

September Means.....

BACK TO SCHOOL !



Yes, I'm
doing
jumping
jacks that

summer is over...and my sanity is relatively intact. And the lure of all those pens, notebooks white out specials....ah, I love school shopping. Always end up spending more for myself than my kids! :-)

It's a short newsletter this month, but I hope you find the articles helpful.

I'll be toasting you all with a mimosa in hand at the bus stop on Sept 3rd. <eg>

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FROM THE PREZ

Lori Lyn Grube
September 2002

ELECTION TIME!

I'll keep this short; I promise. RWA ballots for the 2003 national board positions have now been mailed out to all members. No matter where you stand on the current issues with our national organization - whether you have ignored the whole thing or whether you have passionately followed it - it is important that you vote in the upcoming national RWA election. (I always remind myself that if I don't vote, then I have no right to complain or celebrate - so, I definitely vote!)

I know, I know - it takes time to familiarize ourselves with the candidates. Sometimes they all seem to make such general statements it is hard to know where they really stand on issue. When we vote in our country's elections, if we are unsure of candidates, we have the luxury of opting to vote a party line. Not so with national. That makes it much more difficult.

But remember that all of the candidates have volunteered to give up a portion of their personal time to help our organization. All candidates should be heard and I urge all of you to join up at electionrw2002@yahoogroups.com. Please take just a couple of hours and read through the messages. And if you have questions or are still unsure, ask members you feel may have some answers.

Now, here is your first notice that your very own chapter is also facing an election quite soon! All positions on the Greater Seattle Chapter of RWA are open to any member in good standing. While we may be able to convince a few of the current board members to keep contributing, there will definitely be seats available. Volunteering at the chapter level is much less time consuming than at national level, but still very rewarding!

If you have any questions about a position on the GSRWA Board, please e-mail the person in the current position and/or me for more information.

Sincerely,

Lori Lyn Grube 2002 GSRWA
President

Market News

for September

Julie Moffett

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Washington Romance Writers and Julie
Moffett.



I hope you all had a great summer! A lot of people think summer is a slow time for sales, but on the contrary. I've got lots of market news to report this month . . . First up are the new deals . . .

Romance superstar Linda Lael Miller has sold a romantic thriller called "THE OTHER CAROLINE" and another yet untitled book to Amy Pierpont, at Pocket in a "quite major"

deal, which means far beyond the \$501,000 price range. And Elaine Coffman has sold three Scottish historicals to Amy Moore-Benson at Mira Books, reportedly also in a six-figure deal. New author, 25-year-old Beth Lavin, sold her debut book "THIS IS WHERE I CAME IN" (being billed as "a fresh new take on romantic fiction,") to Amy Pierpont at Pocket for what is being called "a strong five figures deal." Way to go, ladies! (Publishers Lunch/6-17-02)

Mystery writer, Gwen Hunter, sold her next three books in her continuing series of thrillers featuring Dr. Rhea Lynch to Amy Moore-Benson at Mira Books, in "a nice deal" which means anywhere from \$1 - \$100,000. (Publisher's Lunch/7-01-02)

Romance author Deborah Smith has sold the film rights for her upcoming novel "SWEET HUSH," a romantic comedy-drama about the son of a Georgia apple farmer who elopes with the President's daughter, to Disney and producer Deborah Martin Chase (The Princess Diaries) in a "significant deal." (Publisher's Lunch/7-1-02)

NY Times best-selling author Sandra Brown has left her longtime publisher Warner and sold her next three novels to Simon & Schuster for publication beginning in Fall 2003, in a "very major deal." (Publisher's Lunch/6-24-02)

The publishing industry is buzzing about a new book called "THE PLOT THICKENS: 8 WAYS TO BRING FICTION TO LIFE" by Noah Lukeman. Lukeman's book is being called an innovative and fresh way to help

writers jazz up their plotting techniques. Lukeman also wrote the best-selling book, "THE FIRST FIVE PAGES." Need a good present for your birthday? This is it! Still groaning about your last measly royalty check? Well, Publisher's Weekly reports that salaries in the publishing industry took a significant hit last year, too. PW's annual survey found that the average raise in 2001 among publishing officials in 6.7% as compared to 9% in 2000. (Publisher's Weekly Online/7-02-02)

Did anyone see the terrific article about romance/mystery writer Janet Evanovich in a July issue of Time Magazine? Interesting tidbits include: It took the NYT best-selling author 10 years to sell her first book - a series romance. After receiving rejection after rejection, she finally burned all her papers and sat on a curb and cried. A few months later, an editor called to buy one of her books. She wrote a dozen series romance before switching to her crime-solving Stephanie Plum series. Now, money is no longer an issue. She is quoted as saying: "If I see something I like, I can buy it. I have more money than time now. I don't always have to look for the best buy." (Time Magazine/7-14-02)

Scholastic Inc. is NOT amused about a new book called "HARRY POTTER AND LEOPARD WALK UP TO DRAGON" recently released in China and written by a local writer who got tired of waiting for UK author J.K. Rowling to finish the next installment. And speaking of Harry Potter, Scholastic CEO Dick Robinson has told Bloomberg News that the company may not publish

the next book in the series until June 2003 or later. Reportedly, the book is still not done and they are not sure when it will be ready. (Publisher's Lunch 7-8-02 and -22-02)

Award-winning author Julie Moffett is the author of seven historical and time-travel novels and one novella. Her latest offering is "Light a Single Candle," (Kensington/March 2002), the first in a trilogy about three sisters living in Salem who are descendants of a Scottish clan possessing magical powers. The second book "Call Down the Night" (July 2002) is by Julie's sister, Sandy Moffett. The final book "To Touch the Sky" by Julie will be out in September 2002. For more information on the series or Julie's other books, visit her website at www.tlt.com/authors/jmoffett.htm.



Web News

Contests

Contest Alert-All the news on upcoming contests, plus Finalist & Winner listings, questions, etc. Sign up now! ContestAlert-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

If you're a Contest Judge, join ContestsJudges-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Eighth Annual Opening Gambit Northeast Indiana Romance Authors Postmark Deadline: September 1, 2002 First Chapter & Synopsis - 30 pages max. <http://nirauthors.freeyellow.com/>

2002 Golden Synopsis MERWA, Maine's RWA Chapter Postmark Deadline: September 1, 2002

Synopsis - 12 page max.

<http://www.stobiepiel.com/MERWA/Contest.html>

The Lories - Three In One Contest (Published Contest) From The Heart Online Chapter Deadline: September 6, 2002 Book issued from September 1, 2000 to July 31, 2002 Best Overall Author Best New Author Best Proposal - beginning of your manuscript and 5 page maximum synopsis (55 pages total maximum). http://www.theromanceclub.com/ft_h/contest/pub.htm

Put Your Best Hook Forward Inland Valley Postmark Deadline: September 7, 2002 First Ten (10) pages <http://www.ivrwa.org/entryform02.doc>

Labor of Love Contest Heart of Louisiana Deadline: September 12, 2002 Chapter/prologue & Synopsis - 50 page max. <http://www.heartla.com/Contest.htm>

Harlequin Intrigue Writing Contest Received by September 30th First chapter (no greater than 5,000 words) & outline of the complete novel (no greater than 10 pages in length) <http://www.eharlequin.com/harl/learnrtowrite/42intr11.htm>

Sweet, Spicy, & Spooky Smoky Mountain Romance Writers Deadline: September 30, 2002 (in hand, not postmarked) Ten (10) page holiday* scene between hero and heroine with an emotional impact, with a required, but not judged, one (1) page-setup.

<http://www.smrw.org/contests/sssc/contest/sss.htm>

"Hold Me, Thrill Me" Contest
Southwest Florida Romance Writers
Postmarked by September 30, 2002
Prologue/first chapter (15 pages
max), optional one-page synopsis.
<http://www.pengwens.com/contest/contest.html>

The Suzannah North Louisiana
StoryTellers and Authors Received
Deadline: October 1, 2002 Chapter 1
and a ONE-page SINGLE-spaced
synopsis
<http://www.shreve.net/~nola/page-contest.html>

The Emily West Houston RWA
Chapter Received Deadline: October
1, 2002 First 35 pages of the novel
(including prologue, if applicable).
<http://www.geocities.com/whrwa/TheEmily.html>

Fiction From the Heartland
MidAmerica Romance Authors
Received Deadline: October 1, 2002
First chapter and synopsis not to
exceed 35 pages
<http://www.mararwa.com/Home%20Pages/events.htm>

Fourth Annual Launching a Star
Spacecoast Authors of Romance
Postmark Deadline: October 1, 2002
The author's "best" chapter,
maximum 20 pages, plus a two page
(max) set-up of what is happening
leading up to the scene.
<http://www.authorsofromance.com/launching%20a%20star%202002.htm>

First Kiss Contest New England
Chapter Deadline: October 1, 2002
Send us the scene from your book
where the hero and heroine first

kiss. 10 pages maximum plus 1 set-
up page.
<http://www.geocities.com/necrwa/fIRSTkiss.html>

Ticket to Write Red River Romance
Writers Postmark Deadline: October
7, 2002 First 25 pages of your
manuscript.
<http://www.rrrw.org/contest.html>

Romancing the Tome Coeur de
Louisiane RWA Chapter Received
Deadline: October 12, 2002 First five
(5) pages and two (2) page synopsis
<http://www.geocities.com/coeurdelouisiane/Contest.html>

2002 Duel on the Delta River City
Romance Writers Entries must be
received by October 15, 2002.
Prologue and/or 1st chapter, not to
exceed 30 pages
<http://www.rivercityrw.com/DOD2002.html>

On The Far Side Futuristic, Fantasy &
Paranormal Postmark Deadline:
October 31, 2002 Synopsis (not to
exceed 10 pages) and 30 pages of
the prologue/first chapter(s).
<http://www.romance-ffp.com/contests.htm>

GOTCHA! Contest Silicon Valley
Chapter Postmarked by 11/02/02
First fifteen (15) pages.
<http://home.earthlink.net/~svrwa/2002gotcha.htm>
The Laurie Smoky Mountain
Romance Writers Deadline: January
10, 2003 Up to date information not
on website as yet. (8/24/02)
<http://www.smrw.org/contests/laurie/laurie.html>

The Prism Contest (Published
Writers) Futuristic, Fantasy &

Paranormal Receipt deadline: March 1, 2003 Your book from 2002
<http://www.romance-ffp.com/contests.htm>

Donna Caubarreaux is a member of Coeur de Louisiane, NOLA Stars, Heart of Louisiana, Kiss of Death, Scriptscene and From the Heart Chapters of RWA. She received a RWA Service Award in 1997. She also sponsors several writing lists... Finish that book...three pages a day or you're axed! List begins on September 16th, and lasts for four weeks. SurvivorWriters-subscribe@yahoogroups.com Writing a novel? Learn from these daily articles. FirstDraft-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

For anyone interested, here is a new SHORT STORY CONTEST (excerpted from
<http://www.bridgesmagazine.info/contest.htm>):

Calling all romantics! Bridges Magazine announces its first romantic short story contest.

Have a romantic short story tucked away? Want to write about that magical first love, first kiss or special moment? Then write it down or dust off that story and enter it in the Bridges short story contest and you may be a winner!

For only \$4.00, you can enter our romantic short story contest. All entries must be written in English, however, the writer may live anywhere around the world. Entries are limited to 1200 words or less and should include a title.

Copy and paste each entry directly into the body of an e-mail (all attachments will be deleted unopened) and send it to publisher@b... with the subject

heading "Short Story Contest." Please include your name, pseudonym (pen name if applicable) your mailing address and e-mail address. You may enter as many stories as you would like. Payment for email submission can be made through PayPal (Paypal info at: <http://www.bridgesmagazine.info/contest.htm>)

~OR~

Mail your printed, DOUBLE-SPACED copy along with payment (check or U.S. money order--no cash please) to:

Bridges Magazine Short Story Contest
PO Box 150099 Denver CO 80215-0099
Mailed entries will not be returned and emailed entries will be discarded after contest has ended. Entries that do not follow the above guidelines will be disqualified. We will acknowledge receipt of your entry once it has been received and payment has been verified.

GRAND PRIZE -- \$25 cash or \$25.00 gift certificate from Barnes & Noble.com, a free one year subscription to Bridges Magazine (or one year free renewal), publication in Bridges Magazine and on our website. We ask for First North American Serial Rights for print in the magazine and one-time electronic rights for posting on our website for the winning entry.

Please note the deadline for entries is Friday, August 16, 2002. Winners will be notified by September 1st, 2002 and announced/story printed in our September/October issue. Good Luck and we look forward to receiving your entry! (Above information and paypal registration available at:

<http://www.bridgesmagazine.info/contest.htm>)

I noticed that there is a need for a Contest Judges loop...
A place where Contest Coordinators can ask for judges for their chapter contests.

Such as: (doing my own plug here)
Romancing the Tome Contest held by Coeur de Louisiane RWA Chapter #186 Judging period from October 15 to November 15... First 5 pages, plus 2 page synopsis Categories: Long Contemporary/Single Title; Short Contemporary; Historical, Paranormal If you can judge, please send your name, address and category to: joey@cricket.net visit our website for details
<http://www.geocities.com/coeurdelouisiane/Contest.html>

See how easy... If you are a contest judge and/or contest coordinator sign up at: ContestsJudges-subscribe@yahoogroups.com



Cinderella Newbie's Conference Diary

By Alesia Holliday

4 a.m. March 17th - Wednesday

Only two hours of sleep and the alarm goes off -- it's RWA Conference Day!! I "accidentally" poked my darling husband in the

stomach with my elbow on the way out of bed, since he made me waste 30 valuable minutes around midnight explaining why I needed 7 pairs of shoes for 5 days.

Not that I'm bitter.

Must find coffee or die.

11 a.m.

This is great! A double latte and a large diet Coke later, I boarded the plane and just happened to be seated next to Caroline Cross, who is also going to RWA. She is a published author and has been so gracious about sharing ideas for how to make the most of my first conference. She is traveling with our very own Golden Heart nominee, Gerri Russell, but somehow they were split up on seats. (I realized halfway into the flight when the caffeine finally hit my numb brain that I should have offered to switch seats. Duh! Sorry, Gerri!)

Caroline was so helpful and great fun to chat with! She was even pretty understanding when I started cutting her breakfast into small pieces and asked if she needed to go potty before we landed.

NOTE TO SELF: Must travel without the kids more.
1 p.m.

The Adams Mark is the perfect conference hotel; elegant ambience, right in the middle of downtown, and big enough to hold a swarm of romance writers (a gaggle? A flock? No poultry references. A pride of romance writers, definitely!) I found Beverly Brandt right inside the door!

She was either hoping to find someone to have lunch with or waiting to ambush her publisher, but seemed happy enough to settle for me. She helped me haul my bags upstairs so we could get lunch. Pretty rarified atmosphere when a published author helps you hang your clothes in the closet!

The suite I am sharing with another fantastic author, Pam Binder, is opulent but has a serious defect. There is no handle on the toilet. Being the savvy traveler that I am, I kept waving my hand in front of the bowl, in case there was some automatic flushing thing going on, like in the airport. No luck.

Major crisis: Do I call friend for help, thus admitting I'm not smarter than the toilet? After much anguished soul-searching lasting at least 35 seconds, the need to flush outweighed my waterpipe-challenged status. I called for reinforcements. I was secretly relieved to see that my friend couldn't find the flush handle, either. (In the interests of protecting her privacy, I won't give Beverly's name.)

So I called the front desk: we have a defective room. There's no way to flush the toilet. They seem puzzled, but will send an engineer. It's amazing what an expensive hotel will try to get away with.

2 p.m.

Now to the important stuff: registration! I have my nametag and am official! I feel like Cinderella at the ball. On to lunch. We ran into Pam, and a

brief stroll down a very pleasant, traffic-free road brought us to the Hard Rock cafe. During a slightly giddy health-food lunch of deep fried everything, we discussed the pros and cons of wearing Hard Rock biker babe attire to our meetings with editors and agents. Avoiding margaritas was probably a good idea - we escaped tattoo-free.

3 p.m.

Let the free stuff begin!! On to the goody room! What wonderful promotional ideas everyone has; I am taking notes like crazy for what to do when I finally get "the call." There were magnets and back-scratchers; chances to win trips, and lots of free books. I was pretty weighted down when we left, although the goody room monitor politely discouraged me from taking 17 of one author's promotional squirt guns (The Wedding Duel - great tie-in) for all the neighborhood kids. I admit she had a good point about being fair to the other attendees, but clearly she has never suffered from advanced Mommy guilt.

Back in the room at last. I spent \$150 in the gift shop in 3 minutes flat. I feel like a Visa commercial:

Tacky hotel t-shirts = \$50

Tacky hotel caps = \$45

Tacky assorted hotel junk=\$38

Alleviation of small portion of "how could you leave us" guilt = priceless. (The engineer has been there and fixed our very technical toilet problem. She pushed the towels on the rack to either side to display the toilet-flushing button.)

But, for the REALLY BIG NEWS:

The voicemail message on the phone was flashing. When my roommate picked up the message, an agent to whom I had pitched a non-fiction book proposal (in addition to my romance writing) was on the line. By the time I got to the phone, the message was almost over, but I got her room number. I hit redial to hear the whole message and got the most exciting news of my entire life: "Your message has been deleted."

NOTE TO SELF: Read instructions on strange phones before pressing any buttons.

Well, at least my roommate said the agent sounded upbeat.
4 p.m.

I have an agent!!!! She said my book proposal "touched a chord in her soul" and she wants to represent me!!!! I have been dancing around the hotel room and singing for 10 minutes! Poor roommate looks like she may be edging for the door, but claims to be happy for me.

Anyway, I was very cool and collected in the meeting with my agent and think I even asked one or two semi-intelligent questions. Of course, I had related the whole toilet anecdote when we were first chatting, so she knows just who she is dealing with here.
But she signed me anyway.
11 p.m.

I am ON MY WAY!! I just drank water out of the same pitcher as Nora Roberts. Need I say more?

The booksigning was so much fun. I bought so many books, I may have to change my return flight to a cargo plane. The delight of watching a first-book author sign her book is worth so much more than the cost of the book - and the bonus prize is getting to read another great book when I get home. I took pictures of all of our authors and bought their books: Beverly Brandt, Pam Binder, Janice Johnson, Deb Stover, Ann Roth, Adrienne Lee, and Caroline Cross of course. I tried to say hi to RITA-finalist Jane Porter and the talented Stella Cameron, but they were always swarmed with fans! Being far too sophisticated to demonstrate any awe at meeting my heroes, I casually got a few autographs from a few of my non-Seattle idols. Suzanne Brockmann gave every impression of responding to "AAARK GRGMPH LLTP" as though it were a recognizable language. Teresa Medeiros was as charming as her magical heroines.

Met friends at the bar for drinks, although the long day after a sleepless night was starting to get to me. I had a diet Coke at 8 p.m. and a glass of wine at 9 and then came upstairs to learn that the effects of caffeine and alcohol are magnified on the body at this altitude.

Nobody can ever say my timing doesn't suck.

I don't think it affected me at all, though, if you don't count the nightmares of giant rejection letters chasing me through the Rocky Mountains.

What a day! I can't believe it began at

4 in the morning Seattle time. Must sleep.

6 a.m. March 18th - Thursday

[NOTE TO SELF: Never room with evil woman who sets wake-up call for 6 a.m.]

1:30 p.m.

Another great day! Attended workshops and publisher "spotlights" and I have been learning so much! The funny thing about RWA conferences is that they seem to be populated by escaped lawyers. The Golden Heart Finalist I met this morning used to be a lawyer in Boston. The speaker at my first workshop was an ex-lawyer. New-York Times best-selling author Joan Johnston is another.

Lunch was fantastic! Teresa Medeiros gave a eloquent and inspiring talk about writing and about her parents' love story - one that overcame many obstacles, including serious mental illness. They should give out waterproof mascara in the goody room.

I have managed to work the phrase "my agent" into normal conversation over 350 times since yesterday afternoon. I thought it was quite seamless, until everyone seated at my lunch table shouted in unison, "We don't care if your agent likes chicken."

1 a.m.

We closed the bar down. Again. I think we are funding our server's kids' college educations before she even has kids. What an exhausting and thrilling day! Had a very late dinner with a new friend - she used to work in the press secretary's

office for President Reagan. Part of the fun of this conference is the chance to connect with old friends and meet new ones - what fascinating backgrounds people have!

Friday, 1 a.m. again

I am starving! What a whirlwind of a day. I learned so much in Debbie Macomber and Joan Johnston's talk on taking charge of your career. Took notes on my Visor™ so I can share them with everyone back at GSRWA. The Dorchester spotlight was encouraging; they really are looking for all kinds of paranormal these days. Suzanne Brockmann taught us how to create tall, dark, and believable heroes, and Julia Quinn was eloquent on the subject of dialogue.

Diane Hall-Harris and I are both as-yet unpublished, so Friday night - traditionally the night where publishers take their authors to lunch - was looking pretty bleak. But we skipped RWA's pizza party and went to a great local restaurant with another new friend, a soap opera writer who is responsible for Dr. Marlena Evans' demon eyes on Days of Our Lives. What a great night!! Diane and I had a lovely amount of wine and went to see Men In Black and made fun of Lara Flynn Boyle, the Amazing 12-Pound Villainess. We hooked up with the entire GSRWA contingent and closed down the bar again. (I know, this is getting to be a theme. Idea for next year: 12-step program for romance writers at conference.)

Saturday, 6 a.m.

If I put sleeping pills in her Chai Tea, do you think Pam would quit looking so perky at 6 a.m.?

AAAAAARGHHHHHHH.

Dinnertime

How does this week keep getting better and better??? Went to our own Deb Stover's wonderful talk (with Sue Swift) on setting in the novel and learned how to make my setting a protagonist. Then I heard Nancy Berland give the ABC's of great promotion on a shoestring budget.

Suzanne Brockmann was the luncheon speaker and she was phenomenal, as usual. She inspired us with her thoughts about writing romance post-September 11 and excited us with her vision of "Go, Team Romance!"

More seminars in the afternoon and a quick trip to the store for pantyhose for the awards ceremony. I had forgotten to take my nametag off and an elderly gentleman came up to me at Rite Aid. I just knew he could tell by my aura of calm competence that I was a writer. Maybe even one who would be on the road to publication in a year. I prepared myself to answer his questions about the writing field, or perhaps the romance genre. As he made his halting way down the aisle to me, I braced myself to represent our entire industry with style, grace, and class.

"Where are the cough drops, Miss?"

OK, so even Cinderella had her low moments.

At last!! The awards ceremony! Our own Jacquie Rogers and Gerri Russell are up for Golden Hearts and Jane Porter is nominated for a Rita. We cheered until we were hoarse and were so proud of our finalists. When Gerri won, I think we all started crying, although we wouldn't admit it. She was so lovely and eloquent in her acceptance speech.

The dessert buffet at the after-party was enticing, but Cinderella was finally starting to turn into a pumpkin. 4 days of non-stop excitement and no sleep caught up all at once and sent me to pack up my shoes and glass slippers and go to bed to dream of next year's conference in New York, where maybe I, too, will wear a pink ribbon.

This was one of the best weeks of my entire life.



Thinking Like A Journalist

By Theresa Meyers

Editors Note: Theresa was nice enough to give me several articles on PR. As a result. I will feature one a month

Every good hunter knows that in order to catch your prey you must be familiar enough with it to think like it. Writers interested in catching the attention of a media person can do no different. So, how do you go

about thinking like a journalist? Pretend he or she is one of your characters

You know all the likes and dislikes of your characters intimately. Do the same for the reporter. Read his or her work and discover what kind of style they write in, what topics they lean towards and what kind of information they like to highlight. By becoming familiar with a reporter's style and preferences, you'll be better able to slant your information packet or pitch letter to grab their interest.

■ Put yourself on deadline

Remember the pressure you experience when a deadline is looming over you? Now imagine that you have a new deadline everyday. So goes the life of the working journalist. Magazines have monthly deadlines; weekly newspapers require weekly articles; daily newspapers may have two deadlines each day for early and late additions of the paper and television stations have often hourly deadlines for specific programs. When sending material be especially sensitive to the deadlines the reporter is facing. Make calls when you know they won't be busy, but in time for them to use your information for their deadlines. Always take the time to ask the simple question, "Is now a good time?" If the reporter says no, ask when would be a better time to call and then get off the phone-don't give them a pitch, don't waste their time. Remember what you feel like on deadline.

■ Consider the journalist's audience

When you write, you consider your readers and their likes and preferences; media people must do the same to stay on top of a competitive industry. Help them out and you'll make good friends. Consider what information they will need in advance. Statistics from a variety of sources are a necessary item for any good journalist. Do some of the leg-work for them. Call a large local bookstore for example and find out how many romances they sell in a month, if the cost of romances is a factor in what they see selling, and what comments they receive from customers. When you offer these statistics and quotes to a journalist, be sure to include the source you used and a way for the journalist to get a hold of the person to ask additional questions.

■ Learn to write, again

Journalistic writing is different from just about every other form. It is specific in format and style, but changes to suit the "voice" of a publication or the "image" of a broadcast show. If you don't own a copy of the Associated Press Stylebook go to the ASU bookstore and buy one. It gives the "journalistically" correct abbreviations for everything from states to titles as well as the punctuation journalists use. When you write a press release, try to make it read as much like a news story out of your local paper as possible. Study publications to pick up their voice. If you are writing a pitch letter for television, be sure to give examples of visuals, events or guests that would make an appealing television segment. Watch the show and see where you would

best fit in. Don't know what to write? Remember that you are not just a local author. You are an authority on the changing role of women and men in our society. Make what you have to offer, more than just an author with a book. Be creative and look at the kinds of articles that your paper uses as a guide to the content they are searching for. If you can't make your information fit what they need, then you'd be better off not sending it.

■ Remember the food chain:

Like any other business, media has a pecking order. Yes, there is a difference in status between an associate editor, a managing editor and an editor 'n chief. Make sure you're sending material to the person who will be most receptive. Ideally, you'd love to get it into the hands of the producer or editor 'n chief, but these folks at the top are very busy and often pass stuff along rather than following up themselves when they're interested. You're probably better off hitting someone lower down the food chain. You also don't want to run the risk of ticking a senior person off by acting as though the tactic approval of an underling should generate their automatic acceptance as well.

Throw into the mix an odd working schedule (which most writers can easily identify with), a nutritionally worthless diet (which is why journalists love to meet over lunch), and a phone that never stops ringing and you begin to get a real sense of your prey. As a fiction writer, thinking like a journalist may not be your style, but it can help you get an

edge when you're on the hunt for publicity.

A professional book publicist and President of Blue Moon Communications, Theresa has been a member of RWA since 1993. First published in non-fiction in 1987, she is currently working on writing her third romance and continues to produce articles for magazines and newspapers.

What's The Buzz On Bad Boys? Finding Your Hero in Category Romance



By Catherine Mann and Joanne Rock

Romance authors strive to create the ultimate hero with every story, a tall order when so many fabulous men have already captured the hearts of readers. Shelves are packed with to-die-for heroes, from Suzanne Brockmann's SEALS to Nora Roberts' MacGregors.

One archetype we notice again and again in romance is the quintessential Bad Boy-- a hero who might be tall, dark and dangerous, or maybe a rogue in need of reform. Perhaps this man is so popular because he presents such an enticing challenge. The more of an obstacle the hero provides, the more triumphant our heroine feels when she wins his heart. So how do we go about creating that ultimate, spine-tingling hero to capture a reader's heart?

The Bad Boy hero can take many forms. Corporate shark. Cop. Scientist. Fireman. Surfer turned millionaire businessman. We all have our ideal of the "perfect guy," and what attracts us differs for everyone. Part of the Harlequin/Silhouette marketing strategy depends on tapping into those individual inclinations by delivering a certain kind of book for each line, based on reader preferences. That includes the type of hero.

Questioning Bachelors #1, 2 & 3... Researching Your Hero

The first step to writing a compelling hero in category romance is to do your research. Read, read, read the line you're targeting. Does the line look for a bad boy who's edgy and larger than life? Or a hero who curbs his bad-boy ways to an occasional wicked gleam in his eye? When we first decided to target Harlequin/Silhouette, we began by reading hundreds, yes hundreds, of category romances.

The following chart is a model to help analyze your target line and identify trends. (Remember, exceptions can be found to every example!) While reading your books in the line you are researching, note the following facets of the heroes you meet:

Ages Looks Sexual Thoughts Jobs
Lifestyle Role of Money Children
Family Types of Conflicts Risks
Stakes

A Little Mouth-to-Mouth ... Breathing
Life Into Your Bad Boy

A sexy hero can transform your book from merely a good story into a memorable keeper-shelf read. To write a studly sensation, you'll also want to keep in mind these principles of good characterization that can be applied to all romance heroes. Here are some basics to use as a springboard for launching the creation of your very own hot hero with a healthy dose of sizzle.

Give him flaws: We want to watch our heroes grow on their journey. If you write a hero who is perfect to start with, his character has no room for development. Is he commitment shy, afraid of something, too proud, emotionally reticent? What internal conflict does he need to overcome during the course of the book?

Give him quirks: Ever read a hero who was too cardboard? He probably didn't have any personality quirks to make him stand out in our minds. On the other hand, who can forget a hero with a troll pin on his duster like Mitch in Joanne's Tall, Dark & Daring (Temptation 10/02), or an Air Force officer sporting a do-rag like Grayson in Catherine's Grayson's Surrender (SIM 9/02)? Give your hero an intriguing quirk or two and you've given your reader a memorable man.

Make him studly: Create a man with presence. This isn't a matter of physical beauty—he can be fierce and formidable or quietly in charge. Whether he's a corporate shark turned stand-in pirate as in Joanne's Wild & Willing (Blaze 9/02), or an aviator airlifting troops in Catherine's Taking Cover (SIM 11/02), readers are attracted to masculine strength in any number of

areas. But your hero needs to dominate whatever landscape you choose to pen for him.

Give him an element of danger: A bad boy hero comes complete with an element of danger. Depending on the line you are targeting, that might mean your hero is a detective or a military man, or it might mean he's a corporate lawyer who's a little edgy and unpredictable. Despite this element of danger, the hero should never be scary to the heroine. He might present a momentary threat to her peace of mind, but the heroine's heart is always safe in his hands.

Make him worthy of the challenge: Show us hints of his redeeming characteristics early in the book. We want to see shades of honor or nobility from the start, no matter what other character flaws you've given him. Offer us a sense that this man will be worth the heroine's effort—that he will be a prize worthy of her love.

Enjoy the Show... The Bad Boy in Action

With a little careful analysis and characterization layering, you can create a hero that fits your line's parameters, yet simultaneously stretches the boundaries. A memorable romance has at its heart an unforgettable hero and that man deserves the best start in his fictional life that you can give him. Remember to make him heroic and strong, flawed but filled with potential, universal and at the same time, unique.

A tall order? You betcha. But we are, after all, talking about heroes here, and there's nothing that a sexy bad boy can't handle.

Critique partners Catherine Mann and Joanne Rock look forward to presenting their visual Power Point workshop on the Bad Boys of Category at the NJRW conference this October.

Catherine Mann's "Wingmen Warriors" SIM series takes flight in September with Grayson's Surrender followed by sequels in 11/02, 1/03 and summer '03. Look for Catherine's prequel contribution to the "Family Secrets" continuity with The Cinderella Mission, 2/03. Visit Catherine at www.CatherineMann.com

Joanne Rock offers steamy reads from Blaze and Temptation "Heat" including Wild & Willing, Blaze 9/02, Tall, Dark & Daring, Temptation 10/02, and Revealed, Temptation 3/03. Visit Joanne at www.JoanneRock.com. First released to "Tete-a-Tete," the online newsletter of Coeur de Louisiane. May be reprinted by other RWA chapter newsletters.

CoLoNY's Top 10 Tips To Promote Yourself - For Free ~ by Rosemary Morretta

Here are 10 totally free ways to market yourself, your manuscripts and your books. They are not, I repeat not, for the faint hearted. Good luck!

1. Your Elevator Pitch - So, you find yourself in the elevator with an editor, journalist, talk-show producer, bookseller, or virtually anyone you want to get excited about your book. You've got maybe 60 seconds of his or her time to convey the essence of what your book is about. You have to:

1) Be the most enthusiastic individual they have ever met; and

2) tell them why your book is going to change your reader's

lives. Otherwise, you will part company on the 10th floor.

Go for it!

2. Your Email Signature - Name, Telephone #, Fax, Address, Website, Email, even the title of your recently written book or any services you offer or products you have for sale - This is the place! Don't be shy. Write 10 lines if you want to. Your email recipient will stop reading when they get bored.

3. Your Emailed Newsreleases - These days many media professionals prefer to receive press releases via email. Do the research and find their email addresses. But, remember the one and only goal of

your release remains the same as your snail-mail releases and that is to reveal the heart and soul of your book in a way that shows the recipient why you will make a great interviewee. Oh and don't forget the: who, what, when, where, why and how, even a techno-marketer like you can't forget the details.

4. Your Interviews - Did you know that there are over four thousand radio and TV programs that book approximately 10,000 guests every day as well as sixteen hundred daily newspapers with umpteen pages to fill? Get on the case ladies (and gents) the people responsible for bringing in the content will be thrilled to hear from you. Do your career a favor and get in touch with them. They are waiting...

5. Your Professional Networks - Everyone needs all the help they can get. And, believe it or not, there are people out there who would help you if they knew who you were. In order to succeed you need a network of readers, writers, booksellers, publishing reps, etc. Virtually anyone you can think of who could potentially help your career. Meet them at book signings, online in the publishing links, or (though this is not free) you could meet them at conferences and through national writing associations like RWA and the its local chapters. Find out who can help and how to get in touch with them. Just do it!

6. Your Follow Thru - It's a sad fact that most people don't follow-thru on their initial efforts. They work hard at doing their promotions, reaching out to the media and finding new readers and then don't

follow-up. The result is that their efforts are wasted. Don't be that guy! If you send someone something, call or email to make certain that they received it. If they don't respond, keep contacting them until they do. Also, if you're published, find a comfortable way to stay in touch with your readers to let them know what you are up to. They are your best shot at success. Do the warm and fuzzy. It's a win/win for all concerned.

7. Your Thank-you Notes - This has to be the easiest thing in the world to do and one of the nicest things to receive. When someone does something for you just say thank you. But don't just send an email - that's too easy. Handwrite a personal note. It shows you cared enough to take the time and that makes it memorable. P.S. There is no spell-check when writing long hand so don't forget to use a dictionary!

8. Your Peers - Yes, we all realize that your writing has no peer. However, you do have a lot in common with other writers and since you have the same fish to fry you may as well put aside your competitive cap and replace it with one of cooperation. Having like-minded writers to share information, discuss complaints, and celebrate victories with will help move your career forward. And who knows, when an agent or editor asks them if they know anyone who writes the kind of books you do...they just may pass on your name. Hey, it could happen...

9. Your Services - People love freebies and book people want books and book-related products or

services as the giveaway. Give it to them and then make certain you get what you need in return : promotion for yourself and your book. Get permission to add them to your mailing and email list or, if they have a customer list, get permission to use it to send out future promotions. As a promotional giveaway you can offer an excerpt from your book to readers, bookstores or to the media or you might offer some other free informational content. You could start a readers contest and offer your book and/or something related to it as the prize or run a contest for your peers and offer editing or critiquing services as the first prize. And what are you going to do after you provide someone with a freebee? (Ah, how quickly we forget! See Tip #6 for the answer.)

10. Your Support - Giving back to the publishing community for the support that it provides you by giving industry talks and writing articles not only publicizes you and your books, but also garners you a whole host of additional benefits. By sharing your knowledge and giving presentations locally, you can obtain a continuing presence in the media, generate sales for booksellers (always a good thing to do), add names to your mailing list, and much more. So step away from the computer and remember, what goes around comes around!

One of CoLoNY's founding members, Rosemary Morretta spent 20 years as a marketing executive, beginning her career at Apple Computer where she was a member of the original Macintosh development team. More recently she was Chief Marketing Officer for several dot.coms, all of which went bust. Deciding that the universe was trying to tell her something, Rosemary gave

up her high-tech career and is now the Executive Director for a small historical house museum in Ridgefield, CT. Rosemary is writing a series of historical Regency period novels whose heroines are named for mythological goddesses. Her first novel, *Divine Love*, was amongst the winners in the 2001 Central Ohio Fiction Writers "Ignite the Flame" contest. This article first appeared in the July/August 2002 issue of *Sound Ideas*, the newsletter of the Romance Writers of Southern Connecticut and Lower New York (CoLoNY).

PLAYING TO YOUR STRENGTHS ON THE CONTEST CIRCUIT

—OR—

HOW TO HIDE YOUR FLAB WHEN STRUTTING YOUR STUFF

by Cheryl Lewallen

Hello again, little strumpets! It's me, your guiding floozy here to pontificate about what I have and haven't learned from the contest circuit. Today's lesson will be in putting your best foot forward to gain the attention you want. Now, slip your feet into your spiky red heels and let's head onto the street.

First, you must have attitude. Us hussies are a tough lot. We've been pushed around, beaten up and shamed by tons of pious, finger shaking judges. We're pretty street smart. We've learned that in order to stand out, we have to approach this business with verve, attitude, zeal. You can do it, too. Does your submission shine? And I'm not just talking about with squeaky-clean edits (though that is important). Does your story possess emotion,

sensuality, or humor? If so, how can you make it more emotional, sensual, humorous? Is your submission unforgettable in that special way that only you can make it? You think so? Good, then, on to the next step.

You must dress the part. Dressing for our little corner of the street is important. This is where you strut your stuff. You must stand out. Remember, you have one brief moment to attract their eye, to lure them into that seductive web. A special wardrobe is in order. Set aside your everyday wear for later when you must slow down a bit and focus on finding a long lasting relationship (i.e., editor). Choose carefully now. Pick that g-string, er, story that gets 'em right away. Some stories are better than others at doing this. I have one manuscript that will never see the light of day on the contest circuit because it's a genre rule breaker. I won't waste my time and money to be told something I already know.

Start a contest file. This file is separate from your regular manuscript file. Within that contest file, download the first chapter (or two) and synopsis of the ms that you want to enter. Make sure that chapter fits the contest criteria. And what, you ask, is that criteria...? First the hero and heroine meet in chapter one. Get that electricity going right away. Lure. Entice. Tease. And it is here I digress some. Since I am about to discuss what I have seen as the major flaw of first timers. Watch for what I call the plausibility factor. Just because this is your first manuscript and perhaps the first time you have allowed

yourself to write a sex scene, do not force the hero and heroine to kiss (or otherwise) in the first chapter if it really is not a natural part of the scene. That's not upping the sexual tension. What man whom you have first met took you in his arms and gave you a wet one before he asked your name? If it happened in real life, it would be scary, gross, offensive, so what makes you think it would be sexy on paper? Kissing is not the sexiest part, nor is sex. What leads up to it is.

The second criteria are a plot twist, or a little something extra and different that happens in that first chapter that will (hopefully) inspire the judge to remember your entry. Turn those tricks, ladies. We're aiming to please. Third, the entry meets the page count of the contest (more on that in a minute). And fourth, the entry ends with a cliffhanger. That's right, girls. We want those customers coming back for more. We like to see them beg. People have quibbled 'til the list-serves come home about how contests force you to write to these demands. There are some legitimate arguments here since most editors are more patient than contest judges. They like it nice and slow, or at least slower. They're more patient; they will allow you to build your story.

But consider this -- my agent told me that a good portion of the manuscripts she rejects are not engaging from the first page. Ouch. More sequins please! I believe that contests train you to set that impacting moment in the first few pages. Having to put that hot scene, interesting plot twist, or whatever

makes your story special, right out there helps you to get to the nitty gritty of a scene. Helps you to be a better writer. So this is where the file comes into play. This is where your contest entry will be from here on out. This chapter will obviously reflect your regular manuscript chapters, but it will be tweaked a bit here and there to fit the demands of each contest. This is not cheating, I promise.

Don't forget the accessories Okay, now the page tweaking. I have seen many a contest entry in Times New Roman. It's an acceptable font and will certainly lower your page count (ten pages can usually be squashed down to seven and a half), but frankly, this impresses me as doing just that...Squashing. And squashing a poorly written chapter down to fit the page count doesn't make it a better written story. We are going to do something else instead. We are looking for areas of that chapter that slow the pace down. Back story always slows the pace down and should be used sparingly. Perhaps it's whole paragraphs, or maybe just words, like those frumpy little ones that end with the "ly" suffix. Get them out of there.

We're also going to examine the ending of the story. Does your page count go to thirty, yet, the contest you so desperately want to enter demands twenty pages? Hard question time. Do you want to skip this contest because you absolutely cannot cut your precious story, or do you see places of back story or introspection that can be taken out and used in later chapters? Your choice. If you decide to modify your chapter, then also consider where

the chapter ends. It may not be at the end of the same chapter that you're sending to editors. But still, wherever you end that contest submission, you must leave them wanting more. Go on. Make 'em beg.



Series & Sequels by Rita Herron

What exactly constitutes a series, how does an author land her own series or get involved in an in-house series, and is there a difference between a series and a sequel? The romance writer/reader sees a multitude of taglines on books these days which designate books that belong to a series or a mini-series. These taglines are meant to help the reader identify the books that belong in a series so they don't miss one or more of the stories.

A series or mini-series (for this article I'll use the terms interchangeably) is a group of two or more stories which contain a common element or hook. Each story usually has a self-contained romance of its own with a satisfying ending but may or may not have questions from a sub-plot left unanswered to hook the reader into buying the next book. Many times the mini-series or continuity series is a group of three books (can be longer), each book having its own romance, but a thread of the storyline continues throughout the series and all elements and questions are tied up at the end of the series.

For example, in my Hartwell Hope Chest series from Harlequin America, the common hook is the hope chest that is given to each granddaughter at the beginning of the book. Each story revolves around one of the granddaughters and her quest for love and has a self-contained romance, but the thread of the sub-plot, the girls' family lives, and the conflict between their divorced parent's builds throughout the first three books.

Series are often planned from the beginning, either by the author or as in the case of the continuity series, by the publishing house. In an author-generated mini-series, the author pitches the idea to his/her editor and usually writes all the books in the series whereas a continuity series is generally started in-house. An editor or group of editors writes the bible for the continuity series, then invites certain authors to participate. In this case, the author is given the basic storyline for their book along with the bible and continuity elements which must be built into their book. Each book has a satisfying romantic plot but leaves off with a hook for the next book in the series.

Another series type story which consists of several authors comes when several stories have a similar element and are given a tag line to tie them in but are not related. For example, Temptation does a Wrong Bed tagline, Superromance does a Nine-months Later tagline which involves pregnant heroines, Intrigue does the Her Protector and A Memory Away series. This type of story is a place for new authors to start—the author writes a story

which fits into that type of storyline and is then given the tag to help distinguish it to the reader, but the books are not related in any way.

A sequel differs slightly from a series in that the author may or may not plan the next book when the first one is written. Often times a writer will include a secondary character that becomes so strong throughout the story that the readers and/or editor may decide to follow up with a sequel. Carmen Green's Crawford family is a perfect example; she constantly gets mail begging her for stories about the other Crawford family members and has written several sequels just to satisfy her readers! In sequels, the secondary character is usually introduced in the first book as a friend, relative, or co-worker.

The first story should tie up all loose ends concerning the first romance and plot line. Often times, these stories are not given a tagline, but to identify them as sequels are given similar sounding titles such as Karen Hawkins' historical novels, *The Abduction of Julia* and *The Seduction of Sarah*. Another type of sequel is the connected book, which may or may not be two books written by the same author.

For example, author Deb Webb and I joined together and are writing connected books for Harlequin American which involve a twin switch (an adult parent trap story) where two men meet as adults, learn they are twins that were separated at birth, then decide to trade places. Each book has its own romance, yet we worked closely together to tie in a sub-plot about the families and

how the boys came to be separated. My book *The Rancher Wore Suits* (10/02) ends with a hook for the follow-up story by Deb Webb, *The Doctor Wore Boots* (11/02). Another market for series stories is the mystery genre. Mystery authors often write a series about a character or particular setting. Series are not as common in single title although Sue Grafton's alphabet murder series is an example of one, Janet Evanovich's *Stephanie Plum* another.

But let's focus on category series books and what they're looking for. How do you get into a series or get your own series going? First of all, study the markets! Make sure you understand the line you want to write for. Common hooks and elements for category lines center around the popular hooks for the line. For example, Temptation wants sexy, sassy themes; Intrigue wants mystery/suspense elements with common romance hooks; Harlequin American and Special Edition want family elements. For the romance writer in any line, think large families or communities (Nora Roberts' *McGregor Brothers*, Harlequin Intrigue, Amanda Steven's *Eden's Children*), a common place or setting for the story (Harlequin Intrigue's Ruth Glick's *Light House* series, Kelsey Roberts' *Rose Tattoo* series, Deb Webb's *Colby Agency* series, and my new Intrigue series, *Nighthawk Island*).

Also look for concepts which tie the series together. Not only does my *Nighthawk Island* series take place in one location, off the steamy coast of Savannah at a fictitious research center, but each story is a medically-

related mystery. Donna Sterling wrote a mini-series called *Bedside Manner for Temptation* which featured small town doctors. Charlotte McClay's *Harlequin Intrigue* series, *Men of Station Six*, features stories about fearless firemen.

What are the advantages or disadvantages of a series? Disadvantages come if the author tires of the series and is ready to move on but gets pigeon holed into only writing that series. In the case of the continuity series, the author may not be given the copyright in her name, and the author is essentially writing a story based on someone else's plot and/or characters, so the author's creative freedom may be limited. Working and planning with other authors is time consuming, and can get tricky if egos get involved or if editorial or author changes affect the next author's story.

Advantages stem from the fact that participating in a continuity series (being invited to join) is considered an honor and perk for the author. Also most series are given extra promotion and can build a loyal readership for the author, which eventually leads to more sales—just what we writers want! Well, except for those of us who are just writing for the fun of it . . .

Tips for Series Writing DOs

- Study the market to see what's out there and come up with something unique that will fit into the line you are targeting (another source to study is television programs;

sitcoms revolving around families or friends, mystery series, etc.)

- Think on a large scope—think family sagas, communities, work places that invite characters and plot lines a reader would want to revisit

- If you want to write for a pre-existing series which is open (ask editors which ones are), then read all the stories in that series to get a feel for the storyline, tone, the characters, the theme and other elements · Keep a bible of characters, places, names, ages, etc.

- Give the reader a satisfying ending regarding the main romance · Plant other characters, family members, problems and threads of conflict that you can bring out later, use your sub-plot to introduce this conflict

- Leave some unanswered questions or a hook for the next story · Include a lead-in for the next story, possibly a short excerpt, at the end of each book in the series

- Show characters change and growth from one book to the next (for example, your bad guy in book one may slowly progress through the next book to be redeemable enough to be your hero for book three)

- Let old characters revisit in subsequent stories—when readers get invested in a family or community, they like to see the characters from previous books return and know what's going on in their life

- Use category hooks—again, study those markets

- Have books come out close together, if possible

DON'Ts · Start by boring the reader with long drawn out paragraphs to catch them up on family members or characters from previous books (weave these people and events back in slowly)

- Start with one book, then move back in time with the second

- Have similar elements, story line or conflicts so all the books sound the same (for example, if book one has a secret baby element, don't repeat it in the other books)

- Watch for repetition of names and similar type characters, make each one different and an individual

Rita Herron's new Nighthawk Island series from Harlequin Intrigue debuts with book one, Silent Surrender, in April 2002. Look for book two, Memories of Megan, in December 2002, and book three, title to be announced, in May 2003. Watch for two more books in her popular Harlequin American Hope Chest series in July 2003 and September 2003, and her Trading Places twin switch story The Rancher Wore Suits in October 2002. Rita is also contributing the sixth book (a November 2003 release) to Harlequin Intrigue's Colorado Confidential series beginning in July. And last but not least, her second single title comedy, Under the Covers, comes out June 2002. For other writing tips and updates on her releases, visit Rita at www.ritaherron.com. This article first appeared in the April 2002 issue of The Galley, newsletter for Georgia Romance Writers.