

Hearts Talk



ROMANCE
WRITERS
of Australia

The official journal of Romance Writers of Australia

Our 2015 Award Recipients



The Ruby (Romantic Book of the Year)

Marion Lennox
Waves of Temptation
(HM&B Medical)
Short Sweet

Amy Andrews
Risky Business
(Escape Publishing)
Long Romance

Annie West
Damaso Claims His Heir
(HM&B Sexy)
Short Sexy

Johanna Nicholls
The Lace Balcony
(Simon & Schuster)
Romantic Elements



Anna Hackett
Beneath a Trojan Moon
(Self-published)
The Ella (equal winner)



Anna Campbell
Her Christmas Earl
(Self-published)
The Ella (equal winner)



Diane Curran
Lynne Wilding
Meritorious Service Award

Carly Main – *Memento Mori* – Valerie Parv Award

A New Year for RWA

Can you believe that another conference has been and gone? Two years of planning culminated in an amazing conference with more than 400 delegates taking part in *Get Fresh in '15* from 21 to 23 August. And what a weekend it was. I'd like to extend my thanks to the conference team—convenors Kate Belle and Kathryn Ledson, with their team consisting of Sarma Bardeau, Sarah Brabazon, Ashley Carr, Frana Graco, Lauren James, Delwyn Jenkins, Jennifer Kloester, Samantha McHenry, Patsy Poppenbeek, Sue Price, Tracey Sharpe, Michelle Somers and Paul Sleeth—for putting together a star-studded, informative and fun Melbourne conference. The workshops and presentations were excellent, but it was the camaraderie and face-to-face interactions between our members that really made it a weekend to remember for me. Thank you to everyone who volunteered, presented and shared in *Get Fresh in '15*.

I would also to thank CT Green and Sandra Harris for their work on the Claytons conference, which ran on the same weekend as the Melbourne conference. You put together a great line-up for this online event and I know the people who participated enjoyed it thoroughly.

The Melbourne conference was also where our annual general meeting was held. There we celebrated the achievements of the past year and welcomed the new RWA committee for 2015/16. I am delighted to be staying on for another year as president, particularly at this exciting time in RWA's history where we have employed our first staff member. I believe this is a bold and necessary step forward for the organisation—which now numbers over 1000 members—and look forward to working with the committee and the new administrative assistant, Shannon Curtis, on improving our organisation and delivering even

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more value to our members.

Please check out the RWA Notices on page 14 to learn who the new committee is made up of. I hope you will join me in welcoming and supporting them in the important work they do to keep our organisation running and thriving.

Here's to another great year.

Leisl Leighton
RWA President, 2015-16



Carla Caruso:

- ♥ Getting acquainted with the wonders of Wattpad on page 10.
- ♥ Disco naps (my twin boys have turned two and their rowdiness means I sometimes need to doze when they do!).
- ♥ The Griswolds returning in an updated version of *National Lampoon's Vacation*. (Hoping the Christmas remake comes out next—I'm an eighties tragic.)



Daniel de Lorne:

- ♥ Taking note of Lisa Chaplin's tips on dramatic irony on page 6.
- ♥ Gearing up for another year on the RWA committee as we consolidate the old and work on the new.
- ♥ Getting the balance right between my day job, writing job and socialising so I can get my next book written (and finished).

From Your Editors

It's unbelievable that the much-awaited RWA conference is over for another year, spring blossoms are re-perfuming the air, and the supermarkets are already hanging up the Christmas tinsel (or preparing to). To keep you on a roll until the year's end, we've included a motivational article from Catherine Evans on different tactics writers use to keep going when the going gets tough. Plus, in case you missed it, our conference award winners grace our front cover. Here's what's on our minds this month...

Our 2015 Award Recipients

Continued from page 1...



P.J. Vye
The Hermit Next Door
Emerald



Heidi Catherine
The Soul Weaver
Emerald Pro



Danielle Binks
Things No-one Tells You About
Romance Readers – The ROMA



Kat Colmer
For the Love of Gnomes
Little Gems



Tamar Sloan
Catalyst
First Kiss



Dee Scully
Believe in Fairy Tales
Ripping Start



Bronwen Evans
Play Me
Selling Synopsis



Sheridan Kent
Little Gems Cover Contest



Jennifer Brassel
RWA Life Member

Fresh and Flirty Cocktail Party



With thanks to Duncan Carling-Rodgers for the award and cocktail party photographs.

Dramatic Irony – a Vital Tool for Every Writer

by Lisa Chaplin

The meaning of ‘dramatic irony’ in the reference dictionary: *irony that is inherent in speeches or a situation of a drama and is understood by the audience, but not grasped by the characters in the play.*

Dramatic irony is something we use in everyday life—“You don’t know what it’s like to be me/what I’m capable of”, for instance. However, as a literary tool, it’s vital for writers. To create tension in your storyline or between characters, it’s vital for one to *keep a secret* from the other character/s. However, *readers* don’t like to be kept in the dark.

Agatha Christie left her readers in the dark so well in her mysteries—but you can go back and find the dramatic irony throughout, a trail of crumbs leading to the solution. Shakespeare was a master at dramatic irony. He knew well that readers want to be kept in the loop, to hunt for the clues given throughout; and the interest lies in how the characters will either discover the secret, or tell the secret, and how the other character will react.

A classic use of dramatic irony in category romance is the ‘secret baby’. The “if you only knew you were a father” thoughts, or the justification to keep the secret, alerts the reader *to* the secret, or having the heroine interacting with the child in scenes where the hero is absent.

When they’re together, every so often the heroine will say something rich in hidden irony about his playboy lifestyle, addiction to work or commitment issues, and the reader reads on to see how the truth will come out. Another popular one is where the protagonist has been falsely accused (or their family member) of a crime that’s ruined the antagonist’s life. The secret often lies in *how* the innocence is shown, but the antagonist refuses to see the truth until the evidence is shoved in their face. And healing finally begins.

In my 2010 release, *His Housekeeper Bride* (M&B Sweet), the heroine, Sylvie, hides a terrible secret. She and Mark met as children, while loved ones were dying. They formed a strong bond, but when Sylvie’s mother died, she disappeared from Mark’s life. Years later, she returns as a woman, his housekeeper—and it’s obvious she’s keeping more than one secret.

Mark tried to make contact on making his fortune, even paying her family’s bills, but she never called, even to thank him. Having lost the only other girl who ever meant anything to him, he doesn’t want to trust or forgive her now, but Sylvie’s aura of secrets fascinates him, the suffering she refuses to show. As he comes to know her and find out some of what she’s hiding, he sees the woman of worth she is, and realises his suffering pales in comparison

to hers. He’s awed by her sweet optimism. When he finally discovers the reason why she never contacted him, it’s the catalyst for major change in his life.

A classic dramatic irony in the mystery/whodunit is the false alibi, or the hidden weapon. Reread some of those fabulous Agatha Christie mysteries, searching for the hints that one of the characters knows about the lie told, or about the weapon, given in a tone rich in understated irony—who usually gets killed for his or her trouble.

NYT bestseller Tasha Alexander is also very good at this in her *Lady Emily Mysteries*—a word dropped carelessly, a look...and after you discover the villain/s, you can read back and see her excellent use of dramatic irony. For example, in her first Lady Emily mystery, *And Only To Deceive*, which is in the first-person, Alexander uses diary entries from Lady Emily’s dead husband (or is he really dead?) to show what Emily doesn’t yet know. These entries, though written two years before the book’s opening, are an excellent dramatic irony because you realise every time how little Emily knew about the man she married, that she’s about to find out something new and shocking about this man she came to love only after he’d died...and why this places her life in jeopardy.

“Readers want to hunt for the clues.” In my debut historical fiction novel, *The Tide Watchers*, dramatic irony first comes

when Duncan knows his spymaster knows something he’s not sharing—vital secrets that will change both Duncan’s life and the woman he comes to love. Soon after meeting Lisbeth in France, Duncan discovers another secret. One he *can’t* tell her because she’s the only person he’s sure he can trust. There’s a French spy on his team, and he desperately needs help to find Napoleon’s invasion fleet that he believes is ready to attack England. Throughout the book, Lisbeth is the unwitting tool for dramatic irony as she writes home or talks about seeing her mother again, while Duncan’s not even sure her mother will be there to welcome Lisbeth when her disgraced daughter returns home at last. The two secrets collide in the worst possible way for Duncan and Lisbeth—as any good fiction should. Never let your characters off the hook!

In ML Stedman’s *The Light Between Oceans*, the classic secret-baby plot is given a twist when she becomes secret even from her only surviving parent. The baby is found in a rowboat beside her dead father and taken in by a childless couple living at a remote lighthouse. The dramatic irony lies in their telling family and friends that the child is theirs, while in their hometown, a grieving widow refuses to believe her daughter is dead...and the guilty, conflicted ‘father’ leaves small clues for the real mother to let her know the baby’s alive, well and happy. For his trouble, he

ends up in prison and almost losing his wife, who never gets over the grief of losing the only child she'll ever have.

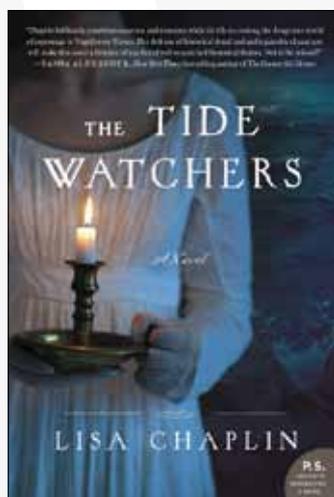
Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief* is rich in both foreshadowing and dramatic irony. In fact, he starts many of his acts, chapters or scenes with foreshadowing, combined with dramatic irony. That this is told from the viewpoint of 'Death' makes the irony even stronger. "If Liesel knew this was the day that..." and you know something life-changing is about to happen. You keep reading on to see what happens to Liesel, Rudy or Mama and Papa.

There's a difference between foreshadowing and dramatic irony, hard to discern, especially when the line blurs. The book, *What Came Before He Shot Her* by Elizabeth George, begins with: "Joel Campbell, eleven years old at the time, began his descent toward murder with a bus ride." This is very clever foreshadowing: you *must* read on to see where

the line is crossed and an innocent child ends up a killer—but it isn't dramatic irony. There is no "if he'd known this was the day that..." or any hint of the narrator's regret or sarcasm, anything to show that the words spoken could change the character's life if they only knew about it.

How you use foreshadowing and dramatic irony will depend on which genre you write. A skillful use of these helps the reader to discern the stakes for the characters in a neater way than in ordinary narrative, or telling the reader how the character feels. It's a clever 'show' if you feel you've already told the reader enough information...or, better yet, if you don't *want* to tell any more information!

Lisa Chaplin has published 20 contemporary romances under a pseudonym, but the publication of *The Tide Watchers* marks her mainstream debut. Visit www.harpercollins.com/9780062379122/the-tide-watchers.



Hoot, Hoot! October 2015 OWL

The Dark Art of the Blurb with Ainslie Paton

With more and more authors choosing to self-publish or manage their returned backlists through self-publishing, and with some digital publishers asking for a first draft blurb along with a submission, the ability to craft a winning blurb has become more critical.

Join us in October as Ainslie shows the dark art of the blurb and how to make yours stand out in the crowd in a workshop to be delivered in three parts.

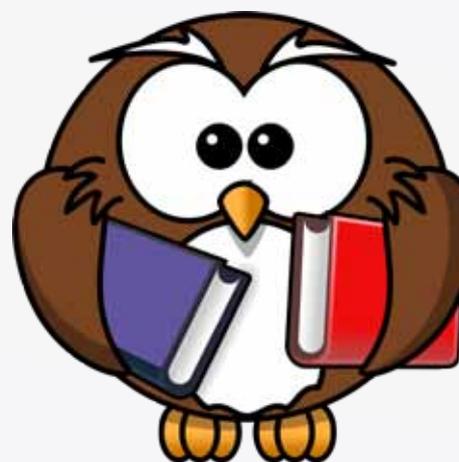
Course numbers are limited: with only 20 students, you will have the attention of the teacher to enable you to get the most out of the course.

Course Dates: 12 October 2015 – 1 November 2015

Cost: RWA Member – \$25. Non-RWA Member – \$35.

You can find out more at www.romanceaustralia.com/owl/14.

About the presenter: Ainslie Paton is a corporate storyteller working in marketing, public relations and advertising. She's written about everything from the African refugee crisis and Toxic Shock Syndrome, to high-speed data networks and hamburgers. She writes cracking, hyper-real romances and is self- and traditionally published.



How Do I Keep Going?

by Catherine Evans

I joined RWA in 2008 with a dream of a fast-track to publishing (and authorial) success. After a while, I realised I was more than a little deluded about how I slotted into this publishing game...becoming published wasn't going to be anywhere near that easy.

At my first conference, I met an inspiring lady who had her First Sale ribbon—after writing for 11 years! Then I met another who had been submitting for 20 years before becoming published. I began to wonder how people kept going when they weren't getting published. I knew I'd need tips.

People gave me their answers (e.g. Helen Lacey in *Hearts Talk* July 2009, Emerald Finalist, and again in January 2012, *The Writing Journey*; Fleur McDonald in *Hearts Talk* April 2014, *How Do I...?*), but I wanted something more. I wasn't sure what, but I think it was more definite answers and a stepping-stone pathway I could follow. One thing that stuck with me was something Nalini Singh said at a conference: 'Don't forget to enjoy the journey.' That resonated with me. When you're enjoying a hike it doesn't seem difficult, especially if there's a great bunch of hikers with you. I kept going, looking for ways to enjoy it, but I still wanted answers.

It's only recently that I've begun to realise how you keep going is different for everyone, which doesn't exactly help me with following those stepping stones! How you're motivated to keep going is strongly tied to your writing dreams, and dreams are personal. You have your own motivation for having that particular dream. You have your own way/s of achieving that dream, and you know what you can afford to give up/not give up to get there. So because all of that is personal, and if your life is like mine, it's also ever-changing, then the way you keep going while trying to achieve your dream also has to be personal, and maybe ever-changing.

So I asked a few friends, who also joined in 2008, if they were willing to share how they've kept going. I figured we'd all have different stories, which might illustrate my point.

Anita Joy

I guess I've never thought about what keeps me going before. But when I look back over what keeps me motivated when times are tough I found the following to be key:

- ♥ I began writing seriously over six years ago. Back then, while questioning my ability to become a 'real' writer, I entered my first contest with an entry I now cringe to read (truly the perfect guide of what not to do). I'm sure my judges had to force themselves to read those pages. Even so, one of them took the time and effort to couch their comments in the most positive way they possibly could. Thanks to that judge I began to believe in myself.

That feedback carried me for a long time!

- ♥ People talk about 'giving back' to RWA by volunteering, but I've always found it's a two-way street. I've had some great opportunities, met some amazing people and learnt heaps about our industry. But, more importantly, I have made lasting friendships and received unexpected words of encouragement and advice from people I respect and admire. True 'rays of sunshine', those words always give me a boost and motivate me to keep at it.
- ♥ I'm very lucky to have an amazing family who believe in me and my ability to make a career out of my writing. Without their support it would be very hard to keep going; they are my number one fans. Not wanting to disappoint them is a huge motivator!
- ♥ I also have some very special writing mates to travel this journey with. To have friends who get what you are going through, who are there to offer a shoulder no matter what the crisis or to help celebrate a success, makes a world of difference. I'm not travelling this path on my own.

These really do help to keep me going. The thing is, though, they are all external motivators and the reality is the most significant motivator of all is me: my internal, personal drive to be a successful author. I want writing to be my job more than anything and the only way that is going to happen is if I keep trying. The strongest driving force of all is your own determination. How badly do you want it?

I have two quotes stuck to my computer that sum it up perfectly:

Never give up! Never surrender! (Galaxy Quest)

The most painful thing to experience is not defeat but regret. (Leo Bascaglia)

Anita Joy (who one day will be published as AJ Blythe).

MG McClintock

I've always had a problem with backstory in my manuscripts and any writer will tell you, you need to start smack-bang in the middle of...well, something. So when I was asked the question, 'Why do I persist with writing?', I had to whittle down the reasons to find the core of what makes me story tell.

The answer? I have to. Whether driving, mopping, shopping or trying to fall asleep, no matter the rudimentary task, I'm always playing out a story in my head. The subconscious compulsion cannot be denied. And I love (sometimes hate when it's not going well) nothing more than sitting down and pursuing that story. The hard part is everything else that gets in the way. That's my backstory.

Some writers will say, if you really want it or if it is really important to you, you will make time for it. I think that is a fair and reasonable statement. I'm a very driven person, passionate and tenacious about achieving anything I put my mind to. But I'm also passionate about my husband, my family, my business... I'm equally passionate about the things that take me away from writing as I am about writing. So the question I think for me is not 'why?' I persist with writing, but 'how?'

What worked for me, was choosing a writing day and protecting it. Now, every Thursday, myself and a fellow writer meet and spend the entire day writing. We discuss plot issues, character traits, word counts etc. And just write. This isn't going to work for everybody and, obviously depending on your word count, can be a very slow way to finish a book. But like I said, writing is a compulsion. I have to write. And, yes, of course, my ego wants to see my book on a shelf one day, whether it be virtual or print.

Back to me, Catherine Evans

I always had a hazy, malformed writing dream. I really didn't know what genre I wanted to write (I read everything, so working out what you like to read didn't help). And then I wasn't sure how I wanted to write—which POV and tense—because what I wanted to do (first person, present tense) was opposite to what I kept being told (third person, past tense). Then I had a bit of a problem with my personality—meeting people and asking for help wasn't something I was comfortable with. But I had learned to do that for my day job, so I could do it.

With all that in mind, I hatched a wacky kind of plan. RWA has lots of volunteers and if you stick your hand up, someone grabs you. So I figured I'd volunteer in roles that might help me meet more experienced writers and get involved in learning the industry. I managed a contest and learned heaps reading entries and judges' comments, plus I 'met' fabulous authors who were judges ('met' in RWA terms is often only via email...but to me that was enough. When I later went to a conference, all the cyber-friends became real and I already 'knew' them!). Then I volunteered to help with *Hearts Talk* and then a conference organising team. These were the jobs where I really met people and learned about the industry. Wow! I did things (like chat normally to editors and famous authors) I would never do without those 'jobs'. And then I did an even stranger thing, and got published in a subgenre I hadn't considered writing early on, but I could write shorter stories in that subgenre and my plan was to learn there and put it into practice in my longer stories. Now I have a raunchy self and a tamer self. That wasn't part of the original dream... but, hey, I'm enjoying it.

I don't think I'd swap my journey for anything. It wasn't fast like I'd dreamed. I've shed tears and cursed a lot along the way, but I've grown, learned, toughened and found my tribe. And that's what's really kept me going—finding

somewhere I belong, with people who understand me.

It isn't easy to keep my dreams in focus. It's not easy to stay on my path. I often wish I could stray across to someone else's path, especially when they're snapped up with their first manuscript, win awards, publish prolifically, get great deals...but my path suits me, my dreams and I'm enjoying the meandering (most days anyway!).

While I was writing this article, it dawned on me that seven years isn't that long at all. So I asked another person for their tips, someone who knows about persistence and publishing.

Marion Lennox

After more than a hundred published romances, this is a fair question and I can give you some very solid replies.

I have:

- ♥ a great writing space
- ♥ a Support Husband and a Support Dog, with me every word of the way
- ♥ a publisher who continues to buy me
- ♥ a worldwide readership and fabulous feedback
- ♥ an amazing support network of writerly friends.

All of these are invaluable, and if I lost any one of them I may well crumble, but here's the biggest, the reason I write and will continue to write:

Disappearing into story is a joy.

One of my earliest and slightly embarrassing memories was being, far down underneath my bedclothes, a pirate. And I wasn't pretending. For me, right then, my story was real. So—and here's the embarrassing bit—when the pirate needed a wee, the pirate used the pirate loo on the pirate boat.

Whoops. Suddenly I was a little girl again and I was in BIG trouble. It seemed Story had come to a soggy end. But how could my punishment be fair? I was that pirate. I still remember the ghastly jerk back into reality, but the associated trauma hasn't stopped me disappearing into make-believe, over and over again.

So that's what keeps me going. I no longer furnish my pirate boats (or romances for that matter) with working loos, but I still disappear into my stories with joy. I hope I always will.

If you're struggling to keep going, I hope you can find some tips in this or the other similar articles. If you need help though, yell out. There are a lot of people waiting to give you a hand. That's what RWA is about. So give a shout (even if you're shy). I've found that everyone's more than willing to help...look at the people who've helped me with this article!

Catherine Evans will have a rural romance published in 2016, so stay tuned.

Wattpad Wonder

Ever thought about sharing a story via online writing community Wattpad? We asked veteran Sarah Gates the lowdown.

Sarah, how did you discover Wattpad, when did you dabble, and what made you do it?

I was 16 years old and I read about a book a night, sometimes more. My weekly trip to the local library just wasn't enough. So I turned to the internet and soon discovered Wattpad. I don't remember deciding to write a novel and then posting it on Facebook. I just remember the process of writing a 'chapter' every Sunday morning and posting it straight to Wattpad—no editing, embarrassingly.

What was your process for uploading the novel?

I posted chapter by chapter, although each chapter was only about 1000 words and by the end there were about 50 of them. This way I could build up readers quite organically and readers felt like they could influence the story, which they did! I ended up killing a character because he was unpopular—only after fixing his flaws and making them fall back in love with him, of course. It was a great way to learn about how readers respond to certain characters and plots and how to make my story a hit.

You had a staggering amount of views for your novel. Are there 'secrets' to getting more views?

My novel currently has 9.5 million reads, 65.2K votes—similar to a 'like' on Facebook—and 11.1K comments. I think posting regularly and chapter by chapter is best to build a readership. Also, interacting with readers is important. I started out by chatting to other readers and writers in forums until my views started building steadily without this time commitment. I would post questions about what readers thought about certain characters, twists or other features of a chapter, so readers could comment and discuss. This also helped me to adapt the book to what was popular.

The only other big 'secret' that I have is fairly obvious: quality. It's easy to stand out by having a great title (e.g. not a sentence-long title that describes the entire plot), a professional cover and a captivating blurb. My book was selected for the 'featured' section of the website, which boosted my views by millions. Others have done the same by being shortlisted or winning the annual Watty Awards. Once people start reading, voting and commenting on your work, it moves up in the 'what's hot' charts, which is how most users find their next read. So more people discover your book and it moves higher again. Before you know it, millions of people have read your book (not just registered users) and people are interacting with what you've written.

What did you get out of the experience? Any movie offers as yet?

I wrote my first book. With readers begging for the next instalment, I had to commit and write regularly. My confidence grew and I learned how to manipulate the readers'

emotions and perceptions—how to make them cry in sad scenes and laugh in others. Apart from the writing journey, I also decided to self-publish, and without spending any money or barely any time on marketing, it was a successful experiment. But, no, there have been no movie offers!

Are you an avid Wattpad reader? Have you discovered other writers this way? Do you find the format reader-friendly?

Not anymore. I discovered a few writers that publish on Wattpad exclusively or that have since self-published, but there's a lot of poor quality writing in terms of a lack of editing. I know I was guilty of it, but nowadays I find myself spotting a couple of errors in every traditionally published book I read and it drives me insane—let alone a whole book, full of them, on Wattpad! But occasionally I look over new completed works on Wattpad and find a gem.

I read on my tablet and it's easy and reader-friendly. You can search for new stories online and then read offline. The reading experience is just like any other ebook, except you have the option to interact if you'd like to drop a comment or even just a vote.

Can we be so rude as to ask how old you are? Is Wattpad well-known in your age group?

I'm now 21. It doesn't seem to be widely used by my age group in Adelaide, but more people know about it. I occasionally help out with the After School Teen Writers Club at SA Writers Centre though, and most of the 11-14 year olds that are part of that group use Wattpad to share their own writing.

Do you think getting stories for free in this way stops people from actually wanting to pay for books?

I think the type of people that use Wattpad and other sites to access free books are not going to want to pay for books. The demand is there and these sites are the supply—they're not



responsible for reader behaviour. People are going to find a way. I'd much prefer they flock to sites like Wattpad, where authors have elected to provide their work at no cost, than if they were to pirate.

That said, some readers are happy to then go and buy books they have enjoyed or buy books by authors they have grown to love. It's a hard balance. I took most of

my book off Wattpad, leaving the first 10 chapters as an excerpt when I self-published. I got a lot of backlash and still get angry messages from time to time. Some people feel they are entitled to my writing for free just because they want to read it. Others just don't have access to a credit card to pay online (especially if you're writing for a young audience, like I was). I think you just have to expect that.

www.sarahgates.com.au

A Wattpad Experience

Amy Andrews is a Wattpad newbie. She shares her experience with the site.

Amy, tell us what you've been busy doing on Wattpad lately, and who came up with the idea—you or your publisher, Tule?

I started a profile with Wattpad about eight months ago now. I was part of the *Café Nix* [book collaboration] authors from Escape who put up some material there, so I needed a profile. But then I started looking around Wattpad and it's an interesting place where a lot of books are being read by a lot of people, so what's not to like, right? I popped up a deleted scene from *No More Mr Nice Guy* (Entangled) as well and that was fun.

I noticed with all my poking around that serialisation was very popular there and it's something I've been wanting to experiment with and I figured serialising a new full-length novel might help expose me and my writing to a new readership. I wasn't sure if Tule would get on-board, but they were more than happy for me to dabble.

HT understands you posted the book up chapter by chapter. Was there much editing done beforehand? Did readers make any feedback that led you to tweak the manuscript?

My original plan was to post a chapter of *Some Girls Do* (Tule) every week for 14 weeks until it was complete, which would bring it right up to publication date. I would then pull all but the first few chapters and Tule would publish it a week later. But two things happened—I got impatient. The suspense was killing me, so I can only sympathise with readers who have to wait a whole week—eek! And I decided I wanted to have the complete work up there for longer before it was pulled. Give more people a chance to stumble across it.

As far as editing goes, the book had already been through two sets of edits so it was pretty clean. It has gone through one more since then, so there will be tweaks in the published book that weren't on Wattpad, but the emphasis is on tweaks. There was no feedback from readers about things that did or didn't work. I thought there might be. Would have liked some, to be honest. There's quite an age gap between the hero and heroine and I thought readers might comment about that but it seems they haven't minded (if lack of comment is anything to go by), so I guess that's an answer in and of itself. And of course, it's early days yet.

Do you think allowing people to read the entire book on

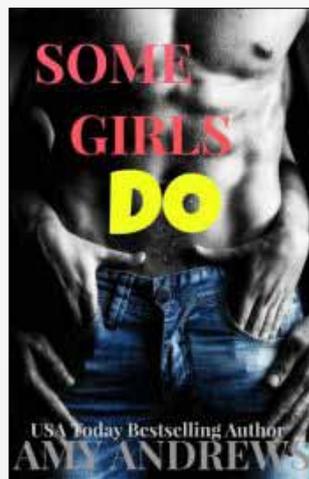
Wattpad might deter them from actually buying it?

The thing with Wattpad is that it skews really young. So the majority of the readers are way too young for credit cards. So, no, in a nutshell I don't think it deters because, honestly, the demographic aren't buyers anyway. BUT, they WILL be. One day.

I look at it like me hoovering up all my mother's Mills & Boons when I was 11 and 12. They got me hooked, which turned me into a paying consumer when I could afford it, and hopefully it'll be my name they'll remember. I think it won't deter die-hard Amy fans, though, and even if it does, *Some Girls Do* is the first book in a [multi-author] series. So whilst I may lose out on first book sales hopefully the others (which are coming out in quick succession) will have a ready-made readership.

How'd you find the Wattpad experience and would you do it again?

My Wattpad experience with *Some Girls Do* is really still ongoing. It'll be interesting to assess it all when the book is pulled and then published to see the end-result. I would definitely do it again. It's a very easy-to-use site, and if you have the app, they have this really neat feature called 'quote art'. You can grab a quote from any book you're reading on Wattpad and turn it into a meme (attributed to the book, author and Wattpad) to post onto your Instagram/Twitter/Tumblr/Facebook etc. feed. I've also found their support really fabulous. www.amyandrews.com.au



Marketing Questions Answered

by Sara Hood

QA I'm told that you have to advertise now to reach your fans on Facebook. That seems so unfair. Is it true?

– Alison from Melbourne

Good question and one that's regularly framed in the inverse form: that ***** Facebook is now restricting the number of my fans who get to see my posts to make me advertise!

So first point: Facebook is not a charity. It's a business. You can't advertise in a newspaper without paying for it, so why should Facebook give you free promo?

Second point: Except they do!

There is so much to say about how the Facebook algorithm works, this question is answered across two months. The main thing, though, is to rest assured that, yes, Facebook wants your money, but, no, you don't have to pay them to make the platform work for you.

I run a number of Facebook business pages and they are all growing. Some pages advertise sometimes. Some have never advertised. Facebook success can be achieved without paying, it's just slower.

Facebook as a business

Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook, has said that he would build Facebook to a billion accounts and then he would commercialise it, and that's what he's done. We got to use it largely for free as it built to a billion, now it's around 1.2 billion and as promised it's being commercialised. That doesn't mean the free ride is over, but it does mean paying is now much more front and centre. I stress though, you can continue to build a great Facebook business page without advertising. The caveat is that you must be prepared to put in the effort, both to learn and then implement what you've learned.

The keys to doing well on Facebook are:

- ♥ Understanding how the algorithm works that drives Facebook and why it works like that (this month)
- ♥ Understanding what your fans enjoy and why it's important to give them what they like (next month)
- ♥ Understanding when the best time is to post that content for your fans (next month)

How does the algorithm work?

Facebook data shows that, on average, any individual could get to see 1500 posts a day. Think about the maths: that means each post would be at the top of anyone's newsfeed for about a nanosecond. Instead Facebook delivers around 300 to 350 posts to each person per day and each post has

an average life of around three hours. (BTW, we all know where averages come from, and I have posts that continue to grow days and even weeks after they were first posted. I also have posts that died in the first hour.) As a marketer, do you want a shot at appearing for a nanosecond or for appearing for an average of three hours?

How does Facebook pick those posts?

They pick them based on a complex and very confidential algorithm that is believed to have at least 100,000 different elements. What we do know is:

1. The more people engage with a story (that is they like, comment and share it), the wider it will be spread.
2. If someone engaged with your last post then it is more likely that your next post will turn up on their newsfeed.
3. If your Facebook friends engage with a post, there is a presumption that you will also find it interesting, so the algorithm may send that to your newsfeed, too.
4. How quickly people respond to a post matters. A speedy response means the story will be spread to a wider community
5. Some words will affect how widely the post is spread. Words that indicate the post is sales-y or 'overly promotional' will reduce the reach.

These five points aren't fool-proof and very simplified, but they're a good place to start.

How can my post be the one the algorithm picks?

That's the billion-dollar question and it will be covered in more depth next month. In the meantime: you need to post stuff that your fans want to read and want to engage with, not what you fancy posting.

You need to post consistently and you need to choose what time of day to post. You don't post when you think of it, have the time or are in the mood.

Next month we'll outline what types of stories to post and how to pick a good time to do it, how to track and improve, and how to keep your time commitment to the minimum but still get good results.

Have a marketing question? Send it through to sara@marketing4writers.net. Sara Hood has more than 30 years' experience in marketing and marketing communications. Find her at www.marketing4writers.net.



Vanilla vs Exotic Love Scenes

Moderated by Laura Greaves

Are you a fan of the one-girl-one-guy 'standard', or do you prefer to read about more exotic sexcapades? This month's *Great Debate* visits both ends of the hanky-panky spectrum.

VANILLA

Ebony McKenna writes the *Ondine* series about a girl whose pet ferret, Shambles, starts talking in a Scottish accent. Shambles is really Hamish McPhee, a handsome lad living in reduced circumstances. Book four, *The Spring Revolution*, is her August release. She presented the *Working With Scene Cards* workshop at this year's RWA conference. Find out more at www.ebonymckenna.com.

"I sure do have a dirty mind, but when it comes to writing love scenes for my young adult audience, the words on the page are sweet and innocent all the way. (Although there is wiggle room for innuendo, because sometimes it's fun to see what I can get away with.)

My audience is clever and young; they can read between the lines. They know that when Ondine is sneaking in kisses with her beloved Hamish, there's a thrilling sense they could be 'sprung' at any moment, so they can't let things go too far.

I adore reading and writing kissing scenes; taking that thrilling first step into the world of trusting another with your heart. Nerves are on edge as the couple open themselves up to possibilities.

Raunchier stuff won't fit the fun tone of the books, and to be honest, Ondine and Hamish aren't ready for that kind of intensity. At some point they will take things to the next level. This is a love for the ages—they're going to have plenty of loving and children in the future.

For those published in paper format, a sweet tone for intimate scenes and language means less resistance from parents or librarians (both school and public) stocking the books or recommending them to potential readers. It's all about entertaining the audience, not shocking them.

There are plenty of books that go into far more sexy detail, and I love reading them. Oh, yes indeed! My readers probably do too, and that's fine by me. When they want sexy times, they go to another writer, when they want magical swooning, they come to me."



EXOTIC

Elle Carmichael is the author of the *Spin Me Round* LGBT/erotic short story series. Books 1-4 are out now. Find Elle on Facebook as 'Elle Carmichael Author'.

"Why do I love writing more 'exotic' love scenes? And why do I think it's important that this end of the sexual spectrum is represented in the romance genre?

With the recent spotlight on gay marriage, I think these stories need to be written. I enjoy writing about unique individuals whose sexual appetites differ from the usual M/F romance and 'vanilla' sex scenes.

Life is about choices. Our world is made up of beautiful, unique people. We all have a right to express ourselves in our appearance and fashion, our interests, and all that makes us unique and happy in our own bodies. So why not sex?

People can be reluctant to accept change and often frown upon individuals who look or behave 'differently', but much like the hype surrounding the television series, *Orange is the New Black*, which features same-sex relationships and love scenes, 'different' is the new black. There is something exciting in reading and writing about unique individuals and their not-so-vanilla ways.

Ménage, M/M and F/F romances offer the reader an alternative. Fiction is about removing ourselves from reality and transporting us to a different world—a fantasy world. A world that excites us, challenges our beliefs, and makes us think.

Fifty Shades of Grey has educated many readers who generally would never have picked up a romance featuring BDSM, but BDSM is just another 'flavour'. Sex toys are a spice, and they're a condiment readers are now enjoying in a romance story!

At the end of the day, what keeps us turning the page is the emotion we feel for a character. Whether that character is gay or straight, we need to care what happens to them in the end. We want them to find the happiness they deserve. I believe everyone is equal and LGBT/erotic romances should be represented, and enjoyed by all readers."



Laura Greaves is the author of *The Ex-Factor* and *Be My Baby* (Destiny Romance). Visit www.lauragreaves.com.

RWA Notices

RWA Committee 2015/16

President – Leisl Leighton
Vice-president – Daniel de Lorne
Treasurer – Alison Leake
Secretary/Volunteers – Sue Cole
Events – Sarah Brabazon
Member Services – Vicki Vuat
Personal Development/Contests – Susan Downham
Public Relations – Imogene Nix
Social Media – Imelda Evans
Website – Lana Pecherczyk
General Committee – Helen Katsinis

Ain't Love Grand – Conference 2016

Next year marks our 25th anniversary and we celebrate this by holding our first ever conference in Adelaide.

Ain't Love Grand will be held from 19–21 August 2016 at the newly renovated Stamford Grand. South Australia offers many tourism opportunities that we know will lure big names to celebrate our remarkable anniversary.

As an additional bonus, we have partnered with Flinders University of South Australia to deliver an academic stream.

More details will be announced as they come to hand but we look forward to seeing you in Adelaide to celebrate our 25th anniversary. Save the date now!

Members' Assistance Fund 2015

MAF 2015 received applications from nine members, all requesting assistance to enable them to attend RWA's *Get Fresh in '15* conference.

The high number of applicants made the selection panel's task very difficult.

Unfortunately it was not possible to assist all applicants who qualified as members in need. The panel chose to assist three members, providing each with money towards core conference, travel and shared accommodation.

The successful applicants have been active members of RWA in various volunteer roles, and all have been through significant hardships in the past year/s due to health/home situations. The assistance provided meant the difference between attending and not attending conference.

Several other strong applications were considered but the

panel's choices were limited by the size of the fund. Put simply, funds did not stretch far enough to help every deserving member.

If you would like to help a member going through tough times get to conference in 2016, please consider contributing to the fund. Details can be found in the member's section of the website or add a donation to your next membership renewal.

Bronwyn Turner, MAF Manager 2015

Join The RWA Team

There's never been a better time to join the RWA team of volunteers than right now.

Positions up for grabs include:

- ♥ Established Author Ambassador
- ♥ Face-To-Face Group Liaison
- ♥ New Member Liaison
- ♥ OWLs Registrar

For more information please contact Sue at volunteers@romanceaustralia.com

Hearts Talk Subscriptions

As mentioned in previous issues of *Hearts Talk*, the magazine will soon become a digital-first publication.

On 1 November 2015, those members who currently receive a paper copy of *Hearts Talk* will be automatically switched to receiving a digital version only. If you would like to continue receiving a paper copy of *Hearts Talk*, you will need to email the RWA administration assistant at admin@romanceaustralia.com after 1 September 2015, who will then issue you with an invoice (Australia-based members only). A year's subscription to *Hearts Talk* costs \$25.

Depending on when your RWA membership is due for renewal, the invoice may be for more or less than \$25. For example, if you have three months remaining on your membership, you will receive an invoice for a three-month subscription (\$6.25). When you renew your membership, you can choose to add a paper subscription.

The full-colour and hyperlinked digital version of *Hearts Talk* remains free and sent to your inbox on the first of every month.



Macquarie Dictionary, Australia's national dictionary, is giving all readers of *Hearts Talk* a 10% discount off an individual dictionary and thesaurus subscription. With annual updates and access to over 210,000 definitions, you'll find the right word every time. To redeem this offer, go to www.macquariedictionary.com.au/freeaccess and enter code **MQ10ROM2015**. Offer ends 30 September 15.

Fine Print Critique Group Scores RWA Funding

by Claire Boston

Applying for a Grant

Many in my critique group are at the same stage in the writing process—we're emerging authors and are looking to increase our discoverability. That led us to look for a marketing course, but we couldn't find anything local or in the first half of the year. Then we saw the RWA Group Grants notification and decided to apply.

First we hunted for a presenter. Checking out the Australian Society of Authors website, we found Glennys Marsdon, who was a local and often did this kind of workshop. An email later and she had agreed to put together a course to our specific needs.

We then found a location at the State Library of WA. In WA we have a great network of romance writers who often meet for brunch, so we sent them all an email to see who else was interested in participating in the workshop. The room held 16 people and our critique group was only five. We figured the more RWA members that could take advantage of the grant, the higher our chance of getting it!

It didn't take long to get a full list of names (even some newbies to RWA), and with the quotes in, we applied for the grant. It's actually quite an easy process. We had a course outline to describe the project and it benefited many RWA members because we'd invited other critique groups to take part.

The Event

The course started at 10am, and after a brief introduction from the presenter and the participants, Glennys took us through the basics of author branding and how to find your unique selling point.

After a short lunch break, Glennys did a brief analysis of all the participants' online presences, suggesting potential changes. It was a little confronting to realise she'd researched all of us, but it was fantastic to see how someone else perceived our websites and social media sites. Many of the participants went home and made changes that night! Glennys then spoke about marketing, focusing on target market, place, positioning, price and promotion. There was a lot of opportunity for discussion with participants offering suggestions for each other and brainstorming ideas to help with promotion.

Finally, Glennys covered the essential marketing toolkit and what could be done to improve what we currently have. At the end of the day, we were all reeling with new ideas and potential markets that we hadn't tapped. We'd like to thank RWA for giving us the opportunity to hold this workshop. It was an excellent experience and I highly recommend others to apply for the grant next year.



Top to bottom: Ready to begin – a photo of all participants; presenter Glennys Marsdon; an example of some of the authors' promo material.

Claire Boston is the author of the best-selling *Texan Quartet* series. She can be found on Twitter, @clairebauthor, or via her website, www.claireboston.com.



On The Couch with Patricia McLinn

This *USA Today* bestselling author, who has 30-plus award-winning novels under her belt, was a keynote speaker at our Melbourne conference. We chatted about the industry and what's coming up for her.

Patricia, how would you describe the state of the romance fiction industry today. Would you say it's harder to be a writer, or easier?

There's writing and there's being published—two entirely different endeavors that not infrequently clash.

Being a *writer* is so personal and internal that it ebbs and flows with the individual. I want to emphasise that writing for the pleasure of creation without pursuing publishing is a worthy (and sane!) pursuit. Don't let anyone force you towards publishing if that's not what you want. I do think that indie publishing has opened more paths for writers to reach readers, and that relieves some of the pressure to conform to what publishing's salaried professionals believe will sell to a broad audience. That's a great positive in my view.

The romance publishing industry is in a glorious, messy, scary-for-some upheaval. The traditional publishing model can work wonderfully for authors whose stories mesh with the needs of that model, and that's terrific. What's new is that authors—and readers—who don't fit in that model can find each other through the indie publishing model.

The cycle of industries that have been disrupted by innovation (indie, in the recent case of publishing) says that the current fluidity will gel over time—we're already seeing some of that. But don't get too comfortable—I predict we'll see more waves of disruptive innovation and at an accelerating rate.

So being adaptable and alert to changes are vital attributes for writers who want to publish. But for many of us, to get the writing done, we also need to be able to shut the door on the noise of all that change (whether you find it exciting or scary or both) in order to hear the characters living in our heads.

You've written more than 25 romance, women's fiction, and mystery novels. What have been the biggest industry changes you've seen since starting out?

When I started there was a sense from the then-veterans that an era of innovation was winding down. I caught the tail-end of that—my first book's hero was a basketball coach, something that became taboo a few years later. As romance publishing 'matured', there seemed to be ever narrower beliefs about what readers would accept. And these beliefs excluded the possibility of expanding the readership.

One of the terrific effects of indie publishing and the proliferation of sustainable niche readerships is that readers

who never thought they'd read romance are introduced to it through a niche interest, then explore far beyond that niche into other areas of romance. So we're back into an era of innovation, and I'm delighted to be right in the middle of it now. This is fun!

Top tip/s for writers starting out?

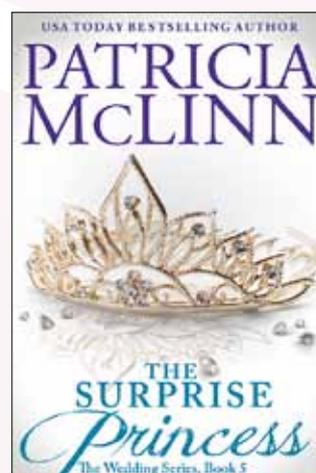
Do what you love. That is the only way you're guaranteed of writing something that at least one person loves—you. Think about it this way, if you write something you're only so-so about and it succeeds, you will forevermore have readers (and editors) expecting you to be *that* writer. Writing is too personal to risk being sentenced to being anything other than what you are and what you want to be.

What other exciting projects are in the pipeline for you in 2015?

I'm working on a novella in the *Wyoming Wildflowers* series called *A Wyoming Wildflowers Wedding*. Also the next book in *The Wedding Series*, called *The Forgotten Prince*, which follows recently-released *The Surprise Princess*.

After that, I run out of titles, but not projects. There's another *Wyoming Wildflowers* novella in connection with an exciting project I'm working on with a crew of writing buddies that I'd be shot for talking about yet. Book 5 in the *Caught Dead in Wyoming* series will be out in 2016 (and I hope the audiobooks of Books 3 and 4 will be out in late 2015). Another mystery series is in the works, more stories for the *A Place Called Home* and *Bardville, Wyoming* series, a romantic suspense trilogy, and a seven-part series of historical connected to Wyoming's past. May I request a workshop on a no-fail, five-minute method of learning to write 10 times your current speed?

www.patriciamclinn.com



RWA Celebrates its 1001st Member

Romance Writers of Australia's membership continues to steadily climb upwards. Secretary Diane Curran reflects on the organisation's growth.

"At 30 June 2010 RWA had a total of 718 members. In the ensuing years since I took over as Member Secretary in August 2010, we have created the electronic database for our members, automated renewal emails and semi-automated payment receipts (thanks Kerrie Ptolemy). This has made it easier for our members to renew and update their own contact details.

"On 29 May 2015, we celebrated reaching the milestone of 1000 members for the very first time. In five years we have had a 39 per cent increase in our membership. It is clear that we have a strong internet presence through our website, blog and social media as this brings a total of 50 per cent of our new members to RWA. Existing members also talk us up with 21 per cent of new members hearing about us from an existing RWA member. I am very proud to have contributed to the continued growth of Romance Writers of Australia."

Hearts Talk also spoke to RWA's 1001st member, Sharon Burke:

Sharon, how do you feel about being our super-duper 1001st member?

I feel delighted, honoured and a little bit guilty! I was a member of RWA over 10 years ago, left the organisation when 'life got in the way', and just applied to re-join. How did I manage to become member number 1001? I am excited to have re-joined such a professional, inspiring organisation.

What made you join Romance Writers of Australia to begin with?

I originally discovered RWA while reading a book for romance writers by Valerie Parv. I had been a keen reader of romance for many years, and was inspired to join. What a great decision! The years that followed were filled with learning, personal growth, fun and laughter. RWA is a great organisation. More specifically, and in no particular order, I should mention some elements of RWA that gave me such a good experience last time: *Hearts Talk*, the wonderful conferences, inspiring seminars, and of course, my membership of the writers' group. This time around I am excited to re-join RWA to learn more about my craft and to have the chance to grow as a writer.

Are you a member of any other writers' organisations or critique groups?

I was a member of Breathless in the Bush. I am currently investigating the possibility of joining writers' groups within RWA and within the Fellowship of Australian Writers. Ideally, I would like to join groups within both organisations.

How long have you been writing for and what stage are you at?

It is 10 years since I have written romance, but I have remained an avid reader. Many years ago, I completed a manuscript and entered it in the Emma Darcy Award contest and first chapter competitions. I had a short story published in an anthology produced by the University of New England students' union. My other publications include non-fiction articles, and high school chemistry textbooks. I am aiming to learn to write effectively about chemistry of a different kind! As far as romance writing is concerned, I am a hopeful 'newbie' with a great deal to learn.

What do you do when you're not writing?

I read, go to the theatre in Sydney with my sister and in Wollongong with my husband, teach chemistry full-time, commute, and spend time with my family.

What is your writing goal this year?

In the next 12 months, I'd like to be published in romantic short stories and non-fiction articles. I'd also like to begin researching an idea I have for a historical romance.



Ripping Start Contest

The Ripping Start is for the first 1,500 words of an unpublished 10K+ romance or romantic elements manuscript (novel or novella) plus a mini synopsis (300 words). Opens **7 September**. Closes **21 September**.

Find out more at www.romanceaustralia.com/p/113/Ripping-Start.

Anne Gracie here. Dust off your Blundies, the *Writer's Life* column is going ru-ro with Rachael Johns whose first rural romance came out in 2011. Since then she's shot to bestselling stardom in Australia. Rach describes her writing journey and generously shares with us the fruits of her experience. Rachael's website is www.rachaeljohns.com.

Can you have your cake and eat it too?

by Rachael Johns

Since selling my first book in late 2011, I have had a rather blessed career. My first print book, *Jilted*, sold exceptionally well for a debut author. It won the Australian Romance Readers' Favourite Contemporary Romance award in 2012 and got me listed in the top 10 in Booktopia's favourite Aussie authors poll in 2013. I've now published six print books in Australia and a number of digital novellas, with my eighth print book due out this month.

I'm lucky that all these books have had fabulous covers and great marketing and promo behind them and each book has sold better than the last, which is exactly what we as authors want. My print runs are now in excess of 25,000 copies and my books are printed in B-format a few months following trade publication. I have a strong following of readers on Facebook and am invited to do bookshop signings and events right across Australia.

Yet, when it comes to an overseas market, mine is a different story. International publishers weren't keen to try an Australia-set story, citing that readers favoured US settings. Although I had a number of actual readers telling me differently and wanting to read my books, I was met with one closed door after another from overseas publishers. They simply weren't willing to risk a single-title, Australia-set romance.

Then three years after *Jilted* sold in Australia, I finally sold the overseas English-language rights. It was released in print and digital in the US and digital in the UK. I was given a gorgeous cover with a beautiful bride that screamed contemporary romance, which we all know is a very popular market. Despite the lovely cover and the fact that I was published by the world's number one romance publisher, this book flopped in the US market. I think mostly this was because it didn't get into Walmart and was given very little promotion, but whatever the reason, it has made me think long and hard about the various world markets.

While a number of Aussie authors are bestsellers overseas, I've noticed that the majority of these authors write books that are not set Down Under. A friend of mine was struggling to sell overseas until she stopped setting her books in New Zealand and set them in the States. The story was in essence still the same, but the location had changed. These overseas-set romances may be read by Australians but they are generally not in the mainstream shops here (Big W, Kmart, Target). The readership of these Australian authors appears to be primarily overseas, but they are not necessarily well-known on their home turf.

In contrast, there are many Australian authors who

are bestsellers in Australia, displayed well in our main booksellers and given good media attention, but like me, are either not published overseas or are not well-known in these markets. While a few Aussie rural romance authors have sold into Germany, none have had much success in other territories outside Australia.

Of course, there are exceptions to my experience, Aussie authors who set their books Down Under and are bestsellers in Australia and overseas. Liane Moriarty and Graeme Simsion to name a couple. But my belief is that for the majority of us, it is an either OR situation—do well in your own backyard OR do well overseas.

For this reason, I want to encourage new and aspiring writers to think about WHERE you want to see your books published and take this into account when choosing settings, spelling, and which publishers to target. Do you see your books appealing to a US market, a UK market or primarily an Australian market? And also target agents accordingly—if you want to sell into the US, I would advise a US agent over an Aussie one.

In theory, the US is a much bigger market but there are also a lot more authors published there. Whereas Australia has a smaller population, we also have a number of publishers hungry for good Aussie fiction and there is something to be said for living in the same country as your major market. It is much easier for me to promote my books in Australia face-to-face with readers than it would be overseas.

While I have not given up on the overseas market, I'm making a good living in Australia and that is where I put the majority of my efforts. Saying that, a US or UK sale would always be the icing on the cake!



Member News and Events

Kaye Dobbie has signed another two-book contract with Harlequin Mira Australia. The books will be similar to *Colours of Gold* and *Sweet Wattle Creek*.

Diane Demetre's first erotic romance, *Dancing Queen*, the first book in her *Dance of Love* trilogy, has been offered a worldwide publishing contract with Luminosity Publishing in the UK. Having only joined RWA last year and attended the 2014 conference as a rookie, she is thrilled to have been offered publishing contracts from two different publishers within only weeks of submission. Diane chose Luminosity Publishing as many RWA authors hold them in high repute. *Dancing Queen* is scheduled for digital release in September followed by POD release in October. Details can be found at www.dianedemetre.com.

Carolyn Wren recently had some exciting news to share. "A couple of years ago, I wrote a quirky little story, quite different to my normal stuff. Life, publishing commitments and a house fire (!) got in the way and the story got shelved. Recently I dusted it off and decided to test the waters in a contest for uncontracted manuscripts [the TARA, run by Tampa Area Romance Authors]. I'm a finalist [in the 'paranormal' category]! How cool is that? Apparently my quirky little modern-day fairy-tale has possibilities..."

This is my fifth contest final, resulting in two wins so far, [RWA's] Emerald and Ella. Sometimes I still have to pinch myself, LOL." More at: www.tararwa.com/tara-contest-finalists/.

EVENTS

Australian Society of Authors – Special Series: Valerie Parv AM

Saturday, 17 October, 10am-4pm

Sydney, NSW

When worlds collide

Romantic elements, if well used, can add emotional depth and give further dimension to your characters when they're not saving worlds. The added conflict and emotion can also broaden your audience beyond readers of traditional speculative fiction. Valerie Parv AM is one of Australia's most successful authors, with more than 29 million copies of her books sold, translated into 26 languages and now available as eBooks. She first combined romance and speculative fiction in *The Leopard Tree* (1987), where the hero might have arrived by UFO.

Cost: ASA member \$170, member of a partner organisation \$210, full cost \$260.

Bookings: www.asauthors.org/event/14450/special-series-valerie-parv-am

Send your news to htgoodnews@romanceaustralia.com.

Market News

SUBMISSIONS

Thanks to Cindi Myers Market News's Blog:

ScreaminMamas is holding a Valentine's Day Fiction contest. Submit your light romantic comedy—historical or contemporary—of 800 to 2000 words featuring a romance that might be found in the everyday life of a mum. The deadline is midnight, 30 September. Get the details here: www.screaminmamas.com/contests.html.

Forever Yours, the digital-first romance imprint of Grand Central Publishing, accepts manuscript submissions from both agented and un-agented authors. Submit your novella (12,000 to 35,000 words) or novel-length (35,000 to 100,000 words) manuscript in any romance subgenre. Forever Yours pays 25% royalties, paid quarterly. For more details: labs.hbgusa.com/web/forever-romance/submission-guidelines.html.

Boroughs Publishing Group publishes digital titles in all subgenres of romance—historical, contemporary, fantasy, paranormal, romantic suspense, urban fantasy, multicultural, and young adult. The editors accept 30,000 to 40,000-word novellas and 70,000 to 120,000-word novels. Guidelines: boroughspublishinggroup.com/submit.

Avon has issued a call for submissions for its Impulse imprint. Avon Impulse publishes a variety of romance subgenres in digital-first format. Since its debut in 2011, Avon Impulse has expanded to publish four to eight titles a month, with over three dozen Impulse releases hitting bestseller lists over the years. The editors are currently interested in acquiring romantic suspense, contemporary trilogies, historical romance with a strong hook, and super-sexy contemporary romance. Authors for Avon Impulse receive 25% royalties up to the first 10,000 copies sold, and 50% royalties for all sales after 10,000 copies. Avon Impulse accepts both agented and un-agented submissions. Guidelines: avonromance.com/impulse.

From Brian Grove's My Perfect Pitch:

A lot of writers assume you need to be represented by a literary agent in order to submit work to **Mills & Boon**. This isn't true. It has an open submissions policy for all romance genre authors, you don't need an agent. Mills & Boon has separate guidelines for each of its many romance series. It pays an average first advance of \$3600. Details: myperfectpitch.com/book-publishers-uk-ireland/mills-boon/.

NEW RELEASES SEPTEMBER 2015



At the Earl's Convenience
Maggi Andersen
Indie Published



Bidding on Her Boss
Rachel Bailey
Harlequin Desire



Discovering Stella
K.M. Golland
Harlequin MIRA



Double Take
Kendall Talbot
Harlequin Mira



Exhibition
Nicolette Hugo
Momentum



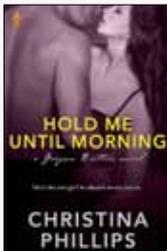
Fire Me Up
Rachael Johns
Loveswept



Heat Wave
Kate J. Squires
Escape Publishing



His Daring Moves
Rhian Cahill
Kindle Worlds



Hold Me Until Morning
Christina Phillips
Entangled



Honour and Virtue
Anne Gracie
Mills & Boon Special Releases



Kissed by Water: The Watchtower Chronicles 3
Delwyn Jenkins
Momentum



Lethal in Love - 4
Michelle Somers
Penguin Random House



Lethal in Love - 5
Michelle Somers
Penguin Random House



Lethal in Love - 6
Michelle Somers
Penguin Random House



Marriage Made in Shame
Sophia James
HMB Historical



Master of Her Heart
Lindsay Armstrong
HMB By Request



Not Vanilla (Spanking)
Jennifer Lynne
Indie Published



Nothing But The Best
Margaret Sutherland
Indie Published



Outback Calling
Lindsay Armstrong
Harlequin MIRA



Out of Time
Shona Husk
Escape Publishing



Perfect Three
Suzy Shearer
Siren Bookstrand



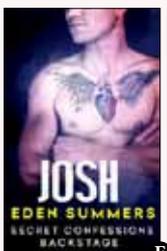
Reunited By a Baby Secret
Michelle Douglas
HMB Forever Romance



Reunited... In Paris!
Sue Mackay
HMB Medical



Secret Confessions: Backstage - Chase
K.M. Golland
Escape Publishing



Secret Confessions: Backstage - Josh
Eden Summers
Escape Publishing



Selling the Drama
Theresa Smith
Smashwords



Sweet Wattle Creek
Kaye Dobbie
Harlequin Mira



The Arrangement
Nicolette Hugo
Momentum



The Bound Heart
Elsa Holland
Indie Published



The Maker - Munro Family Series
Chris Taylor
LCT Productions



The King's Man
Alison Stuart
Escape Publishing



The Patterson Girls
Rachael Johns
Harlequin Australia



The Trouble with Natalie
Joanie MacNeil
Books We Love Ltd



Twin Flames
Cassandra L. Shaw
Black Opal Books



Wanted: An Outback Lover
Marion Lennox
Mills & Boon Special Releases



You're The One
Angela Verdenius
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