

New England WRITERS CENTRE

For people who love writing and reading

May-July 2013

BOOKED IN!



Isobelle Carmody

In conjunction with the School of Arts, UNE, and the New England and North-West sub-branch of the Children's Book Council of NSW, we present **Booked In! – our first children's/young adult literary festival**, from August 14-18 at venues in Armidale and Uralla.

Guest author **Isobelle Carmody** has written many books for young adults, such as the *Obernewtyn Chronicles*, younger readers, the *Little Fur* series, as well as picture books, *Dreamwalker*.

Guest illustrator **Anne Spudvilas** is also an established portrait painter and courtroom artist. Her books include: *The Peasant Prince*, *Woolvs in the Sitee*, *Jenny Angel* and *In My Backyard*.

Local authors and illustrators will also be presenting events at the festival.

There will be workshops for teenagers and adults, in both art and writing, a discussion panel, a competition, author and artist talks, and much more. See website for more details.

NEW ENGLAND THUNDERBOLT PRIZE FOR CRIME WRITING

Our exciting new national competition offers \$500 first prizes for fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. Plus, an extra prize of \$200 to be awarded to a resident from New England in any of these categories. See the website for further details and to download the entry form. **Closes September 30.**

The Skype Sessions

– Online Creative Writing

These one-hour sessions will be delivered through Skype to participants via a large screen at The Armidale School (TAS). Tutors will give a presentation and then invite questions and discussion, in all cases except *Pitching Your Work* with Pippa Masson. That session takes a different form.

Members as always are given preference in bookings for two weeks after events are announced. There is a limit of 15 places per session, to hold your booking you will need to pay in full within a week of booking.

VENUE: McConville Centre at TAS, 87 Douglas St, Armidale.

TIME: Wednesdays, 6pm to 7pm.

COST: \$15 members, \$20 non-members.

SEPTEMBER 11: *Poetry and Creative Energy* – with **Felicity Plunkett**. Award-winning poet, **Felicity Plunkett**, will share ideas from her research and writing about creativity in an exploration of energy-building and creativity: “Jostling in my thoughts and findings are ideas of courage, hospitality, space and balance. These qualities in an array of artists’ and critics’ work have inspired my thinking and my practice. In the discussion, participants may raise specific creative questions, challenges and ideas.”

SEPTEMBER 18: *Come to Your Senses* – with **Linda Jaivin**. Whether you’re a travel writer, memoirist, essayist, erotic writer, historian or working on the Great Australian Novel, evocative, sensual descriptions of place, personality and atmosphere will help bring your prose to life. Great description begins with keen observation, and keen observation means being alert to everything the senses take in: sight, sound, smell, taste and the ‘feel’ of things. This workshop will help you acquire the analytical tools and vocabulary to translate sensual input (real or imaginary) into lively, lucid writing.

OCTOBER 9: *Pitching Your Work To Agents And Publishers – Learn The Ropes!* - with **Pippa Masson**. Pitching your much loved work to publishers and agents can be daunting. How much information should you provide? What should you tell them about yourself? How do you write a synopsis? **Agent Pippa Masson from Curtis Brown** will guide you through the process. A limited number of participants can do a pitch of a synopsis with Pippa in the session, so book early if you want to secure a spot for that. Those who don't pitch their own work can learn from others.

OCTOBER 16: *Out Of The Slush Pile, Onto The Editor's Desk* – with **Emma Rafferty**. What are publishers looking for? And how do they go about finding it? What are the current trends and the new hottest things? How important is getting a literary agent to being published? How do you catch the eye of an in-house editor who spends day-in, day-out working through the slush pile of unsolicited manuscripts from aspiring authors? Which publisher is best for you, and how do you find out? And once you snare an editor, what can you expect of them and what will they expect of you? **Managing Editor of Pan Macmillan Australia, Emma Rafferty**, will give an overview of the acquisitions, developmental and editorial processes in this session.

OCTOBER 23: *Know Your Market: What's different about children's publishing?* - with **Eva Mills. Publisher for Books for Children and Teenagers at Allen & Unwin, Eva Mills** will discuss children's and YA trade publishing in Australia and how it differs from adult publishing.

The session will cover a brief overview of the key players, why being 'local' is important, who are the gatekeepers, and how the e-book market is shaping up for children's books. We will also discuss readership levels and categories within children's publishing, with specific reference to Allen & Unwin's list. This session will be of particular interest to those considering making a change from writing for adults to writing for children. Participants are encouraged to come with specific questions for discussion.

OCTOBER 30: *Identifying a market for your non-fiction idea* with **Ingrid Ohlsson**. There are hundreds of works of non-fiction published each year in Australia that struggle to sell more than 1000 or 2000 copies. Whereas once readers turned to non-fiction books for practical information and advice, they now go to the Internet. This has caused

the erosion of a substantial part of the market - just think of declining cookbook numbers. On the upside, non-fiction often sells on the strength of the idea rather than the name of the author, which means new authors can break through and make an impact. The market is unpredictable, but **Ingrid Ohlsson, Publisher for Non-Fiction at Pan Macmillan**, will show that there are some rules that can help the non-fiction writer and publisher maximise their chances of publishing success; many of these are about identifying and defining the readership early on.

NOVEMBER 6: *Making Digital Publishing Pay* – with **Angelo Loukakis**. The online environment brings new opportunities for authors, but also many issues that need careful thought. The difficulties for authors today include identifying potential sources of income for digital format works. For instance, is Amazon 'the only way' for the starting-out author? Can you or should you try to 'monetise your friends'? If so, how? And if you do make your material available online, how do you protect its integrity and reduce piracy? Earning from authorship becomes more feasible when you're aware of your rights, as well as the regulations that govern what happens with intellectual property. In this session, **Executive Director of the Australian Society of Authors, Angelo Loukakis**, will highlight the key areas of copyright, publishing contracts and commercial negotiation and provide guidance on how to be your own best advocate in the digital arena.

NOVEMBER 13: Details of this writing workshop will be announced in July.

PHILOSOPHIES OF ADVENTURE

- a nonfiction writer's quest for experience

Author and adventurer **Matthew Thompson** will discuss the importance of philosophy to being a writer.

DATE: Friday, May 24, 4pm

VENUE: Armidale Library, upstairs

COST: \$5, pay at the door, no bookings.

LIFE INTO ART

- a guide to writing a book of narrative non-fiction

This one-day workshop with **Matthew Thompson** will take participants through the process of writing a book of narrative nonfiction (a book where a true story unfolds through the use of literary techniques).

DATE: Saturday, May 25, 10am to 4pm.

VENUE: NEWCCOST: \$70/\$65 members

Q & A with author John Walker



John Walker and his wife Gina.

John Walker, NEWC's new benefactor, is committed to the promotion of literature in New England not only because he's a reader with strong connections to our region, but also because he's a published author. His picture books, *Ura's World* and *Ura's Dream*, have been published in Korea, where he resides, and sold internationally. Sales of these books help to benefit animal welfare and environmental charities. **Sophie Masson**, NEWC Chair, spoke to John about his books and his work as an author.

1. Can you describe your evolution as a writer (and reader)? Were you always interested in writing?

I am the eldest of five children, all born at close intervals. My father usually held down several jobs to supplement his academic scholarships and my mother did babysitting jobs. In this environment it often fell to me to put my brothers and sisters to bed at night. I used to invent characters and tell stories about them to ease the family off to sleep. I suppose there was something in my DNA as my father later published six books of an academic nature and my grandfather published children's poems in his retirement as well as some award winning columns for *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

Since leaving university I have dabbled in writing short stories (unpublished), poetry (some published), professional journal articles and more recently newspaper columns reflecting a foreign person's perceptions of Korea. However, my writing of published children's stories did not start until 2009.

2. What inspired you to write your books, Ura's World and Ura's Dream? Can you tell us a bit about them?

In 2009 as a banker I saw first-hand the panic caused by the global financial crisis and found myself travelling even more than usual to drum up business and solve issues. On one of those long flights, I was reflecting that when times are really tough, one should focus on the important things in life and be more generous. I decided this was a good time to write and create something fun but also rewarding. It was not difficult to think of a topic for writing as my wife at recently taken on the challenge of saving moonbears, farmed in Korea for their gall fluid, which is an ingredient in oriental medicine. We had come to the view that the best way to change this horrible practice was to educate Korean children about the beautiful nature and wildlife beyond their megacities. We also wanted to catch the attention of people in other countries to give them an appreciation of Korea's natural beauty.

I shortened the scientific name for bear, *Ursus*, to Ura and created my central character-a baby moonbear. At this time we also decided up front to donate all the revenue for the books to environmental and animal charities. The stories in the two books to date recount Ura's adventures with his two friends Doc Suri - an old, spectacle-wearing eagle, and Gaachi - a young magpie - and many other animals in the mountains where they live. In *Ura's World* they go on a quest to the place where Doc Suri found his glasses. In *Ura's Dream*, Ura dreams he can fly with his friends and dances with the fireflies and meets a strange family of tigers.

3. The process of writing picture books is often quite complex, with text and illustrations needing to be well-integrated. Can you describe how the process evolved? Was the illustrator, Heejung Sohn, involved from the start, or later?

It is certainly challenging to write picture books. I believe the key is to ensure the illustrations reflect exactly what you see in your mind's eye when writing. I showed some early drafts to some American illustrators living in Korea but they just did not get the Korean environment. Finally my wife suggested we talk to Heejung, who was working for an animation company and she really got the character Ura from the very first. From then on it was a very long process of us "negotiating" all the drawings for the first book-- and the same process for the second book. I think it is very

important for the writer not to dominate as a picture book is an effort of a number of parties. In my case this was a real family affair - my wife, our niece Heejung and one of my client's daughters as the book designer.

4. The books are published in Korea, but are in English (with Ura's Dream, however, also having Korean text at the back). Can you tell us a bit about the background to that - including your own double experience living in Korea and Australia?

Ura's World has both an English release and a Korean one. The English ones actually outsold the Korean ones. *Ura's Dream* was published in English with a Korean version at the back for this reason.

I moved to Korea in 2000 to start and build the operations of Macquarie Bank in Korea. After 13 years building a business and living in Korea and experiencing its wonderful people and nature, I guess it was logical that the books reflect my life as both an Australian and a Korean resident, and in fact honorary citizen, of Seoul. I am hoping that these books and ones to follow can help introduce Australians, particularly people from New England where I spent much of my childhood, and Koreans, to the beauty of nature outside Korean cities and perhaps contribute to cultural exchange between our countries.

5. How have the books been received in Korea, and elsewhere? How have children reacted to the stories?

The books have been received well in Korea with bookstore and online sales, and in Hong Kong with book store sales. I hope to promote them in Australia when I get time. I have done many book readings in libraries, bookstores and schools in Seoul and Hong Kong, so I have a good feel for how children react to the stories. The most consistent response I get is that the books are about friendship. This response makes me very happy and I could ask for no more.

Thanks to such a positive response I have been able to donate around \$50,000 to various charities and causes from the books sales and hopefully can do much more in the future.

6. Do you have plans for any other Ura books? Or indeed do you have any other writing projects in mind?

I plan to have a Ura book for each season so have two more to write - one for spring and one for autumn. The next book will be set on the east coast of Korea where Ura will accidentally discover the joy of bodysurfing! After the Ura series I plan to write a book based on the legend of the Tangun Shinwa, which is the story of the birth of the Korean people which, of course, involves animals. I also plan to publish a collection of articles commenting on contemporary life in Korea. I also hope to write some stories based on my reflections on my childhood growing up in New England when I have finally finished renovating the house in Armidale which will be our Australian base.

LOCAL WRITERS - NEWS

Award-winning author, **Bronwyn Parry**, has been receiving plenty of well-deserved recognition in 2013. In January, she was voted Australia's 26th most popular novelist in a poll run by Booktopia, and in March, her third novel, *Dead Heat*, won the Australian Romance Readers Association award for Favourite Romantic Suspense of 2012. In July this year, *Dead Heat* will be taking her to the gala awards night of the Romance Writers of America, where she is a finalist in the romantic suspense category. Fans will be also pleased to know Bronwyn has finished another book and sent it to her publisher, Hachette. *Darkening Skies* will be the long-awaited third book in the loosely-linked Dungirri series.

Counselling psychologist **Lilian Wissink** launched *The Creative Seed: How to enrich your life through creativity*, Exisle Publishing, at Dymocks on May 1. The first part of the book challenges the common myths of creativity and provides exercises to help readers discover their creative strengths. This section concludes with an original concept explaining the creative process called the SEED approach — an acronym that stands for skills, experimentation, evaluation and discovery. Part two addresses common difficulties people experience, such as anxiety, low self-confidence and procrastination. Chapters provide case histories, questions and exercises to assist the reader in gaining self-awareness and practical skills.

In March, NEWC board member Liz Horne, who writes poetry as **EA Horne**, received two exciting letters in the post. One invited her to an interstate awards ceremony because she had won second prize in the Fellowship of Australian Writers (FAW) John Shaw Neilson poetry award with her poem, *The Mask-Maker*. The other letter contained a cheque

and a glowing judge's report from FAW West Australia, because another of Liz's poems, *Fifteen*, had taken out the 2012 Tom Collins Poetry Prize. Judge Marcella Polain said: "The winning poem is extraordinary. It uses its imagery to create a cinematic effect in the reader's imagination, vividly rendering a telescopic image that masterfully underscores the growing psychological distance between the narrator and the subject. The more often I read it, the more I admire it, especially for its managing to make its conclusion (through its image, diction and metre) wistfully sad, hopeful, knowing, grateful and generous. And it does it all with a light touch, as if it is no work at all. This dense, multiple affect is, of course, one of the best things poetry can do. The lightness of touch; the emotional punch through the understated, the restrained; the art appearing deceptively simple is the mark of a highly skilled poet."

COMPETITIONS

With a total prize pool of around \$20,000, the **Newcastle Poetry Prize** is one of the most lucrative poetry competitions in Australia. There is a first place award of \$12,000, a second prize of \$5,000 and third prize of \$1,000. In addition, the \$500 Local Award is given to a poet who resides in the Hunter Region; and The Harri Jones Memorial Prize awards \$250 for the best poem by a poet under the age of 36. Entries close 5pm Friday June 7. More: www.newcastlepoetryprize.com

Society of Women Writers NSW – Poetry and Short Story Competitions - National Open Poetry Competition: Closing date 12 June; National Open Short Story Competition: Closing date 10 July. For information and entry forms, visit <http://www.womenwritersnsw.org/competitions/>

Stringybark Stories - The Stringybark Times Past Short Story Award 2013 will be presented to the author of the best story based on a real experience. It may have happened to you, or be something you have heard or read about. War, disasters, job losses, births, deaths, marriages, happy events, sad events, political events, childhood memories - anything really, but it must be based on an actual event. Writers have 1500 words to produce a short story that will delight the judges. A total value of more than \$810 worth of prizes in cash and books is available. Stories must be sent via email by July 2. More details at <http://www.stringybarkstories.net>

Eastwood/Hills Fellowship of Australian Writers Literary Competition is accepting entries until

May 31. All categories are open theme. Short Story: max 3,000 words, first prize \$200, second prize \$100; Poetry: max 80 lines per poem, first prize \$150, second prize \$50; Memoir: max 1,500 words first prize \$150, second prize \$50. For the purpose of this competition memoir means an incident from one's own life and experiences. Also, Pauline Walsh Award for Short Short Story: max 800 words first prize \$100, second prize \$50. Entry Fee: \$5 per entry or \$20 for 5 entries. Entry forms and more information: <http://hillsfaw.webs.com/>

The theme for this year's **CJ Dennis Literary Awards** commemorates the United Nations International Year of Water Cooperation. First prize in each of the following categories is \$200

1. "Water for Life" – short story
2. "Water for Life" – poetry
3. Short story – open
4. Poetry – open

Submissions are limited to 50 lines for poetry and 2,500 words for stories. For entry forms and more information, email: peter.lane4@bigpond.com
Entries close 19 July.

GETTING PUBLISHED

For the first week of every month The General Publishing team at **Penguin Group** (Australia) welcome unsolicited manuscripts. Email manuscripts and a 300 word synopsis to monthly.catch@au.penguin.com, stating the title of your book, whether your book is fiction of non-fiction and the genre (romance, memoir, etc.) in the subject line of the email. For more info <http://www.penguin.com.au/getting-published>

Tincture Journal is seeking submissions for the next edition of their quarterly e-book literary journal, featuring fiction, poetry and creative non-fiction from Australia and the world. There is no theme: surprise them! All published writers will receive payment and exposure. Visit the website <http://tincture-journal.com> for more information.

Writers' Web is a new way for emerging writers to be discovered, read and sold rather than through the traditional publishing route. Similar to the farmers' market model where the producer sells to the consumer, writers' web allows emerging and self-published Australian writers to connect directly to their readers, becoming authors in the process. Find out more at www.writersweb.com.au or email

info@writersweb.com.au.

Narrator Australia is now taking submissions of short-stories and poems up to 5,000 words for publication on their websites
www.narratoraustralia.com.au and
www.narratormagazine.com.au

ABC Open – 500 Words is a monthly writing challenge that invites you to share a non-fiction story in 500 words or fewer. The theme for May is "An act of rebellion". Have you ever challenged authority, defied expectations, or fought for your beliefs? Choose a single defining act of rebellion in your life and write 500 words about it. Check it out at <https://open.abc.net.au/projects>

Palmer Higgs, a leading provider of book and eBook production services, are looking for people willing to **report on Writers' Festivals** around Australia and overseas. If you're heading to any festivals in the near future and would like to share what you glean there, let them know. Contact: paul@palmerhiggs.com.au

Fastnet Books offers three publishing packages for anybody wanting to self-publish. As they are a local company, it is possible that organising things might be just that bit easier. Contact: Paul Adams, on 6772 6366 or p_r_adams@bigpond.com or Fastnet Books, 227 Donnelly Street, Armidale, 2350 or go to <http://www.fastnetbooks.net/Publish.html>

WORKSHOPS & FESTIVALS

Byron Bay Writers' Festival 2-4 August
Early Bird discounted 3 Day Passes are on sale now at <http://www.byronbaywritersfestival.com.au> for \$210/\$180. These passes, which are selling fast, allow entry into the Byron Bay Writers' Festival site, where you will find marquees with In Conversations, panels, readings, lectures and book launches running concurrently. Most sessions are an hour in length, and you can sit and listen for an entire session or wander between marquees as the fancy takes you. Each day starts at 9am with the last session concluding at 5pm. The full program will be available from Friday June 7.

Writing short course and getaway in Berry on the June long weekend. For those who already write, or who would like to write, the necessary calm, focus and serenity to kick start your writing project - or to push it closer to the finish line - are just a click away on www.writehomewriteaway.com

This is a three-day workshop and relaxing break in the beautiful Shoalhaven for anyone who longs to

write but never gets around to it, or anyone who feels creatively stalled and fears the manuscript languishing in the bottom drawer will stay there forever.

Here's your chance to grab a whole three day weekend's worth of head space, encouragement, and some simple but effective exercises to inspire you and help keep you writing long after the weekend is over. In addition, you'll learn from experienced writer and publisher Chris Mansell how to interest agents and publishers in your project and how to use the online environment to your help your success along.

To book, contact your host, Jill Martindale Farrar on jill@orangekaftan.com or writerslink@gmail.com

Faber Academy – Writing A Novel (Intensive Course) begins October. This is the ideal course for aspiring novelists living outside Sydney and Melbourne or unable to commit to a weekly class. Responding to popular demand, Faber Academy's six-month Writing a Novel course is now available as an intensive course. This is a unique opportunity to experience the same content of the flagship course condensed into three long weekends in Sydney.

Running over three long weekends in October (11-14), December (6-9), and February (14-17), with Skype meetings in between, students will have the opportunity to be part of the publishing and literary community, with minimum disruption to their often busy lives. For full course details and listings please go to: www.allenandunwin.com/faberacademy

The Australian Film, Television and Radio School is running a **Regional Screenwriters' Weekend** in Armidale, in conjunction with Armidale TAFE on June 15-16. The cost is \$270/ \$243, and the course will be led by accomplished writer, actor and director Dr Carl Caulfield.

This intensive and 'hands-on' workshop will explore the many different types of story and the importance of structure, how to build scenes and create compelling characters through your writing. Using a range of practical exercises, discussion and selected movie clips, it will lead you through the stages of script development, exploring plot points, sub plots, alternative story structures and genres.

More details and how to enrol:
<http://www.open.aftrs.edu.au/course/Q572> or
phone 1300 065 281