

New England WRITERS CENTRE

For people who love writing and reading

Newsletter

December 2010 to February 2011

CONGRATULATIONS – NEW ENGLAND WRITERS!

NEWC had a great year with a packed program and a hugely successful Youth Online program, pioneering new technology with 1500 children from 25 schools taking part.

Writers in New England were busy this year, and so many members are now getting published and winning awards:

Janine Carey: Shortlisted for national Calibre Prize; essay *Retreat to the Castle* appeared in *The Australian Book Review*, and feature article on Rebecca and Wendy James in *Sydney Morning Herald*. Writer-in-residence at a three-day writing retreat on North Keppel Island and gave a series of workshops - Introduction to Life Writing; Memoir and Memory; and Polishing, Preparing & Publishing.

Teresa van der Kraan – launched her second novel, *Dreams and Demons*, in November.

Julian Croft: With Colin Grant, former deputy principal of Newling Primary School, a discussion on the lives and output of the ‘war poets’.

Wendy James: *Where Have You Been?* - novel.

Peter Langston : *Six Nines* – book of poems.

Susan McMichael: Highly commended awards for two poems: *Jars* and *Covenant* in the Tenterfield *A Brush with Verse* poetry competition. *Green Hair*, fourth book in the Matilda Poets series.

Sophie Masson: *The Hunt for Ned Kelly* (Scholastic, February), *Bright Angel* (under her pen-name of Isabelle Merlin, Random House), *The Phar Lap Mystery* (Scholastic).

Arleen Packer: *The Gumbangarri Woman* – the reminiscences of Aboriginal elder, Grace Gordon.

Suzanne Robertson: Book compiled from papers of Cherry Robertson (mother): *Cherry Robertson: Episodes in the life of a very special person*.

Michael Sharkey: Curated *Science Made Marvellous*, a project funded by National Science Week, held at the Armidale/Dumaresq Library, with talks by Ian Greenhalgh; Dr Tom Van der Touw, School of Science & Technology, UNE; readings by New England poets and presentation to the public of three chapbooks of science poems.

Craig Schneider: Published several articles in the Armidale Express. Currently working on a novel *As the Sparks Fly Upward*, as well as other short stories.

Steve Conti: *The Zookeeper's War*, novel.

Maria Hitchcock: *Correas – Australian Plants for Waterwise Gardens*. Gardening book.

John Heffernan: *Where There's Smoke*, young adult novel inspired by the Victorian bush fires.

Rebecca James: *Beautiful Malice*, young adult fiction.

Fiona McDonald: *Babes in the Wool*, bestseller in UK for publisher Search Press; *Knitted Aliens*, *Knitted Fairies*; and proposed for next year *Knitted Vampires* – craft books with whimsical profiles for each model design.

Alinta Merrotsy: Runner up 2010 *What Matters* essay competition. (Years 11/12 category), organised by the Whitlam Institute, University of Sydney, for Years 5 – 12 Students in NSW and ACT. Alinta is a student at PLC.

CLOSING DATES FOR XMAS

NEWC will close Thursday, December 23 at 4pm, and will reopen Tuesday, January 18 at 1pm.

PLANS FOR 2011

Workshops are being planned for 2011. Details will be on the website by end of January, and in the mid-February newsletter.

Events for first half of year so far include:

* A visit by crime-writer **Jane Goodall**, April 29 to May 1, for workshops in crime-writing and performance writing and a talk about her work at Armidale Library.

*Publishing workshop.

*Writers Reading workshops.

*Biography workshop.

***Youth Online** program, again funded by the Copyright Agency Ltd. Tutors will include John Marsden, Miles Merrill, Sophie Masson, Michael Sharkey, Cecilia Dart Thornton, Lesley Sly.

And more ...

WHAT WE DID THIS YEAR: Please send us a paragraph about what you did this year, and tell us your favourite book of the year.

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YOUTH ONLINE FEEDBACK

I think Martin Langford'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 the skepticism that students with developing understanding into writing and poetry sometimes present in class study. 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.

**- Greg Bugden
English faculty
Armidale High School**

I am writing on behalf of the students at Hernani Public School to THANK YOU for allowing our school to participate in both an enjoyable and valuable learning experience in regards to the writing workshops program.

Our school is in the North Coast Area of School but is situated on the border of the New England region. We have 18 students in total at the school with students from Year 2 to Year 6 (12 in total) participating in the workshops including one Aboriginal student. This program was really great

for our small school because unlike larger schools we very rarely have special guests and/or performers visit our school. So for the students to experience this via video conference was just a thrilling experience for them and certainly an opportunity they would never have had otherwise. The writing workshops program worked as a terrific motivational tool for students because they knew they were dealing with professional writers and they enjoyed learning about each one prior to the video conference. The children thoroughly enjoyed Miles Merrill.

Furthermore, from a teaching perspective I feel it added something new to our writing program for the term and offered some fantastic teaching ideas.

- Katie Keough-Daley

We all enjoyed the video conferencing especially John Marsden and Miles Merrill.

If the opportunity is offered in the future our school would again be interested in participating.

**- Kym Avalon
Rollands Plains Upper Public School**

Thanks for your organisation and input into the Youth Online program. A small writing enrichment group took part at Gloucester Public and you have helped to inspire them.

Below is the best writing from our group to date. It was in response to the Magic Mouth session run by Cecilia Dart-Thorton. Molly Danton is the author from Year 4.

- Kaye Leighton

Extract from Molly Danton's story:

Magic Mind

Ding-a-ling! The school bell rang. Michael Ratrog pushed me over as I was walking out of class, again! He has fire-red hair and waves of freckles all over his face. His eyes are always dull.

"Gotcha again Lucy!" he scoffed and walked away with his friends.

Man I really hate him! He always does horrible things to me. I'm really sick of it. I live close enough to walk home, but sadly, Michael does too. As I walk home he throws sticks and stones at my back. Every day he throws something different.

What's next? An elephant?

As I was dreamily thinking, he had come up and taken my brand new bag, whipped it off my shoulder and thrown it in the mud. I let out a little horrified squeak and grabbed my bag. I was too upset to do anything to him so I just ran to my leafy hiding bush.

I always come and sit here when I'm sad or anything. I closed my eyes and let a tear roll down

my cheek. When I opened them again, there was a beautiful white cat staring into my face. Her big green eyes sent me into a trance. I shook myself awake again.

“Oh hello,” I whispered.

She sat in my lap and looked up at me, as if she wanted me to tell her about my problems. So I did. It almost felt like I was talking to a person.

“I just wish I had the power to move things with my mind. I would pick Michael up and throw him in the bin!” I laughed at what I said.

**Molly Danton - Year 4
Gloucester Public School**



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*We gratefully acknowledge the support of CAL for
Funding Youth Online this year*

MARKET STALL FUNDRAISER

Thanks to everybody who donated books and helped to sell them. The money raised injected welcome funds in to the coffers for projects in 2011.



Sophie Masson, Wendy James and Lesley Sly at the market on November 28.

WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

Wendy James' workshop on drafting and re-drafting for publication was very informative. Each participant read a piece of work they had written and this was followed by a focused discussion of what seemed to 'work' and what didn't. The discussion not only provided feedback for the writer in question, but also allowed others to more readily identify the strengths and 'clunky bits' in their own work. Wendy added many insights and suggestions and maintained a very positive and supportive feeling in the group throughout the day. Thanks to Wendy and my fellow 'workshoppers' for the comments and encouragement.

Jane O'Sullivan

WORK SPACE

Craig Schneider
A very successful year

In the last issue of the newsletter we told you of some of Craig's articles which appeared in *The Armidale Express* – well there's more. After using so many of his bylines, the *Express* did the inevitable and put him on the payroll. Craig says his desk is opposite one occupied by Janene Carey, another NEWC member who was profiled in our May/August newsletter. In addition to his writing Craig is keeping fit, and helping raise funds for charity by participating in the 2010 Corporate Challenge.

WHAT WE DID THIS YEAR

We want to know what our members have been doing this year?

Have you got into print: articles, short stories, poems or won prizes or a fellowship?

What has been your favourite book?

NEWS AND INFORMATION

E-books – if you are thinking about publishing an e-book then the July edition of the Australian Society of Authors' (ASA) newsletter is a must-read for you. The front page is all about contracts and royalties and it's a minefield! The ASA's paper on e-book royalties and contracts, including model e-book clauses, is available at www.asauthors.org

The Australian Writer's Marketplace contains more than 2,300 updated listings from the world of writing and publishing. It is available in paperback from the NSW Writers' Centre, (02) 9555 9757 or www.awmonline.com.au

Getting your masterpiece published has never been more difficult and many new writers are self publishing. The Australian Society of Authors (ASA) warns of the traps and pitfalls for unsuspecting authors in this burgeoning industry. The following is an extract from their October newsletter. They call the unscrupulous operators *vanity press*:

NSW Fair Trading lists vanity publishers under "Scams" on its website, along with travelling con men, internet offers and lottery scams.

Using NSW Fair Trading's "things to watch out for" as a starting point, the ASA has put together a list of warning signs that should alert you to the presence of a vanity publisher:

They may require you to pay for "submission guidelines".

They may require you to use – and pay for – their manuscript assessment service before submitting your manuscript.

They insist that they will only publish work that has "merit".

They praise your work (this one can be hard to ignore).

They charge inflated prices to publish and "market" your book.

They require you to sign a "non-disclosure agreement" (which means you can't get advice about the contract).

They offer you a 50% share of net profits (and 50% of nothing is still nothing).

When the book is not published on schedule, they will give you a string of excuses for the delay.

They are unlikely to get your book reviewed in any literary journal or major newspaper.

They will not get your book into bookshops, and online sales will prove elusive.

If you are in any doubt as to whether you're dealing with a vanity publisher, contact the ASA.

The Crime Writers' Association of Australia was formed to promote and publish Australian crime fiction and to organise the annual Ned Kelly Award for excellence in crime writing. Contact: contact@nedkellyawards.com or www.nedkellyawards.com

A free internet-based discussion board has been established to allow Australian writers to communicate with one another electronic-

ally. Members can post and answer writing-related questions, and seek feedback on their writing. Go to <http://forum.catplace.net>.

XMAS CLOSING DATES

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to Tuesday, January 18, 1pm.

IP eNews (Interactive publishing). This issue has practical advice on how to learn more about digital composing and whether or not you should be converting your own files for the Kindle and iPad. Already represented in China and Taiwan, IP, with the support of Trade Queensland, now has many contacts in India in the publishing and film industries. Contact: IP Sales, Interactive Publications Pty Ltd, Treetop Studio, 9 Kuhler Court, Carindale, Queensland 4152

Wetink is described as the magazine of new writing. It is available in newsagents or go to wetink.com.au

Authors, booksellers and archivists are crowd sourcing funding online from websites like kickstarter.com, indiegogo.com, and invested.in. Examples of three book-related projects — a comic book, an online library, and a new bookstore are given at <http://publishingperspectives.com/2010/11/authors-booksellers-archivists-crowdsourcing-funding-online/>

The daily Book Show can be heard on ABC Radio National hosted by Romana Koval for everything connected to the written word. It features discussions, interviews, reviews and all things writing related each weekday from 10am.

Black Fox Edit - Louise Wareham Leonard is described as an internationally published, award-winning novelist. She is available for mentoring and editing. Contact: BlackFoxEdit@gmail.com or go to www.BlackFoxEdit.com

COMPETITIONS

The following paragraph from *Newswrite*, October/November, newsletter of the NSW Writers Centre, might inspire you to dust off that short story/poem, give it a polish (or even sit down and write one) and mail it:

'You've got to be in it to win it.' Great things can happen when writers take a punt on their work: Pamela Rushby's NSW Premier's Literary Award-winning YA novel, *When the Hipchicks Went to War*, began as a short story entered into a Brisbane writing competition. Richard Newsome's *The Billionaire's Curse* is picking up swags of awards and short listings, but the book's first win was the inaugural Text Prize. Michelle Cooper's writing career took off when she won a Children's Book Council of Australia mentorship. The point? Write, write, write, and enter some competitions!

December 31: The Aurealis Awards are for works of speculative fiction by authors, editors and illustrators, who are Australian citizens or permanent residents, first published in English between November 1, 2009 and December 31, 2010. Go to: <http://bit.ly/deMwVY>

January 1: The Calibre Prize, valued at \$10,000, is for **all non-fiction subjects** from life writing to literary studies, history to politics, biography to philosophy, natural history to popular science, travel writing to environmental studies. For details and entry form go to <http://www.australianbookreview.com.au/competitions/calibre-prize> or contact: Peter Rose, editor, Australian Book Review, (03) 9429 6700 or editor@australianbookreview.com.au

January 15: *Chapters of Glory!* - is described as a free writing contest designed to give writers positive feedback as they write - and the chance to win US\$200. Entrants are challenged to write a complete, 12+ chapters ebook in two months, and win 'glory points' through comments, 'likes', 'tweets' and star ratings on chapters. The author with the most points at the end of the contest wins! Authors retain full copyright ownership over their work, and they can sell their works after the contest. More details go to: <http://publishizer.com/chapters> or contact Guy Vincent, digital media manager, + 61 4 3887 9385 or guy@publishizer.com

NEW MEMBERSHIP FEES

From January 1, membership will be \$30 (full), \$20 (tertiary students), \$15 (students under 18).

PUBLISHING/FELLOWSHIPS/ OPPORTUNITIES

Celapene Press are publishers of *Short and Twisted* anthology of short stories and poetry with a

twist Contact: 0409 933 930 or enquiries@celapenepress.com.au or www.celapenepress.com.au

The Story Bag invites submissions of short stories, poems and sayings that can be printed on paper/cloth bags and/or coffee cups to be distributed by cafes, wine stores and retail outlets. Payment will be made and products will be distributed nationwide. Go to www.storybag.com.au

The New Writer is UK based and invites submissions of articles, features, short stories and poetry. Guidelines and details of payment: editor@thenewwriter.com or The New Writer, PO Box 60, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 2ZR UK

NEW ENGLAND WRITERS CENTRE

Annual General Meeting Friday, February 25, 2011 at 5.15pm, followed by ordinary meeting at 5.45pm.

Please let us know if you wish to nominate for the committee, or stand for the committee yourself.

All welcome

CONFERENCES/WORKSHOPS FESTIVALS

Watermark Literary Muster, 2011 - The Nature and Place of the Backyard - June 17 - 20, Kendall School of Arts, mid north coast of New South Wales. Contact: Lyndal Coote, Watermark Literary Society, PO Box 284 Laurieton 2443 or 02 6559 9953 or 04127 116 372 or go to: www.watermarkliterarysociety.asn.au

Writing, putting it into words, Sturt Summer School, January 4th-9th, \$580. Contact: Sturt Summer School, (accommodation available), Cnr Range Rd & Waverley Pde, P.O Box 34 Mittagong, (02) 4860 2083 Fax 02 4860 2081, or go to www.sturt.nsw.edu.au

Dungog Film Festival: described as the world's biggest May 26-29. Dungog showcases only Australian content and presents a range of films and projects to suit a diverse audience.

The Ubud Readers & Writers Festival will again be held in the first week of October 2011. Check the website www.ubudwritersfestival.com for the 2011 dates.