



Awards Dinner, Hot August Nights, BRISBANE

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Roxanne St. Claire

Roxanne St. Claire has been writing romance since 2003 when her first romantic suspense, *Tropical Getaway*, was released from Pocket Books. Since then, she's written a total of 24 books—12 single titles, 10 category romances, 2 novellas—which have collected 4 RITA nominations and 1 fabulous RITA win, plus many, many other awards, including 2 National Readers Choice Awards for best romantic suspense, the Daphne Du Maurier for romantic suspense, the Booksellers Best, Bookbuyers Best, and Borders "Top Pick" for 2007.

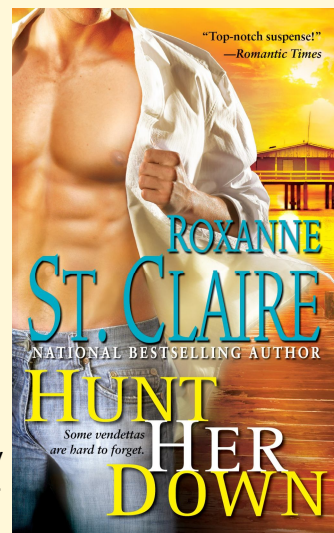
After giving up a career in public relations, Roxanne is now firmly entrenched in the life of a fulltime writer. She lives in Florida with her husband, two children, and an Australian (yeah!) Terrier named Pepper. Info, excerpts, free books and pictures of smokin' hot guys can be found at her equally smokin' website www.roxannestclaire.com.

Welcome, Rocki.

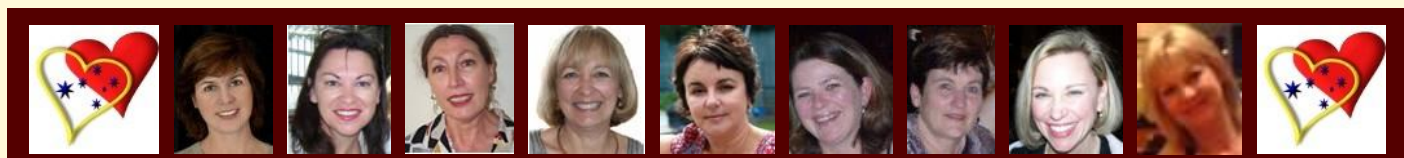
Thank you for inviting me to interview. I'm so happy to get a chance to reach out to my friends and readers "down under."

Firstly, let me congratulate you on your successes, especially with the Bullet Catchers series which readers have really taken to heart. How did the series come about? Was there a specific inspiration?

Thank you so much. I've really enjoyed writing the Bullet Catchers series! My first three romantic suspense novels were stand alone and unconnected, as I was never a huge fan of connected books as a reader. I felt it was asking a lot to expect a reader to be "up to speed" on the characters and what happened before, and I'm one of those people who won't watch a movie if I've missed five minutes, so when I read a book in a series, I'm constantly wondering what I've missed.



Continued on page 6



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For unpublished members. Priority given to those challenged by distance or unable to access creative support by other means. Register for a one-off critique of either 1 or 3 chapters by a published author / advanced unpublished writer.
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NATIONAL CONFERENCE

For all current details and registration forms see www.romanceaustralia.com

CONTESTS

All deadlines, entry forms and sample score sheets are at www.romanceaustralia.com in the members only section (you will need a password), or in the Files section of the RWA Contest Alert yahoo group.
contests@romanceaustralia.com

To obtain contest entry forms via mail, send your request with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: RWA Contests, 20 Waller Crescent, Campbell ACT 2612

To join Contest Alert, RWA's email alert for contest entrants, go to au.groups.yahoo.com/group/RWAContestAlert/ click on the 'join this group' in the right hand corner and follow the instructions.

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To gain access to our members only section: email *passwords@romanceaustralia.com*

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Heading for the finish

It's 5:30am Monday morning after conference and I'm a wee bit spent. Wrung out. Busted. Estimated hours of sleep over the last 72 hours? 12. Estimated hours of worry that something conferencey might come unstuck? 60. Did anything actually come unstuck? No. The divine and capable Brisbane conference committee of Alison Ahearn, Meredith Webber, Lisa Barry, Denise Rossetti and Louise Ousby saw to that. I really should have slept more.

It's the final chapter of a short category romance and the hero and heroine have earned their happy ending. They're together at last, their future assured. As writer, witness and orchestrator of every step of their emotional journey I'm a wee bit spent. Wrung out. Exhausted.

I'm seeing some similarities between the two processes. There's the putting yourself out there knowing there'll be feedback and consequences (scary, very scary). There's the ups and downs – both internal and external. There's the work involved – writing for a living isn't easy, and as for anyone who's ever served in a Prez capacity... let's just say that this past year has ensured a whole new level of appreciation for the subtleties of management.

And yet... whether it be the end of a book or the end of serving on a committee, there comes a feeling of achievement. Of seeing something through. Of nurturing something and watching it grow. I started my adult working career as an agronomist – I do love to see things grow.

This past year, RWA acquired 158 new members. Our current overall membership is somewhere around the 710 mark. We've grown our RBV awards, our member services, our management structures and our volunteer base. For a more detailed account of this past year's doings see our AGM reports – they're in the members section of our website.

But back to the end of some things and the beginning of others. After five years in various committee roles, I'm stepping down from cte, along with Andrea Fuller, Judy McLeod, and Anna Cleary. Romaus list moderator Tina Clarke is also stepping down after three years in the role. On behalf of RWA I'd like to thank them for their many hours of toil on RWA's behalf.

Alison Ahearn (Amy Andrews) is stepping into the President's role. Louise Reynolds steps into the Senior Vice President's role as well as continuing on in her capacity as RBV comp co-ordinator. Rachel Bailey remains Second Vice President and HT editor. Bronwyn Jameson is taking on the Treasurer's position. AJ Macpherson steps into the newly created member secretary/registrar position. Robyn Grady takes on minute secretary duties. Our general executive members are Lis Hoorweg (running the competitions portfolio), Kiki Opdenburg (running website services), Rowena Corey Lindquist, Wendy

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Kelly Hunter hands over her wisdom to incoming president Alison Ahearn, watched over by the Ghost of Presidents Past.

Nichols and Diane Curran. Annie West joins us as Published Author Liaison. Cathleen Ross and Kandy Shepherd join us as our 2010 Sydney conference co-ordinators. Your new RWA exec is a fabulous line up of talented ladies and we're very lucky to have them.

A couple of words about that Sydney conference next year. Venue: Coogee Crowne Plaza Hotel. Keynote speaker: Vicki Lewis Thompson. Friday workshop speaker: Debra Dixon (of goal motivation conflict fame). New York agent: Jennifer Schober from Spencerhill. Expected Australian author line up: Superb!!! Conference bookings open March 1 2010. Expected cost: entirely reasonable. Sounds good, doesn't it?

I took a couple of days off after conference and headed for Byron Bay before returning to work and to my (very patient) family. It's Tuesday evening now, I've discovered day spas, and there's a story brewing.

Day spa manners question: When your male masseuse - who just happens to be wearing black gi trousers and a black sleeveless singlet (designer), and who also happens to be taller than you, wider than you, blonder than you and ten years younger than you, leads you from a glorious tropical garden into a warm candlelit room and asks you how hard you like it, you're allowed to smile, right?

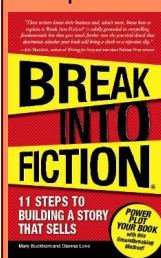
Here's wishing you sunshine and laughter, growth, prosperity, and love. Goodbye and thanks.

Kelly Hunter

Volunteer of the Month

Barbara Jeffcott Geris! Barbara works on our Critique Partner Scheme, liaising with members on the

CP database. She wins an author signed copy of **Break into Fiction** by **Mary Buckham** and **Dianna Love** donated by Mary and Diana. **Thank you Barb!**



What do Tennis and Romance Writing have in common?

(or how to justify spending hours watching Roger Federer work his magic by calling it research...)

By Frances Maslen

I am a long-time tennis enthusiast as well as one of Roger Federer's biggest fans. While watching one of his matches I started to absent-mindedly construct the ideal tennis match. At some point (no pun intended) it occurred to me that the criteria for a match that will go down in history as one of the best and a 'keeper' romantic novel, weren't terribly different from one another.

I Need a Hero

...and in Roger Federer I have one. In Marat Safin, another. OK, tennis is my sport of choice – yours may be another, but I started to wonder what it is about these two guys in particular which makes me root for them against all others. I realised that the characteristics they display have a lot in common with romantic heroes, and these characteristics are ones that are both important and personal to *me*. They engage me as a fan, much as the qualities in a romantic hero engage me as a reader.

Although at first glance Federer and Safin differ strongly from one another, they actually have many characteristics in common. Each is gracious and sporting, in the non-athletic sense of the word, living by their own moral codes. Each is totally focused and gives his all, every single time. They don't give up, they don't always take the easy route to victory and they're not chest-beaters. (Some tennis-playing men literally pound their chest with a fist when victorious – I hate that!). Perhaps most importantly, and though they display it in very different ways, they both care about what they do and what they're trying to achieve – and care deeply.

In writing, we need to create characters readers will care about. We need to give them traits worthy of a hero but flaws, too. In sportsmen it can be easy to see how a character's strengths and weaknesses are flip-sides of the same coin. Sheer pig-headedness can see a sportsman refuse to give up, refuse to allow himself the luxury of relaxing even for a moment, lead ultimately to victory – but it's still sheer pigheadedness!

I Need a Heroine

To produce a memorable sporting contest the players need to be strong and well matched. Our romantic heroine needs to be a worthy opponent for our

hero. She's not someone who'll be easily overcome, but is as fiercely committed to her path as our hero is to his. A woman who makes an impression, who also displays qualities we admire. A woman we'll root for and cheer on through the highs and lows of her pursuit of what she wants. Which brings me neatly onto...



The Conflict

Although in sport—unlike most romantic fiction—the two opposing players are rarely different genders, the contest is still a battle of wits and heart. Each protagonist is trying to achieve his or her own goals, often at the expense of the other.

By its very nature, competitive sport is a conflict. One man, one woman or one team trying to beat another – sometimes by any means, fair or foul. But like any story, the stronger the conflict the more the spectators – and the players themselves – care about the outcome. If the players have a history against one another (think Federer:Nadal, MacEnroe:Borg, Navratilova:Evert), there is an added piquancy. Quite simply, the stakes are higher. These are heightened if the characters involved, sporting or fictional, are one another's equals and the outcome of any encounter is truly in doubt. There is never a time I don't enjoy watching Roger play, but the times my heart is in my mouth with every shot are the ones that I'll watch again and again, the ones where I'll unashamedly cry alongside him in his moment of victory or defeat.

I want my hero to win, of course, but perversely I don't want his path to success to be too easy. I'd rather spend five hours on a knife-edge of agonising uncertainty, holding my breath through every shot than see a two hour wipe-out.

Also important to me is the *way* the players fight (or protagonists behave). I want them to be at their absolute best, and to use every weapon at their disposal, but I also want a fair fight. I need to retain my respect for my hero and heroine – and they need to remain worthy of it.

Frances Maslen

What do Tennis and Romance Writing have in common?

continued...

The Stakes

In sports, the stakes are usually pretty obvious. In tennis there are often hundreds of thousands of dollars at stake, sometimes more, yet what seems to really drive the players is much less obvious. Perhaps it's fame, or payback for the years of support shown by their parents and families, or the desire for glory. Perhaps it's simply the love of the game. For every player the motivation and stakes will differ.

In a story, I need something to care about. I need the stakes to be high and the consequences of the hero's and heroine's failure to achieve their goals to be devastating. I need to understand that the stakes, and what my characters are prepared to do to win them, are different for every character and every story.

Tension

This is equivalent to pacing in a story. In the most important tennis matches a man needs to win three sets to win the match. In each set he has to win six games with a two-game advantage. If the score reaches six games all he has to play a tie-breaker, where the winning margin can be as little as two points.

In men's tennis each man usually wins his own serve so it's winning the other guy's that has become crucial. Now, if our hero wins his opponent's serve in the first game of the first set, the tension level immediately drops. All he has to do now to win the set is hold on to his own serve. But if each player wins his own serve every time, so that the set could go either way right down to that two-point margin at six games apiece, it keeps the fans on the edge of their seats until the very last possible moment.

So it is with our stories. Of course we all know that the hero and heroine are going to end up together, but we read in order to live through that tension with them. To suffer for and with them so that the final success is all the sweeter for the effort it's taken to achieve it. We know they're going to get there, but we don't know *how*. Don't give it away too soon—and make them work for it—really, really hard.

Also key to maintaining tension are shot-selection and tactics. How will our hero go about achieving his goal? Does his game-plan work first time, or does he have to rethink? How does our heroine deal with what he throws at her? Does she defend her heart brilliantly or attack with a few sharp counter-punches of her own?

Emotion

This is key, particularly with Roger. He's so self-contained, he keeps his emotions well and truly in check until that last, defining moment. *That's* the moment I'm waiting for. Through two weeks of each big tournament, every match he gets a little closer. Sometimes, if it's been a tough one, we get a sneak peek at that emotion held in check. A fist-pump or maybe a whoop of encouragement when he wins a tough match. Then to the finals. The championship match.

Because we've made the journey with him we know how much Roger cares about winning. When he does, it's like popping a cork on a shaken magnum of champagne. The emotion spills out of him and for that moment we can see, can feel what victory means to him. We only have to watch a sporting broadcast on TV for proof that this emotion is what spectators want. When Roger won the French Open this year, the moment of his victory when he fell tearfully to his knees, relieved

and joyful, was repeated again and again and again. It was the moment we'd all been waiting for...

"...we all know that the hero and heroine are going to end up together, but we read in order to live through that tension with them... We know they're going to get there, but we don't know *how*. Don't give it away too soon—and make them work for it—really, really hard."

Setting and Supporting Characters.

A professional tennis match needs at least a tennis court and the various officials who arbitrate and assist. We can see whether a court is grass, clay or hard-court, and whether it's indoor or outdoor. We'll be told the name of the chair umpire and we'll watch the ball-boys support the action, and even enjoy the fans' contribution to the atmosphere on court. But, as with a romance, these are background details, there only to highlight and support our protagonists. We don't need or want to know what the species of grass is, or how often it's cut and watered. As with setting and secondary characters (and here I'm thinking mainly of category romance) a little, relevant information is all that's required.

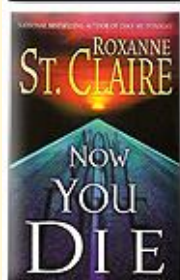
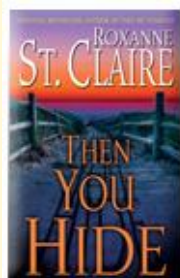
And Finally...

Tennis players are fit. They are finely tuned athletes at the peak of their physical fitness. And sometimes, if we're really lucky, they change their shirts on TV...

Frances has been a member of RWA for several years. She is still working towards publication and last year won the Emerald (short category).

Roxanne St Claire

Continued from p1



But connected books were growing wildly in popularity when I started my fourth romantic suspense and I knew I should think about a series, but nothing was gelling in my brain. I wanted to have a bodyguard premise for that book and while I was doing research, I came across the slang term "Bullet Catcher" for bodyguard. Lightning struck and I knew I had an idea for a series about an elite team of bodyguards and investigators, all run by an amazing, brilliant woman (of course!) and call it *The Bullet Catchers*. Fortunately, my publisher loved the idea and my series was born.

What is it about the bodyguard/protector that resonates with romance readers?

I think there is just something so extremely alpha and sexy about a man who would die to save someone – especially the woman he loves. Even when my husband checks all the locks at night, I get a little warm feeling of love and appreciation, so if you magnify that about a thousand times, add some *real* danger (as opposed to what we get in our rather quiet residential neighborhood), an exotic setting, a few twisty plotlines, multiple villains, and a dash of really sticky situations....you have an irresistible combination.

I must say that you write delicious heroes, alpha in the truest sense of the word. What qualities do you find most attractive in men?

Checking the locks at night! Seriously, I love men who have a sense of humor, intelligence, loyalty, and fearlessness. Make them about 6'3", built like a Gladiator, long haired, sometimes tattooed and I'm even happier. Oh, and he should be a good kisser and a great cook. Ding! Perfect man.

What do you need to start the writing? Are you an extensive plotter or do you find your characters and plot as you write?

I love to find a picture of my hero and a title I *think* I can live with. I don't plot extensively, although I do a brief (3 or 4 page) outline, and then change every single thing including the villain. I used to plot in more detail, but I've grown to be more organic and fluid in my writing style, which works, although there are some false starts and wrong scenes once in a while. I learn my characters as they reveal themselves to me; I just hope they do it sooner rather than on page 200.

The current trend is toward series of connected books and releasing them quickly—your *Hunt Her Down* and *Make Her Pay* are being released back-to-back. Can an author still succeed without multiple book releases each year? Or without a cool series concept?

I definitely think an author can succeed without

back to back releases, and, frankly, I prefer to spread the wealth out through the year. But any fantastic, well written book—whether it is part of a series or not—can find an audience.

8 books, 2 novellas, and more in 2010—did you plan the BC series from the start or has it evolved?

I never planned—I wish I had! I did one, then sold the idea for two more, then had the idea of a "trilogy within the series" – that was *First You Run*, *Then You Hide* & *Now You Die*. There were a couple novellas in there, too. Then it seemed natural to have two more books as fan favorite Bullet Catcher Dan Gallagher needed to have his story told (he's the hero of *Hunt Her Down*) and I was able to seed yet another Bullet Catcher in that book, and tell his story in *Make Her Pay*.

Is there an end in sight for the Bullet Catchers, and if so, what next?

I don't know if it's an end, but I'm taking a slightly different direction next year, as I recently moved to a new publisher and we've decided to launch a new romantic suspense series! I'm thrilled that I'll be writing for Grand Central Publishing and launching the Guardian Angelinos, a new series about an extended Italian family of rogue crime fighters and investigators based in Boston.

I see this as a much grittier, street-wise group of men and women, without the technology, jets and sophistication of the Bullet Catchers, but with plenty of courage, brains, and attitude. This series has more focus on the family, as a brother and sister start this small business and serve as "anchors" to the series, but I promise plenty of wild, sexy, exciting adventures and deeply emotional love stories because that's what I write!

Is there a temptation, or an ambition, to write straight thrillers...or anything else? I loved your category romances for Silhouette Desire -- do you think you'll write any more of those?

Honestly, I have no temptation to write straight thrillers as the romance is always the number one most important aspect of the story for me. I love the new wave of women's fiction and "community" stories, and my years at Silhouette Desire gave me a deep affection for straight and pure "romance" where the relationship is front and center. I would love to do more of those books, either for Desire or in a longer format. I hope there are

many, many books and subgenres in my future.

Your path into publishing was a little unconventional, starting in single title, then category romance, then launching in romantic suspense in a big way. Do you have any advice on career planning?

I don't know if I'd call it unconventional – everyone's path is a little different. I have always been a prolific writer, seeking multiple avenues to get my work published. I was fortunate to sell a single title first, but as a new writer, there really wasn't an opportunity for me to have multiple books in the schedule. That's why I started writing in category after single title; it was a way to get more books out each year and build my audience.

My advice on career planning for the unpublished is always the same: as soon as you finish a manuscript and it's ready for submission, start the next one so it's complete by the time you sell. For a published author, the most important thing to remember is that you cannot compare your career to anyone else's. Our paths are all different, each impacted by our personal lives, our writing style, our choices of agent and publishers, and our personalities. No two romance writing careers will match. That doesn't mean you shouldn't watch the "masters" and model your career goals after theirs! It just means you can't beat yourself up if your friend writes five books a year and you write two. Just write!

All writers are (understatement alert) interested in the process of authors. Do you write to a set timetable or is your approach more flexible?

I love to talk to writers about their process, too! I guess we get validation for our style, and ideas for how to change. Yes, I write just about all day, every day, certainly during those hours my kids are in school and when on deadline, even more. I usually edit the previous day's work in the morning and write fresh pages in the afternoon.

My personal style is to write one scene a day, regardless of the length, because a scene really exhausts me if it is done properly. It takes time to set it up, to fully understand the "arc" of the scene, including the climax and the hook. I will often write the same scene three times from beginning to end during the course of one day, changing POV or setting or pace until I get it as close to right as I can get it. Then I close up and re-read it the next day, when I edit or revise for several hours before starting the next one.

Your schedule must be quite demanding at times, especially with all the promotion associated with new releases. What do you do to unwind? How do you refill the well?

What is *unwind*? Can you spell that please? Well, let's see. I like wine, family time, good food, and sleep. I spend time I'm not working with my husband and children, and I love my morning dog

walk and exercise. I don't write much in the evenings unless I'm on a breakneck deadline, and we like to watch shows like "So You Think You Can Dance" and "American Idol" as a family. I also like to read newspapers, as I get three delivered at home. I've always been a frustrated reporter and the media fascinates me. I'm as interested in "how" they cover a story as what the story is, which probably explains why I have so many journalist characters, including one of the main characters in my new series. And of course, I love to read!

Speaking of promotion... You're on Twitter, Facebook, MySpace. You blog, sign, speak, while bringing up a family. Q: are you Super Woman? No, seriously, how important is on-line networking for an author? Is it a necessary part of the modern business plan?

I think it is growing in importance, but still not as important as 1) writing a phenomenal book and 2) getting publisher support, a good print run, and plenty of co-op and in-store placement. If those two elements are in place, then an on-line presence and networking is going to help. I love Twitter – more for how much I learn and all the great links I find than the promotional aspects.

Facebook and Myspace are just a nuisance to me because I can't keep up with them as easily as I can with Twitter. I have been speaking a lot lately, and am thrilled to add "keynote" at several conferences to my resume. I happen to be one of those rare birds who thrives on public speaking, as long as I am well prepared for what to say.

I am not a super woman, but I have a secret weapon: my husband is retired, does all the child chauffeuring, shopping, and loves to cook. Shazayum! I won the Love Lottery, I tell you.

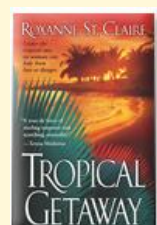
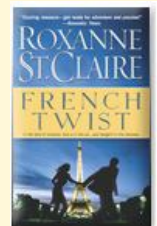
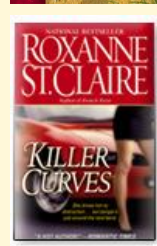
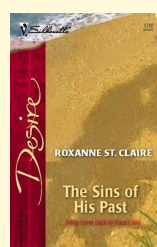
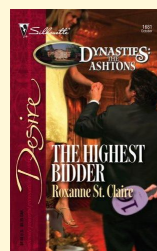
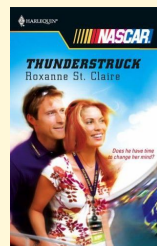
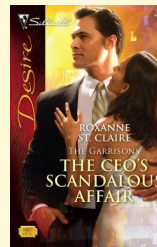
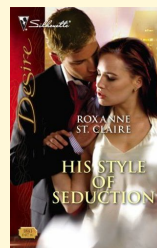
(Fierce envy alert. I'm taking a minute here to collect myself...)

For the reader who's not yet tried a Roxanne St. Claire, would you recommend starting with the earlier *Bullet Catchers* or can she dive right in with *Hunt Her Down* and/or *Make Her Pay*?

Read them all, of course! However, they are all written to stand alone. I give a tremendous amount of thought to how to make the book stand all by itself – including the three that are considered "a trilogy within the series" – because that is very important to me as a reader. I'm not big on recapping, but it is very easy to read my books in any order. More fun to start from the beginning, but if you dive in with *Hunt* and *Pay*, I hope you'll want to find the backlist and read every one!

Thank you so much for inviting me to interview and for loving my books in Australia. I long to see your amazing country and hope to make the trip sometime soon!

For an extended version of this interview—including Roxanne's advice on promotion, contests for the published & unpublished and choosing titles—see the RWA website.



RWA Conference

Winners & Grinners



We've all just arrived home but are still high from Hot August Nights.

The fabulous Alison Ahearn and her conference committee raised the bar for all future conferences. Congratulations and thanks to Alison (Amy Andrews), Denise Rossetti, Lisa Barry, Louise Ousby and Meredith Webber. A conference report will be in next month's Hearts Talk, but for now, we thought you might like to relive / have a sneak peek into some of the highlights...



Contests Congratulated on Awards Night

STALI	First	Allison Withers
	Second	Tess LeSue
	Third	Cathryn Hein
High Five	First	Louise Groarke
	Second	Frances Maslen
	Third	Melissa Smith
Selling Synopsis	First	Shannon Stein
	Second	Dayle White
	Third	AJ Macpherson
First Kiss	First	Enisa Hasic
	Second	Janette Hankinson
	Third	Kylie Short
Little Gems (Turquoise)	First	Bev Lewis
	Second	Katie Calloway
	Third	Vanda Vadas
Little Gems Cover	Aggie Tsirikas	





Awards Announced on Awards Night

Emerald Award Single Title	First	AJ Macpherson
	Second	Kylie Short
	Third	Kylie Short
Emerald Award Category	First	Helen Lacey
	Second	Rebecca Sampson
	Third	Mary McCarthy
Anna Campbell Award		Tess Le Sue
Valerie Parv Award	First	Kylie Short
	Second	Melissa Smith
	Third	Kylie Short
Lynne Wilding Meritorious Service Award	Winner	Anne Gracie
	Finalists	Pam Collings
		Trish Morey
		Kiki Opdenberg
		Serena Tatti
Honorary Life Membership		Trish Morey
Romantic Book of the Year R♥BY Short Sweet	Winner	Marion Lennox
	Finalists	Clare Baxter
		Melissa James
		Fiona McArthur
Romantic Book of the Year R♥BY Short Sexy	Winner	Trish Morey
	Finalists	Miranda Lee
		Carol Marinelli
		Paula Roe
Romantic Book of the Year R♥BY Long Romance	Winner	Anne Gracie
	Finalists	Karina Bliss
		Anna Campbell
		Elizabeth Rolls
Romantic Book of the Year R♥BY Romantic Elements	Winner	Suzanne Perazzini
	Finalists	Maggie Alderson
		Bronwyn Parry
		Suzanne Perazzini



Conference

Light Bulb Moments



Give yourself permission to play to find voice. *Bronwyn Parry*

You want people thinking that if they don't get together they're ruined. Raise the stakes. *Mary Jo Putney*

The black moment has to come from the premise. *Trish Morey*

If characters aren't growing and changing you have no story. *Mary Jo Putney*

It amazes me that people used to write enormous books with feathers. Now *that's* passion. *Mary Jo Putney*

A character who has gone through hard times is more likely to be empathetic/sympathetic. *Mary Jo Putney*



Many of us receive romantic emails from tall, dark, dangerous men from some of our country's finest institutes of incarceration... *Mary Jo Putney*

All characters (even minor ones) should surprise you in some way. *Anne Gracie*

Writing for a living is like paying for sex; the exchange of money changes the whole experience. *Mary Jo Putney*

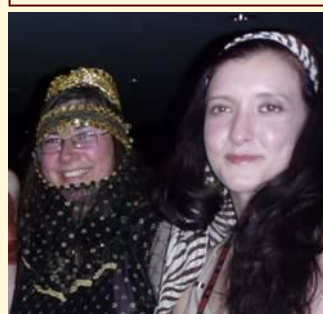
Remember it's a business. *Bronwyn Parry*

Technique needs to be the servant of plot and character. *Mary Jo Putney*

Good story telling is more than the sum of its parts—plotting + character + technique. *Mary Jo Putney*

The greatest source of tension in your story is the question of whether they'll make it. As soon as the romantic commitment is made, the tension drops, the story is over. *Mary Jo Putney*

Every scene has to have character development + emotional development + plot development. *Mary Jo Putney*



Don't lose the passion and joy of writing in the how-to.
Mary Jo Putney

Try something new each time—you need a bit of fear before starting each story. *Mary Jo Putney*

Find out what your hero really wants—then take it away from him. *Anne Gracie*

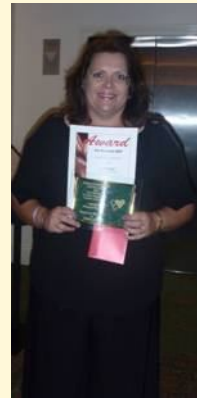
Torturing your hero is better than him torturing the heroine.
Anne Gracie

Don't worry too much about the rules [of writing], go for the emotion. Hook your reader however you can. *Trish Morey*

Career writers are talented, persistent & a little bit crazy.
Mary Jo Putney

The writer's dilemma: the desire to be discovered and the fear of being found out. *Mary Jo Putney*

Writers have the whole world at our fingertips and our fingertips at a keyboard. *Mary Jo Putney*



Let out the inner mother-in-law to judge your heroine.
Anne Gracie

Rejection is not personal—sometimes we miss a gem because of the sheer volume of submissions. *Annette Barlow*

Failing is part of the process. *Mary Jo Putney*

Find your hero's vulnerability... then stamp on it using the plot. *Mary Jo Putney*



Mood plays a big part in how you write. [especially with humour] *Kerri Lane*

Put your energy into writing. *Annette Barlow (Allen & Unwin)*

Before publication, there must be passion. The writing must come first. *Mary Jo Putney*



The Runaway Writer

Last month I talked about a writer's discipline. Here's how another author, Harlequin's multi-published Carol Marinelli, copes with the demands of three young children, a part-time career in nursing and a punishing publishing schedule.

Ms Marinelli, our Writer's Life grapevine says you're now renting office space Outside Home. Can you tell us why you made this move?

I moved to an office because, despite fighting it, I'm a very disorganised person at home. Without going into reasons I've finally accepted I don't work well there. However what annoys and fascinates me is that when I'm nursing I'm the most meticulous person – I have lists and notes and stick to them. So I wanted to see if getting dressed and going to work might somehow bring out that part of me.

What did you look for when you went searching?

A room that was mine.

For me.

Only me.

Far enough from home that I:

Leave it all behind

Can't pop home on my lunch break

Know when I'm leaving work for the day that I won't be returning, so I do just a little bit more.

I'm also superstitious. The office block has London in the title. My London friend was over from the UK and we saw about 8 offices (my office is a dive by the way – nothing fancy) but when we walked into this one we both nodded. It was cheap enough that if it didn't work that was okay, and it just FELT nice.



What hours do you keep?

Variable – sometimes it is only an hour, though that hour is pure writing. Some days I don't get there at all.

Some days I am there from 9-3 and it just flies.

Do you have the internet set up?

God No!!!!!!!

And I don't have a sofa, or magazines or ANY distractions. It's more exciting in a morgue than my office – but that's what I need. I have zero attention span, the slightest distraction and my brain leaps to it, so I've made sure there are none. This is purely for writing.

What can you see from your window?

I have the blinds closed. If I open them I can see people walking and I want to join them – or the odd sexy copper and I want to be arrested by him. It's far safer to keep them closed (though I probably look hourly).

How far is the nearest coffee shop? Do they give you a discount yet?

There are coffee shops everywhere but I've found my favourite.

I buy a large, double shot, two sugar latte on the way to office and they now know how I take it without asking.

I come in and turn everything on. I can smell the bergamot from my oil burner and it's as if everything has been left behind and it's just me, my coffee and my story.

I stop for lunch at about 11.30 (I try to stretch myself to twelve) and buy a lovely salmon, cucumber, capers and cream cheese sandwich, then go back and do another hour. If I have nothing to write in my head, then I print off what I've done. My deal with my kids is that I sit down with them in evening – I read my stuff, they do homework – there is no longer a battle for computer.

We've heard rumours of the magnetic attraction of the Marinelli kitchen table as a meeting point for most of Melbourne. How is most of Melbourne reacting to not having you there?

They struggled less than expected.

The bliss of being a 30 min drive away is that when a friend texts with drama etc – I say,





ohmygod come over – and they go to hop in car and then realise that I am no longer around the corner. So far I've had zero people take me up on offer to come to office!!!!!!

What do the kids think of your office? Do you think it helps them see your writing as a career?

They are consistently fantastic. They actually do get that I struggle.

I think it is more me than them. I find it easier to say that domestic stuff has been left because I've been at the office all day.

As a young writing Mum one of my big problems was fighting the idea that I was available in an emergency. Does the office help this?

A bit, but to be honest, not really. I still believe the best thing a writer can do is have/invent another job and pretend to be there/going there if a friend calls at 8am. They will accept that you have to be at blah blah blah, and can't look after Jonny, far more

than they will understand you are home alone (or in office) and writing. Accept that and learn from it and accept my permission to lie!

Do you think it will be long term or are you missing the tracky daks and ugg boots already?

I think it is the best thing I have ever done. I breathe when I get in there.

Whatever the complications in my life, while I am there I can leave it behind and write. It is very liberating.

Of course I beat myself up for not being there more, but I have stuff – we all do.

I am hoping in the future to make more of my little office.

Carol Marinelli has written 45 books for Harlequin's Medical and Sexy Romance lines, and has been a RUBY finalist for the last five years. Her Blackmailed Into The Greek Tycoon's Bed is out in September.

Member Announcements

with Rachael Blair

Send your news and releases to: HTgoodnews@romanceaustralia.com by the 15th of the previous month.

Member News

THE CALLS:

Cathryn Hein w/a **Cathryn Brunet** has sold her novella *Ritual Passions* to Samhain Publishing.

THE WINS:

Rachael Blair placed third in the RWNZ Great Beginnings contest.

Denise Rossetti won the Futuristic, Fantasy & Science Fiction category of the Passionate Plume Awards for the second year in a row, this time with *Strongman*.

THE SALES:

Astrid Cooper has signed a contract for book two in the Starlight series and is negotiating a contract with Devine Destinies Publishers for another futuristic romance.

Vonnie Hughes has sold her Regency romance *Coming Home* to Robert Hale Ltd. To be released March 2010.

Anna Jacobs sold the large print & audio rights for her first novel, *Persons of Rank*. Although it won a prize in a writing contest, it had only been published in hardback.

THE MISC:

Bronwyn Jameson's *Magnate's Make-Believe Mistress* appeared in the U.S. People magazine's book pages in a

list of 5 recommended romance reads.

Tracey O'Hara's *Night's Cold Kiss* received a 4.5 star review in RT Book Reviews.

Leah Martyn's book *Outback Doctor, English Bride* has been voted No 1 in the UK Readers' Choice.

Bronwyn Parry's *Dark Country* is one of the '50 Books You Can't Put Down' in this year's national Books Alive promotion.

THE LISTS:

Borders Group Series Bestsellers from the past month

#2 **Sandra Hyde** *Having The Billionaire's Baby*

#2 **Emma Darcy** *Ruthless Billionaire, Forbidden Baby*

#4 **Melanie Milburne** *The Marcolini Blackmail Marriage*

#5 **Carol Marinelli** *Blackmailed into the Greek Tycoon's Bed*

#8 **Daphne Claire** *Salzano's Captive Bride*

#8 **Robyn Grady** *Naughty Nights in the Millionaire's Mansion*

#9 **Bronwyn Jameson** *Magnate's Make-Believe Mistress*

Stephanie Laurens' *Mastered By Love* hit #1 on the Borders paperback list.

Nalini Singh's *Branded By Fire* debuted at #14 on the New York Times paperback list.

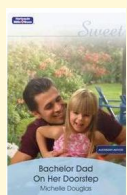
Send your news and releases to: HTgoodnews@romanceaustralia.com by the 15th of the previous month. Please note that new releases will only be featured once, so authors may choose whether that's their Australian, overseas, digital or print release.

Member New Releases



Jane Carter
A DREAM OF SOMETHING
MORE
Doubleday

Astrid Cooper
STARLIGHT
eXtasy Books



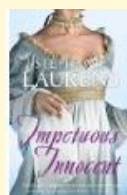
Michelle Douglas
BACHELOR DAD ON HER
DOORSTEP
HMB Sweet

Anna Hackett
WIND KISSED, FIRE
BOUND
Nocturne Bites



Kelly Hunter
EXPOSED: MISBEHAVING
WITH THE MAGNATE
HMB Sexy Sensation

**Marion Lennox/
Melanie Milburne**
A SPECIAL KIND OF FAMILY/
OUTBACK CRISIS
HMB Medical Plus Novella



Stephanie Laurens
IMPETUOUS INNOCENT
Mira

Fiona Lowe
MIRACLE: TWIN BABIES
HMB Medical



Carol Marinelli
BLACKMAILED INTO THE
GREEK TYCOON'S BED
HMB Sexy

Carol Marinelli
EMERGENCY: WIFE
LOST AND FOUND
HMB Medical



Sarah Mayberry
SHE'S GOT IT BAD
HMB Blaze



Melanie Milburne
BOUND BY THE MARCOLINI
DIAMONDS
HMB Sexy

Trish Morey
THE RUTHLESS GREEK'S
VIRGIN PRINCESS
HMB Sexy



Anne Oliver
MEMOIRS OF A MILLIONAIRE'S
MISTRESS
HMB Sexy Sensation

Tracey O'Hara
NIGHT'S COLD KISS
Eos Books/HarperCollins



Bronwyn Parry
DARK COUNTRY
Hachette

Alison Roberts
HOT-SHOT SURGEON,
CINDERELLA BRIDE
HMB Medical



Paula Roe
THE MAGNATE'S BABY
PROMISE
Silhouette Desire

Mel Tescho
STONE-COLD LOVER
Ellora's Cave



Margaret Way
CATTLE BARON,
NANNY NEEDED
HMB Bestseller Collection

Annie West
THE SAVAKIS MISTRESS
HMB Sexy



**The Best Love Stories
of 2009 :**
Miranda Lee, Melissa
James, Paula Roe,
Fiona McArthur, Trish
Morey, Claire Baxter

We'd like to introduce you to...

Roseanne Smiles

Hi Roseanne, and welcome to Member Spotlight!

Thanks Mel. I was surprised by your asking me, and delighted.

I read a little about you on the bootcampers blog, and the start of your fascination with writing is ... well, fascinating! Do tell!

My fascination with writing comes from my fascination with people and the way my mind works. Honestly one day I witnessed a meeting between two men. Neither spoke, merely communicated with a nod, and a parcel exchanged hands. I immediately thought, "drug deal, I wonder where they bought the stuff."

Next thought, where are the cops? Do they have these drug dealers under observation? How big is the organisation? I've been writing ever since. And please don't get me started on a woman, pushing her way through a crowd, constantly looking back over her shoulder.

You have an unwavering focus to be published by HM&B and their intrigue line, tell us a little about this goal and how far you've come to attain it.

When I read my first intrigue I believed that the line was developed for me. I love to write strong heroes with a heroine who's his match in every way. I thrive on putting them in situations where they have to fight for their lives as well as their hearts and if I can throw in a car chase, and nasty villain to up the ante, I'm happy.

What advice would you give writers (newbies) just starting out on their path toward publication?

Do writing courses and learn everything you can from them. Don't be



afraid to ask questions. Join a crit group. But be careful, they can be scary. Saying that, I wouldn't change my crit group, they are such a support.

When others e.g. judges or crit partner, comment on your work, remember it's your work, not you, so don't take it personally. What I think is really important is to never, ever compare your writing to anyone else.

You may aspire to be Anne Stuart, Amy Andrews or Christine Wells, but you're not, you're you, a unique special writer. Remember, don't lose your own voice trying to be someone else. Oh and don't just think about writing, WRITE!

What is the hardest lesson you've learned in the writing business?

That it's subjective. That it's all part of a process. A long, hard process. And you can't please everyone.

Tell us your writing highlights?

I won the selling synopsis competition in 2005 and was asked for the full MS. That was exciting. This year I was a finalist in the first kiss comp. Even though I didn't make it into the top three I was pleased with the result.

I remember the first prize I ever won in a writing competition. It was years

ago, one of the Women's magazines was running a romance writing competition. I remember getting a card in the mail to say there was a parcel at the post office for me. When I picked it up and opened it, there was a bottle of Chloe perfume. The letter informed me that I was awarded the prize as a highly commended entry. I burst into tears, I was so thrilled. I still have the letter.

How important has it been to have your family by your side on the ever-rocky road toward publication?

My husband is my number one fan. He encourages me to keep going when I don't get the results I want. He supplies me with tea and biscuits when I'm in my writing room. And he buys me how to books on line.

I also have another family - my writing family - my crit group, Hells Belles and my Bootcamp babes (bootcampers rock). These women are a great support. They keep me focussed and determined. They are a very important part of my life.

And finally, if you could have dinner with any one of your favourite authors, who would it be, why and where?

I'd have to say Anne Mather. She writes for M&B Sexy. I've always loved her books. In my estimation, this woman would have to be the Queen of sexual tension. Good heavens you can almost hear the pages sizzle.

I'd love to have high tea with her, in the Lake District of England. It would be fabulous to talk writing with someone who's been in the business for so long. Meeting Anne Mather would be a dream come true.

If you know a member who you would like to see spotlighted, email us their name at
editor@romanceaustralia.com

Send your events to: HTevents@romanceaustralia.com by the 15th of the month prior to your event.

In Person Events

(Costings Code: M-member. MC-Member concession. NM-Non-members.)

@ Saturday 12 & Sunday 13 September

Write Your Book on a Weekend!

Jan Cornall

When: 10.00am—4.00pm

Where: Best Community Development Ctr Bendigo

Cost: \$210 MC, \$230 M, \$290 NM

Booking Deadline: August 31

FMI + Bookings: <http://vwc.org.au/what-s-on/event/write-your-book-on-a-weekend/> OR (03) 9654 9068

@ Saturday 12 & Sunday 13 September

Story Design ~ Greg Bastian

When: 10.00am—4.00pm

Where: NSW Writers' Centre

Cost: \$165 MC, \$195 M, \$250 NM

FMI + Bookings: [http://](http://www.nswwriterscentre.org.au/workshops@nswwriterscentre.org.au)

www.nswwriterscentre.org.au/

OR workshops@nswwriterscentre.org.au

@ Sunday 11 October

The Opportunities of Romance Fiction ~ Anne Gracie

When: 10.00am—4.00pm

Where: NSW Writers' Centre

Cost: \$85 MC, \$99 M, \$125 NM

FMI+Bookings: [http://](http://www.nswwriterscentre.org.au/workshops@nswwriterscentre.org.au)

www.nswwriterscentre.org.au/

OR workshops@nswwriterscentre.org.au

@ Saturday 24 October

Polishing for Publication ~ Wendy James

When: 10.00am—4.00pm

Where: New England Writers' Centre

Cost: \$55 M, \$60 NM

FMI + Bookings:

<http://users.northnet.com.au/~newc/>

OR (02) 6772 7210 OR e-mail

newc@northnet.com.au

BRISBANE WRITERS FESTIVAL

Join Anna Campbell, Allison Rushby, Christine Wells, Bronwyn Parry and Kathy Wilson at panels and workshops

Thursday 10 September

Romancing the Tone (Panel)

Anna Campbell, Bronwyn Parry, Christine Wells

When: 3.00pm—4.00pm

Where: State Library of Queensland

Cost: \$14/\$12 Concession

Friday 11 September

Romantic Intimacy for the Modern Reader (Workshop) Bronwyn Parry

When: 10.00am—1.00pm

Cost: \$63/ \$53 Concession

Participant limit: 14 people

Friday 11 September

Escapism in Dark Times (Panel)

Allison Rushby, Anna Campbell, Christine Wells, Kathy Wilson

When: 3.30pm—4.30pm

Free

Sunday 13 September

Romance that Sells (Workshop)

Christine Wells, Anna Campbell

When: 9.00am—12.00pm

Max. 30 Tickets \$63/\$53

FMI+Bookings

See <http://www.brisbanewritersfestival.com.au> for details

Online Events



Julie Rowe, a 2006 Golden Heart double finalist, moderates the Announce Online Writing Classes list.

The Announce Online Writing Classes list notifies subscribers of around 25 to 35 workshops available each month. Most tutorials are sponsored by Romance

Writers of America chapters, but on occasion other reputable teachers are handpicked too. Interested?

Subscribe by sending an e-mail to

Announceonlinewritingclasses-subscribe@yahoogroups.com



Contests!

CONTEST CHANGES

To help contestants, judges and managers we have made a few changes to contest guidelines, so please **READ** the guidelines carefully. Any questions, ask the contest manager well in advance of the closing date.

It has been decided after much discussion to change the judging system this year to **3 reads per entry with the scores averaged**. The main reason for this was a vast increase in the number of entries in all our contests resulting in a problem finding enough judges. We hope this will help take the strain off our hardworking volunteer judges and contest managers.

In the past entries were read 4 times, with the lowest score dropped,

so effectively only 3 results made up the average. We believe the change will still be fair and still give valued feedback to entrants.

There will also be a statute of limitations on sending thank-you's to judges. While these are very welcome and much appreciated, some entrants have sent their notes between 6 months and almost a year after the contest finished. When contest managers change over, these late notes cause problems as files may have moved already. **Please send your thank-you's within 2 months of receiving your results.**

A few other issues are still being discussed and we'll let you know any other changes as soon as possible. They'll be in each contest guidelines, so make sure you read them.

SEPTEMBER CONTESTS



RWA 2010 contest season is about to kick off with the **High Five** (first 5 pages of a category length manuscript targetted at a Harlequin Mills and Boon line) and the **Single Title and Loving It (STALI)** (opening 18 pages in ARC format of a single title length manuscript).

STALI HIGH 5

Both contests open for business on August 14th and close on September 25th. All the forms and information are up on the website

so read and digest carefully as there have been some changes from last year's guidelines.

OCTOBER CONTESTS

The Selling Synopsis contest closes 9th October. It's an email only contest. All details are on the website. So start polishing that requested synopsis, or the one that will be requested very soon!



OTHER CONTESTS



For those of you over 35, Scribe Publications in Melbourne is running a full novel writing contest - for both unpubbed and pubbed - deadline 15 October. Prize includes \$12K and publication.
<http://www.scribepublications.com.au/news/scribelaunchesthecalscribefictionprize>
(thanks to Paula Roe for this one)

Another upcoming Contest is the Scarlett Boa – paranormal world opening – closes Sept 25th

<http://www.stellacameron.com/scarletboa2009.html>



Interested in trying the Romance Writers of America Contests? You don't always need to be a member, so check the contest guidelines.

Stephie Smith has a great website listing all the contests.

Have a look at -

<http://www.stephiesmith.com/contests.html>

OR Donna Caubareaux also has a blog where you can join a yahoo group contest alert.

<http://contestdivas.blogspot.com/>

In the beginning there was...

A P r o l o g u e

By Michelle Douglas

There's a lot of prejudice surrounding prologues – Jenny Crusie for one told us not to use them. So, what exactly is a prologue, why use one, and does your story need one?

My dictionary defines a prologue as:

1. The preface or introduction to a literary work
2. (The actor delivering) a speech, often in verse, addressed to the audience at the beginning of the play
3. An introductory or preceding event or development.

A prologue reveals events that happen prior to a book's actual opening.

So why did Jenny Crusie warn us against them? In an article outlining the biggest mistakes made in contest entries she cites dull openings as one of the cardinal sins, and she identifies prologues amongst the openings best avoided. Why? Because, "a prologue is by definition the stuff that comes before the story starts." And, "you don't have time to set things up first." (www.jennycrusie.com/for-writers/essays/)



So will you go to one of the lower circles of hell if your book starts with a prologue?

No. My September release starts with a prologue and I have yet to be struck down by lightning or accosted by a plague of locusts. If there is one thing I've learned in this writing game it's that there are no absolutes. The above advice may hold true for contest entries, but prologues, like any tool at the writer's disposal, do have a function.

Let me tell you a funny story. Because I was aware of the prejudice surrounding prologues, I didn't call my opening scene for *Bachelor Dad On Her Doorstep* a prologue at all. I wrote Chapter One at the top of the page and started my book with that scene instead. Was my editor fooled? Ha! Of course not (note: editors are smart and savvy). When my proofs arrived I tore open the box, turned over the cover page... to find my opening scene now a prologue. Did I weep and wail, did I argue with my editor to change it back, did I hold my head in my hands and rock back and forth? No, I started to laugh. Why? Because that darn scene was a prologue. And as far as I was concerned, it worked regardless of what name it was given.

One of my favourite books of this past year has a prologue – Anne Gracie's *The Stolen Princess*. I defy anyone to read that prologue and then put the book down. It's impossible. You have to read on. It does everything

a good prologue should – it reveals the heroine's predicament and it sets in motion the action for the rest of the story. How on earth can that be a bad thing? In my opinion, that book is all the better for having that particular opening.

As writers we are often told to start our stories at the point of change. The prologue in *Bachelor Dad On Her Doorstep* shows in real time this point of change for my heroine. The decision she makes in this scene sets in motion the action for the rest of the story. Surely this is more effective than trying to reveal this scene in flashback and/or through awkward dialogue later on in the story – a case of showing instead of telling.

If you decide your story does need a prologue, there are a couple of points to keep in mind:

1. Does your prologue outline backstory quickly and effectively? Take note of the word 'quickly' there. As a general rule, prologues are short – no more than a single scene or several scene fragments long.
2. Does your prologue hook your reader? A prologue ought to lead the reader to a question not an answer – it should give them a reason to keep turning the pages.

If there is one absolute in this writing game, it's don't bore your reader. (You won't go to hell for that one either, but nobody will read your book. Which, when you get down to it, is probably most writers' vision of hell anyway). A snappy and compelling opening will engage your reader immediately, be it the beginning of chapter one or a prologue.

So forget about the prejudices surrounding prologues. If your story needs it, write one. And have fun doing it!

Michelle's September release has a prologue and a 5 star review from Cataromance. For more information about Michelle and her books visit her website at:
www.michelle-douglas.com



Information on markets is sourced from websites and other publications and reported in good faith. RWA Inc. does not investigate the information hereafter and cannot be held responsible for its accuracy and recommends readers verify names and addresses before submitting.

Ref: Cynthia Stirling newsletter, Publisher's Lunch, RWA members

In a mixed second quarter report, **Harlequin** parent **Torstar** said book sales rose 8.7% though the increase was due almost entirely to the weaker Canadian dollar. The company notes: "Harlequin continues to face risk from the global and, in particular, the U.S. economic situation including disruptions to the U.S. retail distribution system and potential further reductions in consumer spending."

Barnes and Noble launched their anticipated **e-bookstore**, offering approximately 200,000 real titles along with 500,000 free public domain titles from Google, "including hundreds of new releases and bestsellers at only \$9.99." The company promised to add another 300,000 titles or so within the next year.

Borders has created expanded sections within some Michigan superstores focusing on **teen shoppers**, providing graphic novels, fantasy and young-adult books together along with non-book merchandise, and expects to roll-out the concept throughout nearly all of their superstores nationwide (USA) in August. The new sections take advantage of space previously used to sell music and dvds.

Quartet Press, a new publishing venture, will launch its first imprint, **Quench Romance!** this spring. The editors are currently accepting queries for all types of romance fiction, including erotic romance. They're also interested in other genres of fiction that have a strong romantic thread. They will consider new, previously unpublished material as well as previously published work for which the author owns the rights. They will consider novels from 50,000 - 100,000 words and short stories from 10,000 - 30,000 words. They will consider only one manuscript from an author at a time. FMI: <http://quartetpress.com/>

Mandy Ferguson will take over as managing director of **Harlequin Mills & Boon**, effective September 1. Previously she was managing director of Rylvita.

(From the RWAmerica conference)

Sourcebooks two years ago, expanded into romance with its **Casa-blanca** imprint. They publish 5-10 romances a month. Deb Werksman edits romance, Jane Austen books (which Sourcebooks has made a sub-genre) and some women's fiction. She's interested in all sub-genres of romance -- contemporary, romantic suspense, historical, paranormal and erotic romance.

Completed manuscripts should be 90,000 to 110,000 words (computer word count). She is looking for: 1. A heroine the reader can relate to; 2. A hero she can fall in love with; 3. World building; 4. A hook that can be conveyed in 2-3 sentences; 5. What is the author's career arc? She accepts email submissions from both published and previously unpublished authors. FMI:

www.sourcebooks.com/our-authors/romance-fiction-submission-guidelines.html

Lyrical Press are calling for submissions of all forms of **steampunk**, with a focus on romance and erotica. FMI: <http://lyricalpress.blogspot.com/2009/07/call-for-submissions-steampunk.html>

Harlequin Teen specifically focuses on teen protagonists. Other publishers — including **HarperTeen** and **Razorbill** — are already benefiting from the growing hunger for teen romances laced with supernatural and paranormal elements, especially as more adults are reading YA novels. Harlequin Teen's first titles reflect a Meyer sensibility: *My Soul to Take* by Rachel Vincent, released July 28, features a girl who can sense when people will die. *Intertwined* by Gina Showalter, released Aug. 25, stars a teenage boy who has four souls living inside him and who is irresistibly drawn to a vampire princess.

So far, almost 20 titles are planned for 2010. They will be a mix of paranormal, science fiction and contemporary romance.

Romance, according to **Business of Consumer Book Publishing**, an industry report, is the biggest fiction category in the USA, with more than 8,000 titles published in 2008. Paranormal romances make up a huge portion.

Spotlight on The Knight Agency (RWA Brisbane Conference)

Melissa Jeglinski spoke to a room of enthusiastic listeners. TKA is looking for all genres. She likes YA but wants different vampire or other supernatural creatures. She's also interested in receiving YA historicals, as these are looking to be popular.

Their submission process is electronic, starting with queries. If a query is successful they'll ask for 3 chaps & synopsis, and after that request the full. Pet peeves include starting queries with a question "What would you do if...?" so she's looking for queries to be a little different and fresh. Include a few lines of pitch, genre, personal info.: organisations you belong to, competitions finished or won. A one liner, e.g. Red Riding Hood meets Jaws; much like a five-minute pitch. Be creative and professional.

If she's interested but reluctant to sign she'll give feedback and ask for a resubmission. With the resub she can decide if that person is dedicated and she wants to work with them. She generally edits her client's work, depending on their needs/ wants. She reads all client's work before sending to a publisher — generally 7-8 publishers at a time, starting with the biggest, most desirable publishers.

She will represent category authors but you need to be prepared to write category for at least two years and not just write it to get published.

She believes publishers are currently looking for: YA, historicals, thrillers, romantic suspense, historical erotica, women's fiction weepies, multi-generational, dark paranormal but vampires in a different way.

Category writers need to be prepared to write 2-3 books/year, single title writers 1 book/year or 2 every 18 months. When negotiating agreements she prefers to gain a smaller advance but with more guarantees throughout the publication process, with the same outcome in the end as it is easier for negotiations for future projects. If you already have an offer they can take over negotiations and try for a better deal and will do all the work from then on. "It's about career building. It's a business relationship but a friendly one." http://knightagency.net/manuscript_submissions/

The Last Word

with HelsKat



Snippets & buzz
from the front lines

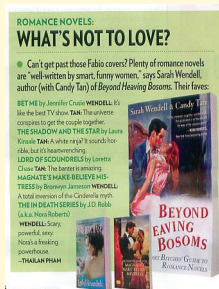


Bron Jameson's Perfect Beach Read

Bronwyn Jameson was recently mentioned by the bloggers at Smart Bitches, Trashy Books (& authors of the book *Beyond Heaving Bosoms*) in a People article for her *Magnate's Make Believe Mistress* as a "perfect beach read".

You can find the full article at:
<http://tinyurl.com/mlglnx>

Go Bronwyn!



Washington Post Article on RWAmerica Conference

<http://tinyurl.com/ktlzn>

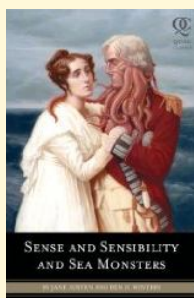
Q&A session with Nora Roberts at:

www.tinyurl.com/m7lju2

**Love affair with romance
interview** where a literary
writer talks romance:

www.tinyurl.com/n5ncag

More Jane Austen Quirky Books....



Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters
by Jane Austen and Ben H. Winters
(September 15, 2009 re-
lease) will

feature "60% Austen and
40% additional monster
chaos!" There's a blog talk
radio interview with the au-
thor at: www.tinyurl.com/

Blog-o-sphere, Twitter land & RWA pride

Romance Writers of Australia is proud to announce we have a blog account at:
www.romanceaustralia.wordpress.com The blog team will feature special events, book signings, guest blogs and author interviews and everything else that promotes the work of our wonderful authors.

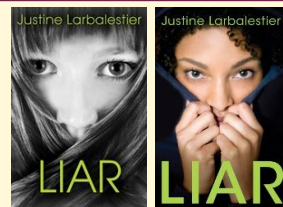
You can also follow us on Twitter at:
www.twitter.com/rwaus



Show off your RWA pride by downloading RWA buttons from our Members section. They can be used on websites and blogs.

<http://www.romanceaustralia.com/members/downloads.asp>

Author Justine Larbalestier criticized the book jacket cover of her book *Liar*. Unlike the Australian version that only has text, the US cover initially showed a white girl on the cover when the character is actually an African-American. The publisher has since made another cover available. Who says feedback doesn't work? *Source: Publisher's Weekly*



Coalitions have been formed on both sides of the **PARALLEL IMPORTATIONS** debate. Be informed:



Australians For Australian Books: Made up of groups

such as the Australian Society of Authors and Australian Publishers Association. From their website: "Australia's thriving book industry and its strong, vibrant literary culture are at risk. Despite the pleas of hundreds of readers, authors, librarians, booksellers and publishers, the Productivity Commission has recommended that Australia abolish territorial copyright for books."
www.ausbooks.com.au/

Coalition For Cheaper Books: Made up of retailers such as Coles, Target, Big W & Dymocks. From their website, they: believe customers in Australia pay too much for books; advocate an open market, leading to lower prices quicker availability; support removal of restrictions on parallel importation of books; argue the current policy can't be justified in an era of e-commerce.
www.cheaperbooks.com.au/

Meyer sued

This time it is Stephenie Meyer being accused of plagiarism by Jordan Scott over the novel *Breaking Dawn*, the fourth in the hit series. Scott claims it bears a "striking and substantial similarity" to her 2006 fantasy book *The Nocturne*. Meyer of course denies the allegations.

This follows a plagiarism lawsuit in April from Meyer's former college roommate who claimed the hit vampire books were based on a short story she wrote while both women studied at Brigham Young University, Utah.

[Sources: chron.com & eonline]

Recession Proof Industry?



While the rest of publishing is struggling, The Star blog reports that romance generates a \$1.4 billion (U.S.) a year. Also romance fiction sales are up 36.4 percent this year to the end of May. Yay!

