

New England WRITERS CENTRE

For people who love writing and reading

Newsletter
January-March 2009

Welcome to our 2009 program.

Several workshops have been confirmed, others will be confirmed in the next newsletter in May. For more details about events, go to our website:

www.northnet.com.au/~newc

WORKSHOPS

Getting Started-Making Stories Write To Live – see details page 2.

The Creative Journal

This workshop is geared towards self-exploration and personal growth through journal work.

Tutor, **Karla Muir** says: I will introduce several techniques which are designed to find out more about yourself, and to help you resolve current or longstanding issues in your life. You will find that the techniques stimulate your creativity, and allow you to tackle things from a new angle.

DATE: Saturday, June 13. 9.30am to 4pm.
COST: \$60/\$50 members

Writ Large: promote your writing

You need to promote your writing, if you want people to read it. Even authors published by major companies have to contribute to promoting their own work (and often they do all the publicity and pay for it) unless they are in the bestseller or flavour of the month categories. Books that don't sell x amount in x amount of time in Australia are pulped. It takes too long for word-of-mouth to sell books to avoid death by pulping. If you self-publish your poetry, novel, or non-fiction, you will need to know even more about promotion.

This half-day workshop with **Rosemary Mort** will give you some hints about how to approach the media and publicise your work for publication and for events such as readings.

DATE: Saturday July 4. 2pm-5pm.
COST: \$40/\$30 members

LitLink Manuscript Assessments

Manuscript assessment consultations with **Peter Bishop**, director of Varuna – The Writers House. Peter has guided countless manuscripts (by major authors) to publication. This wonderful opportunity to get professional advice about your manuscript and your ambitions for it is offered only to our members. (People who are not members can join if they wish to book for this, membership is \$28.50 to June, increasing to \$29.50 from July 1). These one-hour consultations are always booked out, so we suggest you book early! Many of our members have gone on from the consultations to further opportunities in fellowships and getting published.

DATE: June 10-12.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO DO:

Send (to Peter Bishop, c/- NEWC, PO Box 1219, Armidale NSW 2350) about 20 pages (double-spaced) of material that you want to discuss, plus a brief description of yourself as a writer, what you hope for and fear!

The deadline for this and your payment for the consultation is June 1.

Voice Skills For Writers

- with **Chris & Judith Ross-Smith**

Writers are required to promote their books in-person these days, giving readings and talks at writers festivals, literary lunches, and other events. For many this is a terrifying ordeal. For audiences it can be very dull if the writer reads the work in a monotone rush to get to the end as soon as possible. What's the point of promoting your work in this way if it puts people off buying it!

Like everything, public-speaking requires training. You expect to do a lot of hard work to write a good novel or poem, and so you should expect to work on acquiring the skills to "perform" that work. Even in the privacy of your writing room, learning how to use your voice to read out loud in an interesting way, can help with your writing, with improving dialogue and other technical aspects.

This workshop will help you improve:

- * an awareness of your own voice (and its speech patterns) and how it is best produced and protected
- * an understanding of how body, breath, vocal sound, speech variation and articulation interact to create more effective communication
- * making a text come alive by using various techniques to highlight its contrasts and enhance its meaning
- * confidence in reading aloud, vocal interpretation and speech techniques generally

DATE: Saturday, June 27. 2pm to 5pm.
COST: \$40/\$30 members

Opportunities For Writers

Varuna – The Writers House has announced exciting opportunities for writers in the Longlines and LitLink programs. For details go to: www.varuna.com.au



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www.necu.com.au

WORKSHOPS

Getting Started – making stories

This is a one-day creative writing workshop with **Wendy James**. Knowing where to begin is often the hardest part of writing, but at the end of this class you'll have characters, a plot, and plenty of inspiration. You'll be ready to start making stories. Award-winning novelist, Wendy, is now working on her third novel. If you're having trouble starting your first (novel, short story or any creative writing) this is the place to get going.

DATE: May 2 (Saturday), 10am to 4pm.
VENUE: NEWC
COST: \$60 members/\$70 non-members

Write to live – freelance journalism

Learn how to turn your interests/knowledge into profitable writing for newspapers and general and specialist magazines. Learn interview/research/writing skills, how to analyse publications/readership, write in style suitable for general and specialist publications, pitch stories, syndicate your work, and run a profitable freelance writing business. **Lesley Sly** has worked as an editor (newspapers/magazines), reporter for print and radio, senior sub editor for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Financial Review*, columnist for *Rolling Stone*, travel writer for *BBC Radio* and various UK newspapers. As a freelance her work has appeared in *The Bulletin*, *Good Weekend*, *HQ*, *Limelight*, and many other national and overseas magazines. She also wrote a 400-page

book, *The Power & The Passion*, a guide to the Australian music industry, based on 150 interviews.

DATE: May 16 (Saturday). 10am to 4pm.

VENUE: NEWC.

COST: \$65 non-members/\$50 members.

**JOHN HEFFERNAN
Word Play**



Award-winning author of many books for children and young adults John Heffernan shares some of the secrets of his success:

Does winning literary awards give you more confidence as a writer?

Absolutely. It's recognition, it's a kind of reward, and it's an ego boost. The latter is more important than we realise. Writers are dreadfully egotistical; I suspect it is why many of us write. Our egos are also quite fragile; they swing from ultra-confidence to being riddled with debilitating self-doubt. The self-doubt often rears its head when a book is nearing completion, or even after it's finished. But if it goes on to win an award, the confidence takes over once more. An interesting pendulum.

How do you generate ideas?

That's a difficult question. Ideas come at all times in all shapes and sizes from the merest glimmer of a concept through to gleamingly clear and detailed Eureka moments. You have to develop a head for tales, a tendency to see the world in stories and characters and

scenarios, and words and lines. You need to be listening to what others say, how they say it, and ask yourself what they really mean. There's a conscious side to this, but you can't push it too hard or you cause blanks. Most of the best ideas come when you least expect.

How do you keep relating to children and teenagers?

We all have a child within, and a teenager (although they can be harder to access). I don't feel I relate as well as I should to young readers, but I keep trying. It pays to observe them interacting, to listen to them. I talk at many schools and especially do writing workshops with different age groups, and that tells me a great deal about my target audience.

Your books include science fiction/fantasy, life on the land and war and refugees - what inspires you to move between genres in this way?

I would quite simply wither away and die as an author if I had to write the same genre. It's a matter of survival. It probably means that I do none of them particularly well, but it certainly means that I have a ball.

You are working on the third book of the Mythos trilogy. When do you think this will be available?

I was working on it, almost finished. But it is now on the back-burner. The two Mythos books weren't selling well enough for that publisher, and they're not so keen any more. That's a pity because I loved writing that series more than anything. But it's also okay because it will benefit by a period of mulling.

How old were you when you decided you wanted to be a writer?

I've always loved writing, as long as I can remember. Strangely, though, I didn't really make a serious and sustained effort until the later 1990s. I was already an old bugger when my first book emerged, 48. I'm now knocking on the Big 6. I wish I'd started earlier. But what's the point of regret?

Do you edit and rewrite many times or does it come to you and then you polish a little?

I tend to write from start to finish, leaving gaps where I have to: a difficult descriptive passage, dialogue that won't come, a slight hitch in the narrative. What I end up with in the first draft is like Swiss cheese, full of holes, or a garment that is only half-made, pieces missing and lots of pins holding it together. Or better still, a very very rough gemstone which I then set about

polishing and chipping away at and polishing. I do many drafts.

When you are writing, do you have a sense of being in another time/place?

Yes and no. Much of writing is a boring hard slog. It's just you and your thoughts, trying to mould them into shape. All the procrastination, the cups of coffee, the running away, the excuses will never make it happen. You have to make it happen. It can be very frustrating and lonely and you sometimes wonder whether it's all worthwhile. But then you have those special moments when it all comes together; you write effortlessly, the words step into line, the ideas flow, and time means nothing. That's a wonderful feeling.

NEWS & INFORMATION

The Australia Council for the Arts has announced the launch of *The writer's guide to making a digital living: choose your own adventure* -- your guide to the craft and business of writing in the digital era.

The writer's guide includes chapters, resources and rich media on the new media industry, craft, marketing and distribution, business models and more. It also features case studies from Australia's rising generation of poets, novelists, screenwriters, ewriters, games writers and producers who are embracing new media. Go to: <http://au.youtube.com/watch?y=tRueQ1Q6NGA> or Explore the New Writing Universe – <http://australiacouncil.gov.au/writersguide/newwritinguniverse/> or view and download the guide from www.australiacouncil.gov.au/writersguide

Attachment to email from Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts: Lending Rights title claims – information for creators and publishers: the closing date for the 2009 – 10 program ends March 31. It is vital that title claims for books published up to and including December 31, 2008 are lodged by March 31, 2009 deadline.

Please note: claimants should not submit a new claim for a book they have previously registered unless a new edition of the book is published.

For postal applications, title claim forms for PLR and ELR can be downloaded from the website. Online applications can be submitted through the Lending Rights Online link on the website.

Contact: Lending Right Unit, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts,

GPO Box 3241, Canberra, ACT 2601. 1800 672 842 (toll free) or fax (61) 2 6275 9658 or plr.mail@environment.gov.au or eir.mail@environment.gov.au or go to www.arts.gov.au/books/lending_rights

A Pod of Poets on line and on ABC Radio National is a unique partnership between ABC Radio National's *Poetica* program and the Australia Council for the Arts that brought eleven Australian poets to the microphone to read and talk about their writing.

The project was inspired by *Poetica*'s audience who consistently request podcasts of programs, a difficult request to fulfil because of copyright restrictions. Each of the forty-minute *Pod of Poets* episodes is read by the author and features only rights-free music, enabling the podcasts to be created.

"The series will extend the connection between poetry lovers, students and some of Australia's leading contemporary poets," said *Poetica* presenter Mike Ladd.

"The intimacy of hearing the poets read and discuss their works is enhanced by images and sounds and transcripts of poems and interviews. This is a way of engaging with poetry in the 21st century and the series brings good poetry to the ipod generation."

The 11 podcasts recorded and produced by *Poetica*, include established and emerging poets: Robert Adamson, Les Murray, Joanne Burns, John Kinsella, Josephine Rowe, Craig Billingham, L.K. Holt, Aidan Coleman, Jayne Fenton Keane, Martin Harrison, Sam Wagan Watson, Kathryn Lomer, Esther Ottaway, John Clarke and Jordie Albiston.

The *A Pod of Poets* website (abc.net.au/rn/poetica) includes all podcasts, transcripts, photographs and biographical information about each of the poets.

Poetica (ABC Radio National Saturday 3pm, repeat Thursday 3pm) will play the episodes throughout 2009.

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts.

For more information contact Nicola Fern, marketing manager ABC Radio National (03) 9626 1758 or 0418 494 252 or fern.nicola@abc.net.au

INDEXING EXPLAINED

Indexing is a profession that is related to the publishing industry. It is a part of the publishing process such as editing, proof reading, and requires working closely with the author and editor and contributes to the making of a

book. Indexers work not only with printed media such as books, journals, but also with databases, website types that are well-known in the publishing world are back-of-the book indexes and indexes to multiple issues of journals.

Indexes are designed to help readers, researchers, or students to locate information easily and quickly, and the indexer will act as an intermediary between the reader and the text. It provides an exhaustive guide to the contents of a book through subject analysis, cross-references, and sub-division structures. An indexer has to follow established guidelines and standards and needs an analytical mind, accuracy, and good organisation, and attention to detail skills.

In the present era where large amounts of information are migrating to electronic formats with powerful search mechanisms they are still unable to replace traditional back-of-book indexing which requires an analytical mind to create indexes that analyse the text to identify concepts and ideas.

Chitra Karunanayake
B.A. M.Lib, AALIA

(Chitra is a librarian and a freelance indexer and available for indexing any type of books).

NO THANKS – AUTHORS

Some Australian authors say No to Open Book Market. The Australian Society of Authors (ASA) has been stunned by the eagerness of Australian authors to sign up to a petition opposing changes to Australia's book market. On January 16, the ASA sent out an email asking authors to support a call to the Productivity Commission to reject completely the abolition of territorial copyright. By 9 am on January 20, the cut-off time, 724 authors had responded. The petition has now been sent to the Productivity Commission, but the emails of support continue to pour in.

"Australian authors have convincingly demonstrated their complete opposition to an open market for books in Australia" said Dr Jeremy Fisher, ASA executive director. "In this they have been supported by the New Zealand Society of Authors, whose members have suffered from an open market there, and the UK Society of Authors where the market, as in the US, remains closed."

The ASA is the principal advocate for the professional and artistic interests of Australian authors. Protecting basic rights to freedom of expression, working to improve income and conditions, promoting Australian writing and

literary culture. Contact: Tim Sinclair, communications officer, tim@asauthors.org or go to: <http://www.asauthors.org> or PO Box 1566, 98 Pitt Street, (02) 9318 0877 Strawberry Hills 2012 Redfern 2016, Fax: (02) 9318 0530.

WORKSPACE

Launch of Book – Big Leung



Jim Maher, Deputy Mayor, Armidale Dumaresq Council, Big Leung, and Ian Greenhalgh, Armidale Dumaresq Library at the launch of Big's book Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Big said: 'This book invites us to rethink the meaning of medicine and life - which are intertwined together. Most significantly, it stimulates our thinking of how to live in a more humane way, and this is the passion that I would like to share with you all.'

To read some of the reviews on this book go to: [Http://www.e.contentmanagement.com/books/40](http://www.e.contentmanagement.com/books/40)

WHAT WE DID LAST YEAR

One of my plays was selected from more than a thousand submissions into a shortlist of 120 or so for the Short and Sweet Playwrights Festival. This is a competition for playwrights originally set in Sydney but now international, best described on their website: www.shortandsweet.org/ The list is sent out to the registered directors who then select the ones they want to direct for performance, in Melbourne. *Cafe Bleu* was one of those selected, but not performed in Melbourne, in 2008. I did direct it last year in our local 'Favourite Shorts' Festival however, and it is available on DVD.

- Susan Lewington

My year centred around prose writing. However, I did read poetry at Poetzinc. Support with prose was given at the NEWC's monthly Drop-in Workshop. I attended Wendy James's workshops of Writing Gym and Polishing for Publication. In September I was offered a Longlines Non-Residential Reading and Consultation from Varuna. I accepted, and found the eventual discussion of my project fruitful. A trip to Uluru inspired a short story *A Journey Too Far. Inglorious* by J. Kavenna was one of the better books I read this year. The short stories in P. Mitchell's *Dodging the Bull* were of good quality.

- Richard McLennan

The following comment on style is from the February 29 issue of WARM E News:

Style takes its final shape more from attitudes of mind than from principles of composition, for, as an elderly practitioner once remarked, "Writing is an act of faith, not a trick of grammar." This moral observation would have no place in a rule book were it not that style is the writer, and therefore what a man is, rather than what he knows, will at last determine his style.'

Strunk W Jr & White E B 1979, *The Elements of Style*, Macmillan Publishing Co., New York.

COMPETITIONS

March 31: The Best of Times short story competition #7. For humorous short stories (any theme) up to 2500 words. Cash prizes for first, second and third place. (Amounts depend on number of entries received.) Highly commended and commended certificates will be awarded too. Entry fee is \$5 per story. Send a cheque or money order made out to Chris Broadribb. Post your entry to Chris Broadribb, PO Box 55, Blaxcell NSW 2142 or cabbook-7@yahoo.com.au Competition webpage: www.geocities.com/spiky_one/comp7.html

March 31: As part of their 'Save the Males' campaign Barons Brewing Co. have launched a competition for young filmmakers to create a viral video. The winning viral will get \$5000 cash and will be released and seeded on youtube, the Barons website, social networks and online forums. Go to: <http://www.baronsbrewing.com>

April 10: Woorilla annual poetry prize - open section: \$1000, youth section: \$100. Contact: louiser@aapt.net.au or Woorilla Magazine, 255 Macclesfield Rd. Macclesfield, Vic 3782.

May 1: Metro Screen tell your story competition. Tell your story in three minutes to win one of three Network Production Grants, providing screen makers equipment and facilities hire to the total value of \$7,500. Three minutes max including titles and credits; Free for Metro Screen members, \$15 for non-members; submission: DVD only, plus completed and signed entry form; Screening: June 2, 7 pm at Metro Screen Studio 1, Paddington Town Hall. Contact: metro@metroscreen.org.au or 9356 1818 for an entry form.

May 31: PressPress Chapbook Award for an unpublished chapbook length manuscript of poems. The winning manuscript will receive \$500 and chapbook publication with PressPress. Go to: www.presspress.com.au or contact: Chris Mansell, writerslink@gmail.com

PUBLISHING/FELLOWSHIPS/ OPPORTUNITIES

Litlink/ NRWC Unpublished manuscript award. Manuscripts may be fiction or narrative non fiction, and must be completed to a final draft stage. Unfortunately, picture books, poetry and performance pieces are not eligible for consideration. It is essential that works submitted have not been published in part or in full in any form. Each entry must be accompanied by the authorised entry form, available online at www.nrwc.org.au or from the Centre, Level 1, 69 Jonson St, Byron Bay. There is an entry fee of \$35 per manuscript, to assist with administration and adjudicating. A shortlist of four will be announced by Friday, May 29. The shortlisted writers will appear at the Byron Bay Writers Festival 2009, where the winner will be announced in a dedicated session. Contact: Director, Jeni Caffin, (02) 6685 5115 or jeni@nrwc.org.au

Closing: March 30

Applications for 2010 Harold White Fellowships at the National Library of Australia are now open. Each year several Harold White Fellowships are awarded to enable established scholars and writers to undertake research at the National Library for periods of between three and six months. The fellowships provide a return economy fare to Canberra, a living allowance, fully equipped office and special access to library collections and services. Honorary fellowships are also awarded to scholars and writers who do not require

financial assistance but would benefit from other privileges associated with the fellowship. Research projects supported by Harold White fellowships can be in any discipline or area in which the library has strong collections. Past Harold White fellows have undertaken research in fields including Asian studies, history of science, biography, media history, Australian history, musicology, religious history, anthropology, children's literature, art history, politics, indigenous history, Australian literature, Pacific studies, eighteenth century studies, geography, international relations and folklore. Past fellows have included leading Australian creative writers including Frank Moorhouse, Sara Dowse and David Foster. Fellowships have been awarded to researchers working across Australia, in the US, Canada, the UK, New Zealand, Hong Kong, China, Germany and South Africa. A link to the online application form, and contact details are available at www.nla.gov.au/grants/haroldwhite

Closing: April 30

holland1945 is a downloadable journal publishing contemporary and non-mainstream poetry in a variety of disciplines, essays and interviews, photographs, video stills, cartoons, comics (excerpts, strips, panels), and illustrations. Issue Two is now open for submissions. Contact: Ashley Capes, Peter Duggan and Brooke Linford, Editors, *holland1945*: editors@holland1945.net.au Full submission details: www.holland1945.net.au

Write in Your Face: Grants (up to \$5000) available for projects supporting writing practices by young people. Express Media is proud to present Write in Your Face, a program devolved to Express Media by the Literature Board of the Australia Council for the Arts. Write in Your Face supports emerging forms of writing practice by young writers, or organisations working with young writers. Proposals are invited from people who are using language in innovative ways. This may involve writing for zines, e-zines, comics, multimedia, multi-artforms or cross-media works, websites, live performances and spoken word. Download the application form and frequently asked questions from: <http://www.expressmedia.org.au/projects.php> Bel Schenk, artistic director. (in office Monday – Thursday), Express Media, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne VIC 3000, (03) 9663 4155, Fax: 03 9663 4544, www.expressmedia.org.au

Closing: April 24

Currency Press is part of australianplays.org, a new online portal dedicated to the sale and promotion of Australian playscripts around the world. The website features more than 1,500 Australian plays, representing the work of some 500 playwrights. Among them names like David Williamson, Joanna Murray-Smith. Funded by the Australia Council for the Arts, the new site was developed in collaboration by the Australian Script Centre, Currency Press, Playlab and Playwriting Australia. For more information go to australianplays.org.

Olivar Wood Fellowship Award is described as a manuscript development award. Entrants submit a full book-length manuscript. The award includes a suite of development opportunities, including a full manuscript appraisal and an intensive retreat July 24-31. Contact Nike Bourke or Inga Simpson, Olivar Wood, PO Box 252, Palmwoods, Wld 4555 or (07) 5445 9222 or fax (07) 5445 9277 or admin@perilousadventures.net or go to www.perilousadventures.net

Papyrus Publishing are publishers of fiction, non-fiction, biographies, poetry and short stories. Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome but need to be accompanied by a favourable manuscript assessment from one of their recommended agencies. Response time is about 6-8 months. Guidelines available www.papyrus.com.au

Word Weavers Press welcomes manuscripts from new and published writers. Stories suitable for 8-12 year old boys. Enclose a SSAE and post submissions to Susan Richmond, editorial director, Word Weavers Press P.L, PO Box 843, Bulimba, QLD. 4171. info@wordweaverpress.com.au or go to: www.wordweaverpress.com.au.

CONFERENCES/WORKSHOPS FESTIVALS

Writing in Paradise, March 7 – 14, Daku Resort, Savusavu, Fiji, daily morning workshops delivered by Jan Cornall: revision of essential elements of the writer's craft, critique and feedback on any aspect of your writing or writing process. Afternoons free to relax or explore the island and waters. Contact: Delia Rothnie-Jones, 1 Morella Road, Mosman, NSW 2088 or 9969 4753 or paradisecourses@iinet.net.au or go to www.writersjourney.com.au

April 27 - May 2: International Physical Theatre Lab, Malta, with the Russian theatre director and teacher Sergei Ostrenko The Lab is open to professional performers from different creative genres and techniques inspired by Physical Theatre. The process includes intensive practical training and discussions. Details: <http://www.jugte.com/projects/PhysicalTheatreLab.php>

Olivar Wood offers intensive retreats, including oral manuscript assessment, writing workshops, feedback sessions, group outing, evening readings; themed weekends; courses. Full details go to www.perilousadventures.net or Contact Nike Bourke or Inga Simpson, Olivar Wood, PO Box 252, Palmwoods, Wld 4555 or (07) 5445 9222 or fax (07) 5445 9277 or admin@perilousadventures.net

Degas - Master of French Art; Free event, poetry and novel reading: from Impressionism to Realism, Saturday, March 21, Small Theatre, National Gallery of Australia 2 – 4pm. Go and listen to local writers reading from poems and novels by contemporaries of Degas. With his direct exposure to the literary world Degas is an important figure in the marriage of art and literature at this time.

The world of work- capturing the spontaneous and the unselfconscious. Listen to one of Degas' own sonnets about ballet dancers, Henry Mayhew's account of costermongers' lives in London street markets, George Eliot's descriptions of cheese-making and a carpentry workshop, Flaubert's depictions of farmwork and the chemist shop. Kate Grenville, Paul Cliff, Paul Hetherington, Charlotte Clutterbuck and Susan Hampton will read a selection of poetry and prose from Apollinaire, Elizabeth Gaskell, Zola and others. Go to: <http://nga.gov.au/Ehibition/Degas>

This link takes you to the National Gallery of Australia site page on Degas and if you wait a bit you get a slideshow of some of the paintings. From the top menu bar of this page you can go to Overview or to Trailers for more information.

NSW Writers' Centre Novelists' Boot Camp (April 20 - 24) - (09WMILL2) (5 days x 6 hours) 10am to 4pm. Members \$550, Members' Concession \$450, Non-Members \$750. Contact: info@nswwriterscentre.org.au or NSW Writers' Centre, PO Box 1056, Rozelle, NSW 2042.