

New England WRITERS CENTRE

For people who love writing and reading

Newsletter
May - August 2010

COME TO YOUR SENSES ...



with **Linda Jaivin**, in her fiction workshop at NEWC Saturday, July 3. Linda will also give a talk at Armidale Library on Friday, July 2, at 4pm, *A Most Immoral Afternoon* with Linda Jaivin. See page 2 for details.

Top Author For Youth Online

One of the most successful novelists in Australia, **John Marsden** - much acclaimed by critics and much loved by young readers - leads the line-up of tutors for our Youth Online project this year.

The other visiting writers are performance poet, **Miles Merrill**, who has toured in the project before to great success, and bestselling fantasy author, **Cecilia Dart Thornton**. These writers will only be visiting virtually though. The 10 online workshops in the program will be live online through the Department of Education's video conferencing system to interactive whiteboards in classrooms, with sound and vision both ways.

This is going to be a technological quantum leap from the previous methods we had for delivering online workshops to isolated children - phone and typed live chat, which isn't great for non-touch-typists. With the new technology we can take creative writing workshops to hundreds of children at a relatively low cost, whereas even with the \$6000 grant we have from **CAL (Copyright Agency Ltd)** this year we couldn't afford to fly several authors in and tour them by car around New England for several weeks. Local writers, Lesley Sly and Susan McMichael will also offer online workshops. See page 2 for details about the tutors.

The project began this year with visiting poet, **Martin Langford** giving four workshops to Year 10-12 students at Armidale High School and Duval. Greg Bugden of Armidale High's English Faculty, says of these workshops: "Martin's approach was very good. We are appreciative of the poems and commentary that he provided for the Yr 12s on the Area of study: *Belonging*. I was able to tell the students that they could include his poetry reading as their additional text, which would be a unique approach for the examiners. His second workshop was very useful in combating scepticism in students by developing an understanding of writing and poetry. Martin systematically led the students through the context and audience of poetry, and through his inspirations and purpose: a very valuable approach, which gave our students insight."

NEW WEBSITE

NEWC's website has moved, and we have a new email address: see page 8. See page 5 for details of our exciting new **Writers Reading** program. Details for upcoming events with biogs of tutors are on the website, there are also flyers at Dymocks and Armidale Library.

* Thanks to **Ingrid Kalf** for designing, constructing and maintaining our website.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of CAL for funding Youth Online this year.



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Youth Online Tutors

John Marsden has had a string of huge bestsellers highlighted by the Tomorrow series and the Ellie chronicles. John has now sold more than two-and-a-half million books in Australia alone, but is also an international bestseller, with many major awards to his credit. He started his own school on his property in Victoria in 2006, and this has a four-year waiting list.

Cecilia Dart-Thornton was ‘discovered’ on the internet after she posted the first chapter of her unpublished trilogy to an online writing workshop. Subsequently an editor contacted her, and within a few weeks Time Warner (New York) had bought her three-part ‘Bitterbynde’ series. On publication the books were acclaimed in Amazon's ‘Best of 2001’, Locus Magazine's ‘Best First Novels of 2001’ and the Australian Publishers' Association Award: ‘Australia's Favourite Read of 2001’. In Australia they reached the top of the Sydney Morning Herald bestseller list. They also have received accolades in the Washington Post, The Times, Good Reading Magazine, Kirkus Reviews and more. Cecilia's books, including the four-part ‘Crowthistle’ series, are available in more than 70 countries and have been translated into several languages.

Miles Merrill combines poetry with theatre, experimental audio, hip-hop beats, stand-up and political confrontation, flinging words in a rapid-fire onslaught of versified emotion. Born and raised in Chicago, now living in Sydney, he has opened for Saul Williams, jammed with Shane Koyczan, wrote and directed a show in the Sydney International Arts Festival, performed solo at the Sydney Opera House, created Australia's first spoken-word festival – The Night Words Festival – and is founder of the national literary performance competition: The Australian Poetry Slam. Internationally, Merrill has performed in Krakow's Audio Art, at writers festivals in Ubud, Calgary, Beijing and regional China. In Australia he has performed at festivals in Sydney, Perth, Byron Bay, Darwin and Adelaide. He tours music festivals, theatres, galleries, bars and a wide variety of classy joints- anywhere his words will travel. He has toured several times to schools for New England Writers Centre, and they always want him back.

Lesley Sly is a journalist, composer, author. Her music has been used in many soundtracks, won an international award in Berlin, and she has toured and recorded with bands in Australia, UK, Europe. As a freelance journalist her work has appeared in

many national and overseas publications, she was a columnist for *Rolling Stone* for 10 years and an arts writer for *The Bulletin*, she has worked as a magazine editor, consulting editor, travel writer for BBC Radio and newspapers in UK, sub editor for the Sydney Morning Herald and Financial Review. Her 400 page book, *The Power & The Passion, A guide to the Australian music industry*, sold out its first print run and is a core text for contemporary music studies. She has taught at TAFE, and has run many creative writing workshops for children.

Susan McMichael is a poet and also writes fiction. She has been published in various anthologies and online in Australia, America and Egypt. She writes micro stories about the school yard, going on holidays, and the beach. This year she received a Publishers Fellowship from Varuna – The Writers House – to finish a novel.

Workshops Coming Up

Retool & Remix, workshop on digital media with award-winning multimedia writer, **David Reiter**. Saturday June 26, 10am to 4pm. \$65/\$55 members. * *Digital Publishing – from print to TV*, a talk by David Reiter at Armidale Library Friday, June 25, 4pm. No need to book, pay at the door, \$5.

Come to Your Senses, fiction workshop with **Linda Jaivin**. The author of eight books, including the comic-erotic cult classic *Eat Me* and her most recent book, *A Most Immoral Woman*, Jaivin is also a translator and essayist on Chinese politics and culture, and is currently working with the China National Peking Opera Company on a bilingual libretto for a new opera based on a story from a Ming Dynasty novel. Saturday, July 3, 10am to 4pm. \$85/\$75 members.

* *A Most Immoral Afternoon with Linda Jaivin* – talk at Armidale Library, Friday July 2, 4pm. No need to book, pay at the door \$7/\$5 members.

The Exercise Pen – creative writing with **Wendy James**, August 14. 10am to 4pm. \$60/\$50.

Day In the Life of a Writer – the reality of being published, a talk by **Jeremy Fisher** at Armidale Library, Friday, August 20, 4pm, pay at the door, \$5.

Creative Journal workshop, with **Karla Muir**, September 4, 9.30am to 4pm, \$60/\$50 members.

Final Draft workshop with **Wendy James**, learn to polish and edit your work. Saturday, November 20, 10am to 4pm. \$65/\$55.



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JANENE CAREY Profile



Congratulations to member, Janene Carey, on several fronts. Already a published journalist, Janene has been shortlisted for the nationally contested Calibre Prize and had an illustrated article on Wendy and Rebecca James featured in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, April 24. She has just returned from a three-day writing retreat on North Keppel island where she was the writer in residence. Forty six, married with four children, Janene was an IT specialist at UNE. A Masters thesis in 2004 reawakened her interest in writing. Since she joined

NEWC, she has attended workshops with Wendy James, Lesley Sly and Susan Mitchell.

Pam Summers asked Janene about her writing life:

You are a journalist and have had work published in academic and literary journals, do you have any plans to write fiction?

I love the idea of becoming as engrossed in writing a novel as I do in reading them. But so far whenever I sit down to write, I always end up producing something that's based on life, either my own or someone else's. I do use fictional techniques in creative nonfiction pieces, though.

Your submission for the Calibre Prize was based on the experiences of people caring for someone dying at home. What inspired you to choose this as your theme?

Caring for my mother during her long, slow death from breast cancer. It all began as diary entries - writing that was done late at night to dump the day's experiences so I could fall asleep. That became a memoir (published in a national anthology of creative writing students' work) and a PhD proposal to write a book manuscript incorporating other carers' experiences, called 'A Hospital Bed at Home'. The 6,000 word essay shortlisted for the 2010 Calibre prize is a chapter of this manuscript, and it's going to be published in *Australian Book Review*, in June

How did you decide what to include in this highly poignant subject?

The 'slices of life' in my manuscript are a gift from some particularly open-hearted and thoughtful people. During the first conversation with each participant I was listening for characters and circumstances that held the promise of an interesting, engaging story. If I found myself feeling moved, intrigued, outraged, full of questions, eager to learn more about what they had been through, I knew I would be able to fashion something from their experiences that would be worth reading.

What methods of research are you using?

I did several long, in-depth interviews with each carer (and sometimes other family members or friends), which I recorded and transcribed, over the course of several months; I also collected whatever documents they were prepared to give me (retrospective accounts, photocopies of journals, photographs, letters, advance care directives, eulogies). We discussed the rough drafts of my story as it developed, so it was a highly consultative process which I found enhanced trust and deepened

my understanding of what I was being told. I did an article for the academic journal *Text* (Oct 2008) on how the conduct of my project was shaped by the ethical quandaries involved 'using lives' to produce creative nonfiction.

This essay is part of a book manuscript you are writing for a creative arts doctorate. Is your aim also to provide a resource for people who might have to care for someone who is terminally ill?

I wouldn't describe what I'm writing as a 'resource' in the sense of it being a handbook – the stories are too personal and idiosyncratic for that. That said, I certainly do hope it will offer carers information and insights, as well as the comfort of knowing that others have confronted similar situations and found a way through. Caring for the dying can be physically, psychologically and emotionally overwhelming, as well as a precious and immensely satisfying way of demonstrating love.

Do you have a time frame for publication of the book?

I'd like to finish the whole thesis by the end of this year. At the moment I'm focusing on the scholarly bit (the exegesis); after that I'll go back to the manuscript and see what revisions and editing I need to do before I start sending proposals to publishers.

Janene's shortlisted essay for the Calibre Prize will be in the *Australian Book Review* in June. Her blog, in *Media Res*, has her publications list. Go to: <http://janenecarey.blogspot.com>

WORK SPACE

Let Us Showcase You

Do you have a blog or website? Let us know so that we can feature your achievements in our *Showcase* section and add a link from our website.

Last issue we told you of Kaye Mill's new collection of poems *Hearscapes*. This time we share one of them with you.

Hair – not the musical

Now the frost is in my hair
it comforts me to see it
scattered through the faded mops
or beards, moustache and balding heads
of old loves and old friends.
Why then am I plagued
by such unease

to see the hip-length swathe
of my youngest sister's flaming hair
blown dry and burned to grey ash;
and my eldest brother's bright blond
become the colour of yesterday's snow
lying up against a woolshed wall
in cold shade.

- Kaye Mill

- SUZANNE ROBERTSON
- *Cherry Robertson: Episodes in the life of
- a very special person*

Member Dr Suzanne Robertson has published a book prepared from her mother, Cherry Robertson's, papers called *Cherry Robertson: Episodes in the life of a very special person*. At the book launch Professor John Ryan dubbed Mrs Robertson (now 99) 'The mother of the students', a reference to her 24 years of dedicated service to town, overseas and external students as well as college residents. In 1982 Mrs Robertson published *Long Youth Long Pleasure; Adventures behind the scenes of the University of New England 19556 – 80*, which describes her involvement in the founding and continuing role in the residential college system.

Dr Ryan described one substantial piece in *Episodes, University of New England Seminar January 1967*: 'It is perhaps one of the most insightful and memorable responses to Indonesia – especially in the 1965-1967 period.'

FEEDBACK

The Good Writing Workshop – Martin Langford

Every now and then you meet a teacher who has not only talent for their craft but a consciousness of the craft itself. The teacher's consciousness is most important for the learner because it allows analysis and conversation about the learner's skill and where it might move to from where it currently sits. I recently attended Martin Langford's *The Good Writing Workshop* and, with others, became the beneficiary of this not entirely common combination of attributes.

Our group explored the kind of writing that does and does not appeal to us, heard Martin's perspective about what generally constitutes 'good' writing (yes, of course, it must be subjective), completed an exercise which demonstrated to us the relationship between place and time and, people and ethos and how these might be reflected in various

works, including our own. Martin then shared his personal take on writing of merit. The workshop touched on some of the concepts expanded in Martin's non-fiction volume *Microtexts*. Both inputs encourage me to think more about the ways in which writing interrogates life, why people read – for satisfaction/ enjoyment or meditation (upon how they and the author see the world and where their views intersect), or both. I am prompted to consider more fully the balance of economy and expression in writing, the explorations made as writers and readers join in the words of a text and emotions both experience on their way, and the ever important cohesiveness of a piece of writing – large or small. It is certainly no coincidence that Martin's latest collection of poetry *The Human Project* is one of new and previous work which meditates on people and their place in time, and their landscapes. Thanks to Martin for his written works and this workshop, his evening seminar and his reading at Poetzinc's May meeting.

- Krystal Yee

WRITERS READING

These two-hour Saturday afternoon workshops are about reading – analysing great writing in order to improve your own. The tutors have selected favourite examples of great writing and will bring copies of these extracts for participants.

Thanks to the tutors donating their time, we are able to offer these five exciting workshops at a very low price. Must be booked (phone 6772 7210). The workshops will be held at NEWC and cost \$5 for members, \$10 for non-members per session.

Session 1: JANE O'SULLIVAN.

The book for this session is: *The Child In Time* by **Ian McEwan**.

Jane is an academic in the School of Arts at UNE, teaching and writing about narrative representation in film, television drama and prose fiction. Her PhD thesis was focussed on the novels of the twentieth-century British writer, John Fowles.

DATE: Saturday April 24, 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

Session 2: DR ANNE PENDER

The books for this session will be: *Arthur Boyd* by **Darleen Bungey**, some passages from **Hermione Lee's** biography *Virginia Woolf*, and **David Marr's** *Patrick White: A Life*.

Anne is Senior Lecturer in English and Theatre Studies at the University of New England. Before joining the staff at UNE, Anne lectured in Australian literature at King's College London. Anne has recently completed a biography of Barry Humphries entitled *One Man Show: The Stages of*

Barry Humphries. She is also the author of *Christina Stead Satirist* and co-editor of a book of essays about the life and work of the Australian actor, writer and director Nick Enright entitled *Nick Enright: An Actor's Playwright*.
DATE: Saturday August 28, 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

Session 3: MICHAEL SHARKEY. The focus will be poems reflecting everyday occupations. Copies will be provided. Michael is a poet, essayist and reviewer, author of several collections of poetry, most recent of which is *The Sweeping Plain*, published by Five Islands Press.
DATE: Saturday, September 25, 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

Session 4: JEREMY FISHER

The book for this session is *Our Father Who Wasn't There* by **David Carlin**, published by Scribe. Jeremy has worked as editor, publishing manager, executive director of the Australian Society of Authors, and is now Senior Lecturer in Writing at UNE. His writing encompasses fiction, poetry, prose, reviews and critical articles. He has been published in India and Vietnam. His most recent book is *Music from Another Country*, a novel about the humility of survival.
DATE: Saturday October 23, 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

Session 5: ELIZABETH HALE

The book for this session is *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll.

DATE: Saturday, November 13. 2pm to 4pm.

Elizabeth has taught at UNE since 2002, she has written scholarly articles on topics in children's literature, Victorian and New Zealand literature, and Australian theatre, with a special interest in the representation of classical texts in contemporary literature. She is currently completing a book on giftedness in children's literature (1837-1914).

In 2010, she will be representing UNE at the prestigious Dickens Univerise in California, where she will be talking about "marvellous boys" in *Oliver Twist*.

NEWS AND INFORMATION

Jane Kreis has been appointed to the position of Regional Arts Development Officer (RADO) for the New England North West. Jane has extensive experience in performance, arts management and cultural development. She has a particular interest in sustainability for independent arts and a strong desire to work with communities to improve the region's already dynamic arts and cultural practices.

The Australian Copyright Council has published a practical guide for anyone responsible for getting copyright clearance. Issues covered are: when you need to seek permission; the sorts of rights you'll need to clear; who to contact; streamlining the permission process; dealing with common obstacles. Available from the ACC <http://shop.copyright.org.au>

Pass it on is described as a super cheap email newsletter full of industry information for writers of children's books. Go to: www.jackiehosking.com or jacket@smartchat.net.au

Earlybird three day passes are now available for the Byron Bay Writers Festival. Go to www.byronbaywritersfestival.com

Australian Writers Resource website lists Australian publications accepting unsolicited submissions. It has links to Australian literary competitions which are updated monthly. For this free resource go to: www.austwriters.com/

Keeping it Safe: the following is an extract from an article in Australian Author about keeping data safe. The comments are from Colin Webb, Director of Web Archiving and Digital Preservation at the National Library of Australia:

There are no guarantees of anything when it comes to storage. You will hear people like me groaning about the short life expectancy of most data carriers; and yet I do occasionally find ten-year-old floppy disks that still work. At the same time, I have recently lost files on a USB flash drive within 12 months of purchase. Both of these experiences are contrary to normal expectations. As we live in an uncertain world, backing up – and on different kinds of storage devices – is critical.

COMPETITIONS

The following tips from the convenors of the Tom Howard prose competition might give your submission the winning edge in any event:

1. Don't try to write a 5,000-word story or essay in two weeks. It can be done, sure! But a prizewinning story? Unlikely!
2. Keep your story or essay, simple. It's easy to make mistakes in a complicated manuscript and you don't have time to correct them all. The judges deduct points for errors and your entry could just miss out on a prize.
3. Revise your manuscript carefully for spelling and grammatical errors.
4. Present your work attractively. If you are unsure what size font to use, make it too big, rather than too small.

June 9: Letterbox Dreams poetry competition, max 50 lines, prizes \$1000, \$300, \$200, entry fee is \$5 for 1 poem or \$12 for 3 poems. Details: http://web.me.com/letterbox_dreams

June 11: Blake Poetry prize presented by the NSW

Writers' Centre and supported by Leichhardt Council – cash prize of \$5000 for a new poem which best explores the religious or spiritual. Further information go to: www.nswwriterscentre.org.au or 02 9555 9757

June 15: Big Break screenwriting contest- over 20000 in cash prizes. Entry fee \$50 by June 1 or \$60 by June 15. Go to: www.finaldraft.com/bigbreak

June 25: *Sydney Morning Herald* Young Writer of the year - secondary students in years 10-12 (under 21 years of age) invited to enter story on theme of 'silver'. Go to: www.youngwriter.smh.com.au.

June 30: Eric Rolls prize - prose fiction and non-fiction in the genre of natural history writing. Prize of \$1000 plus airfare and accommodation to participate in Watermark Literary Muster. Visit www.watermarkliterarysociety.asn.au

June 30: Dusty Swag awards - bush poetry and story competition. Poems to 80 lines or story to 1500 words, open or to theme of *nature at risk*. Go to: www.dustyswag.zoomshare.com

June 30: Varuna/NAS national short story competition, with the winners (judged by Peter Bishop, Cate Kennedy and Aviva Tuffield) to be published in *New Australian Stories 2.0*, and/or to be awarded a week-long residency at Varuna to work with Cate Kennedy, described as one of Australia's finest writers of short stories. Contact: Scribe, PO Box 523, Carlton North VIC 3054 or 03 9349 5955 or 0434 01 30 80, Fax: 03 9348 2752 or go to <http://www.varuna.com.au/>

August 31: Wet Ink Short Story Prize – first prize \$3000, publication in March 2011 issue of *Wet Ink*, and a year's subscription to the magazine. Two highly commended entries will each receive \$100, plus publication and year's subscription. Guest judge Peter Goldsworthy and *Wet Ink's* fiction editors. Entry form available from the magazine or from www.wetink.com.au

November 30: Prose and Poetry Prizes offers cash prizes as well as publication for the prize-winning writers in *The Collection*, special edition of *The New Writer* magazine each July. Guidelines: <http://www.thenewwriter.com/prizes.htm>

**** REMEMBER:** members get two weeks preference on bookings for events when they are announced, so book early to ensure a place.

PUBLISHING/FELLOWSHIPS/ OPPORTUNITIES

Islet is described as a new online magazine for emerging writers. Submissions are invited of poetry, fiction and reviews for which they pay \$50 – poem or \$75 for fiction or review. Go to www.islandmag.com

Perilous Adventures is calling for submissions for its bi-monthly online magazine. They are looking for new fiction, articles on writing craft, and book reviews. For the current issue, featuring new poems by Mark Tredinnick and an interview with Lisa Unger go to: <http://www.perilousadventures.net/index.html> or contact subs@perilousadventures.net

Submit to the Sydney Fringe - September 10 to 26 – from theatres such as Carriageworks and the Factory through to the gallery spaces and the pubs and bars. Described as ‘the large scale alternative arts festival that Sydney really needs, with a range of events and activities to involve artists, companies and audiences from throughout Sydney, including concerts and theatre events, visual and digital arts and free outdoor events. If you would like to submit a show or want to get involved go to www.the-sydneyfringe.com.au. There are opportunities across a range of art forms, including theatre, dance, film, music, comedy, books, visual arts, digital arts and more.

TheFictionShelf.com is described as a place where everyone who loves reading will be able to read high-quality new writing. And where, uniquely, they will be able to choose exactly how they do that: be it online, printed at home, on their phone or e-book reader, or in a traditional hard-bound copy. Go to www.thefictionshelf.com for submission guide lines.

CONFERENCES/WORKSHOPS FESTIVALS

Byron Bay Writers Festival tickets available Friday, June 4 (the full festival program will be on the festival website from this date). Workshops begin Monday, August 2; secondary schools day Thursday, August 5; main festival days Friday, August 6 - Sunday 8 primary schools days Wednesday, August 4 and Monday August 9. Go to: www.nrwc.org.au or 02 6685 6262

Desert Writers 2010, June 26 - July 3, heads out from Alice Springs to walk and write on the

Larapinta and newly opened Ipola Trails. Meetings with traditional owners Mavis and Herman Malbunka and Arrentre guides, workshops on and off track with writing tutor Jan Cornall, supported camping and walking, medium grade fitness. Bring an existing writing project or start a new one. All genres. Bookings: www.intotheblue.com.au or 0414929768 0415921303

The following are Varuna masterclasses:

The Iowa Connection masterclasses – Professor of non-fiction at Iowa University, Robin Hemley, will be at Varuna December 6 – 20 to run two masterclasses, each with 8 participants.

New Australian Stories masterclass with Robin Hemley and Cate Kennedy (a Scribe/Varuna project).

Exploring Essays and Reviews with Robin Hemley and Peter Bishop (A Griffith Review/Varuna project).

For all the above go to: www.varuna.com.au

Closing: June 30.

Katharine Susanah Pritchard Writers Centre, Western Australia present: Les Murray in Midland, Friday, July 9, 7.00pm - Midland Town Hall. Hear Les Murray read while enjoying dinner in this iconic venue. CabaretsStyle, BYO everything.

Costs: \$15/\$10 concession. Further information or bookings: Phone City of Swan on 9267 9466 or e-mail performance@swan.wa.gov.au

An Evening with Les Murray Saturday, July 10, 7.30pm - Shire of Mundaring Civic Reception Area. The Shire of Mundaring president and councillors invite you to an evening that will include readings from the author, accompanied by a three course dinner.

Costs: \$55/\$50 concession. Further information or bookings: Phone Shire of Mundaring on 9290 6604 or paemcs@mundaring.wa.gov.au

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OUR NEW WEBSITE

<http://members.dodo.com.au/~newc44>

Our old website and email are no longer operating

Check with website for updates on events