progress." She has a number of suggestions. To get an idea of what you're actually looking at, and if you can cut down, make up categories for your online surfing, and log each minute you spend online to that category. You might be a news junkie and visit CNN, the Herald, BBC countless times a day. Set up certain times a day to connect to the internet and stick to it. If you can, get a second computer, just for writing. One of my kids picked up a good, dirt cheap, reformatted computer for a few hundred bucks at auction; if it's not connected to the net, you don't have to panic over viruses. My own personal revelation is to tone down the email by getting rid of the rubbish in the inbox. Not spam but stuff I've signed up to. Newsletters, e-zines, tryathalon information. On that last one, clearly I must have been considering doing one of these but I'm danged if I can remember why! I had indeed signed up for so much stuff over the years, it has taken a good month and more to unsubscribe from it all as stuff just keeps coming on in. It is with some regret I've had to let things go, but I figure, better to eliminate it. None of its life and death stuff, and none of it is actually helping me write a book.

Now that *A Romantic Interlude* is done and dusted, it is time to start saving for *A Capital Affair*, August 2009. This will be the first time in RWNZ history we've had a conference out of Auckland and its pretty exciting. Ten years ago we'd never have thought it could happen because of the population distribution but given it seems half of conference attendees come from out of Auckland, time for us up the top end of the island to fork out the bucks on the airfares. Suffice to say, the Naked Writer's piggy bank is well and truly open to receive regular donations from the pay packet. In what could be a first, Naked is determined to get there and have a ball without having to put a single thing on the credit card.

Watch this space...