

# Words of Paradise

Romance Writers of America ©

Aloha Chapter  
Founded 1988



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## In this issue:

- *President's Place: "Aloha Chapter at the Festival" - Lynn Raye Harris* ..... page 1
- *Aloha Chapter News* ..... page 2
- *"How to Start Your Own Blog" - Lynn Raye Harris* ..... page 3
- *Take Five: "Running With the Big Dogs" - Michael Little* ..... page 5

### **President's Place** **Aloha Chapter at the Festival** by Lynn Raye Harris

Aloha, fellow chapter members! I hope you've had a good month of writing. We've got a lot going on in the Aloha Chapter this month. First, we've submitted our application for a booth at the Hawaii Book and Music Festival taking place at the Honolulu Hale April 22-23.



We will be sharing space with the National League of American PEN Women, so this is a great opportunity to network with another group and to get the message out about RWA. We welcome your help with staffing the booth on both days, and will be coordinating that as we get closer to the event.

Several of our authors are contributing books and promotional items to the event. Morag McKendrick Pippin will be there signing and selling copies of her books, *Blood Moon over Britain* and *Blood Moon over Bengal*.

Jane Porter will also be there signing books. Jane has a new book out this month, *Flirting with Forty*, a Women's Lit novel about a divorced woman's coming of age. Part of the novel takes place in Hawaii, so this is a wonderful tie-in for the event. She is also bringing some of her Harlequin Presents novels, and copies of *The Frog Prince*. RITA-nominee and NYT best-selling author Jill Marie Landis is also sending books, though she is unable to attend. Thank you, Jill!

We also have our e-published authors, Lynde Lakes and Sally Sorenson, participating. And would any event be complete without the gentle humor of Michael Little's *Queen of the Rodeo*?

Finally, and very excitingly, we will also be selling *Strong Currents 2*, the anthology featuring chapter members and local contributors. A portion of the proceeds from this anthology goes to Hawaii Literacy, Inc., so we hope for many sales.

### Words of Paradise

Aloha Chapter  
Romance Writers of America  
[www.rwaaloha.org](http://www.rwaaloha.org)



President: Lynn Harris  
Vice President: Leslee Ellenson  
Treasurer: Sally Sorenson  
Secretary: Melissa Dylan  
Publications: Michael Little

Though we are still only in the beginning of the year, I want to say thank you to each and every one of you for your help, encouragement, and comments during my time as president. I've had a lot of fun so far. You writers rock.

Aloha,  
Lynn

## Aloha Chapter News



### Jill Marie Landis Named RITA Finalist

Our very own **Jill Marie Landis** is a RITA finalist! Her novel *Heartbreak Hotel* is a finalist in the Best Contemporary Single Title category. Congratulations, Jill!

### Lynn Harris a Finalist in Great Expectations Contest

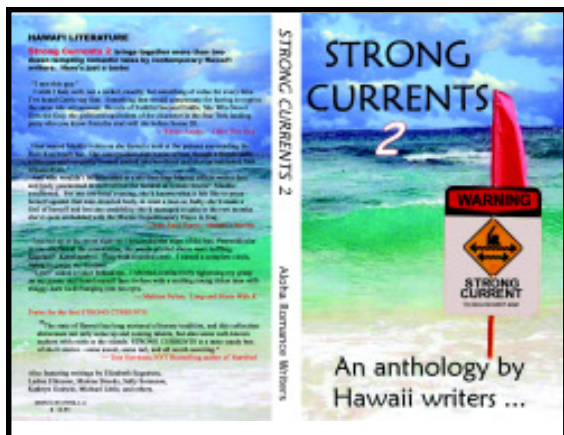
Congratulations to **Lynn Raye Harris**, who received a second place in the North Texas Romance Writers of America 2006 Great Expectations contest and a manuscript request by the judging editor. Lynn was honored in the Steamy Hot category for her *Seducing Evangeline*.

### Morag Pippin a Finalist in Reviewers International Organization Award

**Morag Pippin** has just been notified that her *Blood Moon Over Britain* is a finalist in Romantic Suspense in the Reviewers International Organization Award for Excellence for 2005. This was formerly the Dorothy Parker Award of Excellence. Congratulations, Morag!

### Strong Currents 2 Published

Aloha Chapter's second anthology of Hawaii writers, *Strong Currents 2*, was published in March. Book launch plans are underway, including local signings and readings and a booth at the first Hawaii Book and Music Festival in Honolulu on April 22 and 23. A portion of the proceeds from this anthology goes to Hawaii Literacy, Inc. Here is a list of the writers and titles included in this collection.



WANDA A. ADAMS. *I Met This Guy*  
MELISSA DYLAN. *Long and Starts With K*  
ELIZABETH ENGSTROM. *In a Darkened Compartment*  
LYNN RAYE HARRIS. *Maddie's Marine*  
MICHAEL LITTLE. *How Jackie Got Her Oil Changed*  
LESLEE ELLENSEN. *Maestro Julian*  
MALENA S. BROOKS. *Oh Daddy*

SALLY SORENSON. *Ah, There's the Rub*  
KATHRYN GODWIN. *The Kiss*  
ALEXANDRA MORGAN. *Close Kine*  
HELEN CRAIG. *Aftermath*  
CAMI NIHIPALI. *Haole Girl*

THERESA DREW. *Sustenance*  
K. T. HELFRICH. *Elbow Room*  
SALLY SORENSON. *Love Means Letting Go*  
MICHAEL LITTLE. *In Search of Inspiration*  
HELEN CRAIG. *The Benefits of Exercise*  
KAREN HUFFMAN. *On the Way to Love*  
NINA KREK. *Poor Sheila McKinley*  
LINDA A. MARK. *Feng Shui for Everyone*  
LYNDE LAKES. *Desert Heat*  
J. FREITAS. *The Turtle Pool*  
NATALIE BARRETT. *Stranger Things*  
LESLEE ELLENSON. *His Story*  
THERESA DREW. *Gardening*  
NINA KREK. *Darling*

### 2006 Aloha Chapter Meeting Dates

Saturday, 10 a.m. to noon  
Aina Haina Library

**January 7**

**February 4**

**March 4**

**April 8**

**May 6**

**June 3**

**July 8**

**August 5**

**September 9**

**October 7**

**November 4 (luncheon, Hale Koa)**

### How to Start Your Own Blog by Lynn Raye Harris

You've taken the plunge, surfed the blog links I gave you, become addicted to a couple of them. It's inevitable that you're thinking about the next step. Perhaps you want to set up housekeeping in your own corner of cyberspace, fiddle with templates, make links, prettify your space with add-ons and cyber tchotchke. Most of all, you want to share your thoughts with others. You want to wax poetic about the things important to you as a writer and as a human being. You want to commune with fellow writers, expressing opinions, engendering debates, and generally having a good time.

Here's the part where I suggest you take a moment and think about your goals before you continue on the path to blog heaven. If you just want to wax poetic and have discussions, you can do that on group forums or email loops such as the various RWA-sponsored loops.

Maintaining a blog and increasing traffic is a whole 'nother kettle of fish. Blogging requires commitment and etiquette (more on that in a minute). Some questions to consider: can you manage to update your blog frequently (not necessarily daily, but at least weekly)? Can you find things to talk about that are interesting, relevant, and maybe even a little bit controversial? Can you handle criticism?

You should carefully consider these questions before starting a blog. No one's going to penalize you if you don't, but no one's going to read you either. And the point is to get read, right? Otherwise, you're just typing to hear yourself type.

Okay, so you've thought about it and you're ready to start a blog. You have goals: to reach ten people a day, to discuss things important to you, to find like-minded people, to promote your books. Now where do you start?

If you already have a webpage, chances are you have a blog platform with your web-hosting package. If you're unsure, ask your host or your designer. You'll probably have to download WordPress to get started, but your blog will be on your own site and it'll have your domain name. If you don't want to fiddle with all that, simply go to Blogger.com (it's free) or LiveJournal.com (also free, though you can get a paying account for more storage capacity) and follow the steps.

Typically, you need to create a login name and password, and then you'll be directed to a place where you pick out a template. Don't worry, you can test a few templates before committing to one. You'll also need to think up a name for your blog, a description, and write a mini-bio on yourself. (The good news is that all this can be changed at any time, including the template.) Now all you have to do is sit back and wait for the readers, right?

Wrong. Unless you're multi-published and have fans already, you'll probably feel like you're shouting into an empty cavern. You may get the stray visitor. You'll probably get spam (you can set your comments up for word verification or you can moderate the comments, both of which filter out the spam). But how do you reach other writers?

You can list your blog on webrings such as Romancing the Blog and Authors Blogs (I'm on both, though in truth I get little traffic from either). That will help, and will probably bring you a trickle of readers from time to time. The *only* way, however, to build a readership is by practicing blog etiquette.

1. *He who never visits thinks his mother is the only cook - African Proverb.* To be visited, you must visit. You must go into blogland, find blogs you like, read and make comments.
2. When someone visits you, it's courtesy to visit them in return.
3. Be nice, even if you choose to be controversial.
4. Don't pick fights. Think before responding.
5. Link, link, link. When you link to others, many will return the favor and link to you. You can trade links directly, but don't be afraid to add some of the more popular bloggers with the understanding that they probably are too busy to return the favor.

You should also update your blog frequently because people like new content. Use short paragraphs. Ask questions. Give people a reason to keep reading. Limit quizzes (cute little things that ask such vital questions as "What type of movie is your life?"). And, yes, I am guilty of quizzes from time to time, especially when I'm too busy to write a new post.

Blogging is not for everyone. It requires time and attention. It requires interaction with others on a regular basis. It can be exclusive and cliquish. It can be frustrating. But, the rewards are building a readership, building name recognition, promoting yourself and your work, and making new friends. Though it may seem to make more sense if you're already published, I believe it makes sense for the serious unpublished writer as well. It's simply another form of promotion, and it requires time management skills and a regular commitment to writing. You may as well learn those things now if you hope to have a career later.

One last word of advice: none of this matters a bit if you fail to keep writing your stories. Blog if you wish, but don't neglect the writing. If you decide to give it a try, let me know. We can trade links.

## ***Take Five***

### **Running With the Big Dogs**

**by Michael Little**

If you want to run with the big dogs you have to get off the porch. Sure, it's safer on the porch. It's wild and crazy out there with the big dogs. Where are they running? What's around the next corner? Will the big dogs accept you? Better think it over. Don't rush into things. What if it rains? The porch is dry. The porch is close to the food. But look at those big dogs. My, how they do run.



Before you begin to jump off the porch, and to conclusions, I should offer a disclaimer. This dog story has absolutely nothing to do with writing. You can draw comparisons if you wish. I'm just throwing it out there. I'm talking real dogs here. The Winter Olympics are over, which means that watching Olympic curling on the TV screen is done for another four years (did I dream all that curling?), and now the vacuum is being filled by dogs. Big dogs, small dogs, a canine parade. If you love dogs, or are even mildly curious about them, pull up a chair and grab a milk-bone. I have a couple of dog stories for you.

One dog story involves a three-month-old Italian greyhound named Simone who has moved into our house and stolen our hearts. Our Senegal parrot, who has been the only pet for the past four years and did not ask us to bring a four-legged animal into her territory, is a little wary. The puppy, who only wants to love and be loved, is trying not to ruffle any feathers.

Italian greyhounds are mini greyhounds, smaller than whippets and much smaller than those big fast racing greyhounds. These mini marvels been around for over 2,000 years, beginning somewhere in the area of Greece and Turkey and making it all the way to Honolulu. If you want to see photos and learn more about the breed, visit the Italian Greyhound Club of America at <http://www.italiangreyhound.org>.

Simone, our new family member, has a name that is longer than she is. Her registered name is Ravencroft Shout for Joy (her mom is Ravencroft Amazing Grace and her siblings all sport spiritual song title names). We named her Nina Simone Armani Little. If you use the whole name to reprimand her, however, by the end of the name you will both have forgotten the reason she is in trouble. Simone has yet another, infrequently heard name: Nina Simone's Greatest Hits. Naturally it's not something we want the neighbors to hear us shouting from the porch.

Speaking of the porch, Simone doesn't need to get off it in order to run with the big dogs. She can run with us. We'll be her pack. And we have good dog toys.

The second dog story is about big dogs. This week I saw the film *Eight Below*, inspired by the true story of a pack of sled dogs abandoned in Antarctica when a Japanese camp had to be evacuated quickly because of a sudden major storm. It's a beautiful film, well written, acted, and directed.

The human characters are decent, likeable people, but the stars are the huskies and Malamutes. I found myself caught up in their ordeal, rooting for these big dogs to survive and crying big dog tears at the end. Maybe I wasn't running with the big dogs, but I had a great view of them from the porch of my movie house seat.

*Michael*

