

New England WRITERS CENTRE

For people who love writing and reading

Newsletter

July - September 2006

 **historyweek**
A historycouncilnsw initiative

IS HISTORY FICTION?

In September, during History Week, the New England Writers' Centre (NEWC) and the School of Classics, History and Religion at UNE will bring well-known public intellectuals, Ann Curthoys and John Docker, to Armidale for forums and workshops on the art of writing history.

Ann Curthoys is Manning Clark Professor of History at the ANU. She has written widely on aspects of Australian history, including indigenous history, women's history, the media, and post World War II political history. She also writes on questions of national identity, historical writing, and the representation of history in museums. She serves on the advisory boards of several journals. Her publications include: *For and Against Feminism: A Personal Journey into Feminist Theory and History*; *Freedom Ride: A Freedomrider Remembers*.



John Docker is a well-known literary and cultural critic, public intellectual and is currently Research Fellow at ANU. He has written on contemporary theories of culture, identity, and diaspora; Orientalism and exoticism; monotheism and polytheism; and genocide in relation to both the Enlightenment and

settler colonialism. His most recent books are *1492: The Poetics of Diaspora* (2001) and, with Ann Curthoys, *Is History Fiction?* (2005). This book explores in fresh and innovative ways the perennial question, what is history? How can we in the present know the past?

They will head up what promises to be a lively debate ranging broadly over that topic along with historical novelist Wendy James, author of *Out of the Silence*, and Steve Harris, author of *Gore Vidal's Historical Novels and the Shaping of the American Political Consciousness*.

Ann will also give a seminar at UNE, *Historians in the Courtroom*, and she and John will run a workshop at NEWC *Personal Passions and Historical Writing* the following morning. They will discuss writing books which have a strong personal theme and memory, but which are not straightforward memoirs, based on their own two works *Freedom Ride* and *1492*. On September 20, UNE will also hold an afternoon of seminars with local historians looking at the big problems, questions and issues that historians are tackling.

*UNE Seminars *Frontiers of Australian History II*, Wednesday September 20, 2 pm to 4 pm, Education Building, Lecture Theatre 111, gold coin donation.

*UNE seminar, *Historians in the Courtroom*, Friday September 22, 9.15-10.30, in Arts A2, free.

*Debate Friday September 22, 5.30 for 6 pm, at the New England Regional Art Museum (NERAM), Kentucky St, Armidale. \$15 includes finger food.

*Workshop, *Personal Passions and Historical Writing* Saturday, September 23, 10am to 1pm. at NEWC, \$25/\$20.

MANUSCRIPT CONSULTATIONS

Creative Director of Varuna-The Writers' House, Peter Bishop, returns to Armidale in August to do more manuscript consultations. Six one-hour consultations are available – they must be booked and paid in advance.

Last year Peter visited each of the NSW writers' centres and all sessions were fully booked. He found a stream of lively and engaging writers, deeply committed to their writing and keen to explore new ways of furthering it.

(Continued on page 3)

OCTOBER WORKSHOPS -WITH SUSAN HAMPTON

Last year, Susan's workshops sold out and a few people missed out. This year this renowned editor, novelist and poet returns with another fabulous weekend on editing (something every writer in any genre needs to know about more than ever) and a new workshop called Poetics – Theories About What Writing Is. These workshops are bound to fill up fast. To be sure of a place, book now and pay at least a month before the events.

STRUCTURAL EDITING

a two-day workshop
10am to 4pm
Saturday & Sunday, October 14-15
Tutor: Susan Hampton
\$100/\$85 members.

In 'Poetics', Aristotle defines narrative structure so well we call his idea 'the Aristotelian curve'. What does this mean? What are the alternatives to linear structure? We look at the concept of moving paragraphs or stanzas around for a better effect, changing openings, and the concept of closure.

We discuss how to recognise where you need to delete, how to recognise and change clichés, and why this is necessary. We look at options for structure, the benefits of past and present tense, the effects of using first person or third person, first drafts and tenth drafts. Much of it is still relevant to non-fiction writers.

You can (but don't have to) bring a short piece of writing (up to 3 pages) to be workshopped in the second half of the classes. Please bring six copies.

POETICS

a one-day workshop
10 am to 4pm
Friday, October 13
Tutor: Susan Hampton
\$55/\$45 members.

Poetics deals with the history, theory, technique and criticism of poetry from earliest times to the present. It covers such areas as inspiration, forms of the sonnet, variations to iambic pentameter, rhetorical

devices, Icelandic poetry, Russian formalism, structuralism, and post-modernism. What happened to rhymed verse? What are the changes all about? How do we analyse a poem? What is the poet's theory of what they are doing?

* Bring a short poem. Please bring six copies.

NOTE: You can photocopy your work for these workshops, for 10c per page, at NEWC during open hours in the week leading up to the event (not on the morning of the workshop!)

NOTE: Poetics workshop now on Friday, October 13,
NOT Saturday October 21.



About Susan ...

Susan Hampton is a poet and freelance editor who lives in Canberra. For many years she taught writing at universities. She has written five books of poems. Her poems and stories have won the Patricia Hackett Prize from Westerly, the Dame Mary Gilmore Award from the ACTU, The Brian Eton Prize from Compass, and the Shire of Eltham Short Story Award. In 1990 she won the Steele Rudd Award for *Surly Girls*. She has edited novels and non-fiction.

Her latest book is *The Kindly Ones*, from Five Islands Press. From a review by Prof Peter Pierce of James Cook University:

'The Kindly Ones is striking, bold, funny when cause arises, accomplished at all times in its management of disparate tones and materials.'

Both workshops will be held at NEWC (see page 8 for how to find us).

Tell Us Your News

Please let us know when you get any writing published, or win competitions, or develop your writing. If you would like to publish your work in our newsletter or on our website, send examples.

(continued from page 1)

Through NSW LitLink, the association of NSW writers' centres funded by Arts NSW, there were six one-week fellowships available at Varuna for NSW regional writers last year. Peter couldn't reduce the number of excellent applications to fewer than eight, and he could easily have awarded double that number: there are exciting writers working in regional NSW!

Two of the fellowship places went to New England writers Jim Vicars and Susan McMichael. Both spent a week at Varuna in the company of four other writers from regional NSW –Lillian Reilly from Newcastle, Betsy Roberts from Northern Rivers, Susan Beinart from Albury and Linda Godfrey from South Coast. Alison Thompson from South Coast and Anne Frost from Newcastle came at other times. All agreed that the Varuna experience was an exceptional and inspiring experience in their writing lives, and that it was an excellent and productive thing to spend time with other regional writers.

This year there will be 12 fellowships allocated, in two weeks each of six residents. Deadline is November 30, and the fellowships will be taken up early in 2007.

Manuscript Consultations:

A consultation lasts 50 minutes. It's an excellent opportunity to talk about your writing with an experienced professional. Peter Bishop presently conducts some 300 consultations each year –so he's definitely experienced!

Writers are asked to send about 20 pages of material from the project they wish to discuss, plus a brief description of themselves as writers, all they hope for and fear, to the New England Writers' Centre by Thursday, August 10.

Six consultations will be available each day on the hour from 10-12 and from 2-4 on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday **August 14-16**, at NEWC. Writers who had consultations last year are encouraged to come back and talk about what the past year has done to their writing life.

Cost: \$25 (open only to NEWC members. Non-members can take part if they join at the time of booking, membership costs \$27 per year).

ADVANCED WRITERS – JULY



Anyone who has had work published in some form or who has completed any of Wendy James' beginner workshops can attend her one-day Advanced Writers workshop on Saturday, July 29. \$50/\$40 members.

MONTHLY EVENTS

DROP-IN WORKSHOP

January to November

On the last Thursday of each month from 1.30 – 3.30 pm at NEWC. You can drop in to read your work in progress and get feedback, or listen to and support others. Any style of writing is welcome – poetry, prose, drama – literary or genre. This event is free to members, \$5 per visit to non-members.



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STRONG DEMAND FOR MICHAEL SHARKEY WORKSHOPS

Poetry workshop	-	full
Prose workshop	-	almost full
Journalism workshop	-	almost full

MILES MERRILL WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

Performance poet Miles Merrill was back by popular demand to tour the tablelands in early June. He held Slam Poetry Workshops in primary and high schools in Armidale, Wollomombi, Guyra, Glen Innes and Inverell.

His tour was a joint project between New England Writers' Centre and the public libraries of New England. It also coincided with the regional heats for the NSW State Library's Poetry Slam contest, with Miles judging and adjudicating. He gave a performance at Armidale Dumaresq Library. A selection of comments by schools and pupils is printed below:

On June 7, Miles Merrill visited our school on his tour of the region. His workshop/performance was very enlightening in the aspects of creative writing and performance. He taught us in an interesting, interactive way, how to interject our life experiences into our fiction in order to create a more persuasive and realistic narrative, and also with stage performance.

Throughout the workshop he introduced us to many different 'characters' which ended up being blown up stories of events and experiences in his life. I much liked his style of teaching, it being very different to the standard methods (tried and true they may be) that we are otherwise taught in school.

In conclusion, the workshop/performance was an overall success, being enjoyed by everyone who attended. It was very advantageous to be given the opportunity to learn from an outside source and from a different background to what we are used to seeing. We hope that more such opportunities are given in the future to help young writers and the like to achieve their goals.

**- Peter Newman & Alexander Mills,
Year 10, Glen Innes High School.**

Miles encouraged us to turn any intense emotional experiences we have into writing.

Overall, it was a very interesting cultural and creative experience.

**- Karina Lewis, Amanda Horder, Jess Moor,
Glen Innes High School**

Letter to Miles Merrill

Thank you so much for your recent slam poetry performance at Duval. The students were so impressed by your work, and commented enthusiastically on the way it was delivered.

One of my students was particularly inspired by the quiet writing task, saying it reminded her of her journal that she kept years ago. She is very keen to get back to her writing and to experiment with new ways of responding to tasks.

**- Jenny Squires, teacher,
Duval High School.**

WORKSPACE

In the last newsletter we congratulated Susan McMichael and Jim Vicars on being awarded a one-week LitLink Fellowship at Varuna. The following are their impressions of the experience:

Varuna, - Eleanor Dark's house, was designed by the author. It is large and sunny. Each room takes advantage of all the sunlight. There are no phones, no television, no radio. Aside from the occasional murmur of voices in the kitchen when two people accidentally meet for morning coffee, during the day there was absolute stillness and hours of time to write. I wrote new work for my novel while I was at Varuna. The space, the food, the company and the peace were wonderful in equal measure. I've begun a new story about loss and grief in people's lives

- Susan McMichael.

It was a pleasant surprise when I learned earlier this year I'd been awarded a LitLink Fellowship - having been to Varuna some years before, I remembered what a beautiful and peaceful place it was and knew I'd enjoy returning. And so I did, but this time I was struck by other dimensions of the experience, particularly the degree to which my work was energised.

This came from a combination of things but most of all the way you simply feel nurtured and

your work supported and valued. I was given Eleanor Dark's own studio to write in, for a start. Overlooking the garden, with plenty of space to spread out and relax, it's easy to put aside even the distractions of the mind. Furthermore, the space and time were respected by the other residents, and a good working pattern meant I was able to review and polish one manuscript then make a start on another project. Getting a satisfying amount of work done also made evening gatherings with the other writers something to look forward to, especially given the superb food produced each night by Sheila, Varuna's own special treasure. This, as well as our discussions in front of the living room fire afterwards, emphasised the nature of the residency as an important time of nourishment - the true benefit of which is the way your writing (and your thinking about your writing) - is energised long after you leave.

- James Vicars.

WHAT WE DID LAST YEAR

I wrote short stories and poems. A poem was presented at the Armidale Playhouse. Two poems were published in Poetzinc's *Dark and Dancing*. There was a profitable meeting with Peter Bishop from Varuna in July at the NEWC. From the many workshops offered by NEWC I attended Susan Hampton's Self-editing, and Experimental Writing; Jan Cornell's Writing Your Life; and Wendy James' Advanced Writers. I enjoyed reading short stories by Alice Munro and Joyce Carol Oates, also *Bush Studies* by Barbara Baynton.

- Richard McLennan.

NEWS & INFORMATION

* *Pass It On* is an affordable (50cents/week) networking e-zine for those interested in the children's writing industry. Go to www.jackiehosking.com. Contact: Jackie Hosking at jacket@smatchat.net.au.

* *Manuscript Appraisal Service*: An appraisal offers qualified and constructive feedback about your work from objective established writers and/or editors. The two types of manuscript appraisal offered by the ACT Writers Centre consist of a written report or a report plus a face-to-face meeting for discussion of work and

advice about markets. Included in the appraisal is information on an extensive range of essential aspects of writing in any specific genre. Contact: ACT Writers Centre, Gorman House Arts Centre, Ainslie Ave, Braddon, ACT, 2612.

* *Wannabee Publishing* is under new ownership. For information about submissions and writing competitions contact Lisa Dempster on (03) 9415 1292, or 0401 449 158 or lisa@wannabee.com.au or www.wannabee.com.au.

COMPETITIONS

28 July: The Broadway poetry prize, offers prize money of \$3000. Details SSAE to Poets Union, PO Box 91, Balmain, or [m](http://m.com).

31 July: Sheila Ryan short story competition-2006. Theme: *An Invitation*. Contact: Sheila Ryan, 106 Golden Shores, 7 Bay Drive, Hervey Bay, Queensland 4655 or (07) 4194 0928 or sheila.ryan@bigpond.com.

31 July: The Mornington Peninsula prize 2006, offered by the Fellowship of Australian Writers, Victoria. 1st prize \$250, 2nd prize \$100, 3rd prize \$50. Contact: Mornington Peninsula Prize, FAW, PO Box 574, Mornington, Vic, 3931.

31 July: SOYA, Money for Art & Ticket to Fly, Qantas Spirit of Youth Awards, 2006, includes categories for moving pictures, and words. Entrants must be Australian citizens, aged 25 and younger. Contact: Breanne Squires, SOYA project co-ordinator, 1800 080 826, or info@noise.net. or www.noise.net. or www.soya.com.au.

11 August: Human Rights Personal Essay & Rights in Perspective Art competitions: The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) is calling for entries from young Australians between the ages of 11 and 18. Great prizes on offer, including iPods and digital cameras. Contact (02) 9284 9600 or paffairs@humanrights.gov.au or www.humanrights.gov.au/competition.

31 August: The John Marsden prize for young Australian Writers, under the age of 25, sponsored by Express Media. Two age categories, under 18 years and 18 – 24 years, offering \$3,500 prize money. Contact: Rohini

Sharma, Meat Market Arts Centre, 5 Blackwood Street, North Melbourne, VIC. 3051. www.expressmedia.org.au or (03) 9326 8367.

30 September: The Tom Howard poetry contest, all genres, cash prizes to \$3,500. Contact: <http://tomhowardpoetry.bravepages.com> or <http://writeway.exactpages.com>.

20 October 2006: Wannabee Publishing *Wet Ink* 2006 poetry competition. Open theme, 1st prize \$300, a subscription to *Wet Ink* and the winning poem will be published in edition five; 2nd prize \$200 and both poems will be published on the Wannabee website. Contact: Wannabee Publishing (03) 9415 1292, fax: 03 8610 2058 or www.wannabee.com.au.

PUBLISHING/FELLOWSHIPS/ OPPORTUNITIES

The Multicultural Writers Association of Austral Inc is planning to publish a national anthology in 2007. Theme: Australian Stories Across Cultures. Contact: Dr Anne-Marie Smith, anthology coordinator, 0439 941 380, or The Secretary, The Multicultural Writers Association of Australia Inc, PO Box 192, Kent Town, SA, 5071.
Closing: 1 October 2006

Crime Zine is a new e-zine offering readers flash, short stories, serials and articles. They are looking for submissions of quality fiction. No payment offered at present, but hope this will change. Go to: www.Seismicfish.com.

Arts NSW 2006 Fellowships, scholarships and awards: NSW Literary Awards, **closing 10 November**; Phillip Parsons Young Playwrights Award, \$5000, **closing: August**; Rex Cramphorn Theatre Scholarship Biennial, \$30000, **closing 2007**. Contact: Arts NSW, PO Box A226, Sydney, NSW 1235, or ministry@arts.nsw.gov.au, or 1800 358 594, fax (02) 9228 4722 or www.arts.nsw.gov.au.

Exile Publishing is launching a new series of concise books on iconic events, people and places. Authors are wanted, to research and write the titles. Interested writers need to be previously published, with an emphasis on non-fiction. Contact: Gareth St John Thomas, publisher@optusnet.com.au or www.exislepublishing.com.

ASA Mentorship Program: The ASA is offering

12 mentorships to emerging writers and picture book illustrators. Successful applicants have the opportunity to work closely with an experienced mentor of their choice for 20 hours over a period of up to 12 months. Contact Jill Dimond (02) 9318 0877 or jill@asauthors.org

The Regional Arts Fund is now open for applications from NSW. Funds are available for arts and cultural projects in regional and remote communities starting on or after 1 January 2007 in three categories – New Initiatives, Partnerships and Residencies & Mentorships. Contact: Rachael Vincent, communications & promotions, Regional Arts NSW, Pier 5 Hickson Road, Millers Point NSW 2000, (02) 9270 2504 Fax (02) 9247 7829 or www.regionalartsnsw.com.
Closing 14 August.

Asialink Residency Program: Grants of up to \$12,000 to undertake three to four month residencies in Asia with a host organisation. Offered in the following areas: arts management, literature, performing arts, visual arts/crafts. Open to all Australian citizens/permanent residents, who have at least three years professional experience in their field. Contact Asialink Centre (03) 8344 4800 or arts@asialink.unimelb.edu.au or www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/arts. **Closing 1 September.**

South Pacific Anthology. The Communication Research Group at the School of Creative Communication, University of Canberra is putting together an anthology of short fiction and poetry written in and/or about the South Pacific, by both established and emerging writers. Submissions of unpublished work for consideration for this anthology: poetry, or short fictions (up to, say, 1500 words). Contact: Jen Webb, Jennifer.Webb@canberra.edu.au and Kavita Nandan, nandan_k@usp.ac.fj. **Closing: 15 September 2006.**

Scripts Australia is a service providing Australian writers for stage, film, television and radio the opportunity to promote their work to local and overseas producers, production companies and literary agents. Contact: www.scriptsaustralia.com.au.

The Working on Writing Weekends = Wow I did it, will be held in July, September, October and November. These Jan Cornall workshops take your book or script from first page to first draft in

six months. Preference will be given to those who sign up for 4 weekend modules, however it is possible to join for individual weekends. Venue: Dickson Space, 35-37 Dickson St, Newtown, 9.30 – 3.30. Contact: whwn@jancornall.com.

The Great American Poetry Show is a hardcover serial poetry anthology. It is open year round to submissions of poems in English on any subject and any style, length or number. Email poems only by attachment only to info@tgaps.net. They also have a chatroom and also a messageboard where anyone can post poetry news, reviews, essays, articles and recommended books. Contact: Larry Ziman.

The Bright Lights Café is online and wants submissions of short stories, poetry and articles for possible publication and performance on their website. Guidelines from www.brightlightmultimedia.com/BLCafe or *SSAE to Bright Light Multimedia submissions, Suite 143, 236 Hyperdome, Loganholme, Qld. 4129.*

Pan Macmillan Australia accept unsolicited submissions of almost any genre except children's picture books or short story collections. Full guidelines at www.panmacmillan.com.au/submit.htm. or The publishing department, Pan Macmillan Australia, Level 18, St Martin's Tower, 31 Market Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.

Publishing for Passion and Profit, is a one day workshop by Messenger Marketing. They describe themselves as '... a creative and innovative publishing and marketing consultancy'. They are offering two workshops: August 15 and September 15. Contact Messenger Marketing, PO Box H241, Australia Square, NSW, 1215, or fax (02) 8569 0689 0412014466 or www.messengermarketing.com.au

CONFERENCES/WORKSHOPS/ FESTIVALS

Occupation Resistance Resilience Poetry evening at the Newie, August 18, 7-9pm. Poets, writers, radicals readers all welcome. Literary contributors contact Sue 67722036 or Maxine 67785038. This event is part of the August visual art exhibition, *Occupation Resistance Resilience* at the Keeping Place organised by Armidale Women in Black.

Inspired Writing Intensive – 5 day Bali retreat, Ketut's Place, Ubud, Bali, October 4-8, following Ubud Writers and Readers Festival, September 30 –October 3. Contact Jan Cornall, whwn@jancornall.com. Festival details: www.ubudwritersfestival.com.

The Third Armidale International Film Festival, August 2006 (4-5 August) at the Belgrave Twin Cinema, screening films from Europe, Africa, Asia, South-America and the Middle East. Argentina, China, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Russia, Senegal. This is the first time that these foreign language films have been shown outside metropolitan areas. Festival ticket for all 13 screenings is \$ 50. Individual tickets at normal screening prices are also available. Bookings: Belgrave Cinema (02) 6772 2856 or contact Dr. Andrea Schalley, iff@une.edu.au or LCL/UNE. (02) 6773 3655 or www.armidaletourism.com.au or www.une.edu.au/iff.

ACT Writers' Centre workshop: Romance Writing's Brave New World, with Valerie Parv, September 16, 10-12 and 1-3 pm. ACT Writers Centre Workshop Room, Canberra, (02) 6262 9191 or www.actwriters.org.au.

Byron Bay Writers Festival, August 3-6 with workshops beginning on July 31. Venue is the Byron Bay Beachside Resort in Byron Bay. Contact: The Northern Rivers Writers' Centre, PO Box 1846, Byron Bay, NSW 2481 or phone (02) 6685 5115, fax (02) 6685 5166 or nrwc@nrwc.org.au or www.byronbaywritersfestival.com.

2006 National Poetry Week, September 1 – 10, presented by the Poets Union in partnership with the Australian Poetry Festival. Contact: Lizz Murphy, NSW Poetry development officer, PO Binalong NSW 2584, phone/fax (02) 6227 4393.

Biennial Regional Arts Australia conference, Mackay, Qld, September 15 – 17. Contact Pacific Edge, www.pacifedge@qac.org.au.

WANTED – VOLUNTEER

If you'd like to help out with the mailout of the newsletter and other office tasks at NEWC in exchange for free workshops, contact Janice on Wednesday or Thursday afternoon, on 6772 7210.