



Carindale Writers Group newsletter

7 July 2011

Present were Annette, Bev, Brian, Chip, Dawn, Debby, Dorothy, Ed, Hilary, Jeff M, Jeff P, Karen H, Len, Leslee-Anne, Nick, Peter, Rebecca, Rolando, Shirley.

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Today our meeting began with one of our periodic 'in-house' administration sessions. We learnt that the accounts are in a healthy condition. We have enough in hand to cover the fees when they next fall due to bodies such as the Qld Writers' Centre and for our website hosting. Nevertheless, it is important for people who wish to continue as members to be sure their annual donation of \$12 is paid up to date, so that their place with the Carindale Writers' Group is maintained for them.

Members are reminded to take a look at our website www.carindalewritersgroup.org to make sure your bios are up to date. If you would like to write up a fresh biography of yourself, perhaps to mention recent contributions to our anthologies, please do so. Submit it to Desley Melrose desley.melrose@bigpond.com who very kindly looks after the website on our behalf. Members who haven't yet entered a bio to the website are invited to do so.

Acknowledgement of her years of dedication were made to Beverley, outgoing facilitator of the group, along with bookends as a token of appreciation to show our sincere thanks to her.



*Debby Raymond and Beverley Asmus, incoming and outgoing facilitators,
Carindale Writers' Group*

Thanks were expressed to Nick who constructed a beautiful lectern for us to stand before to deliver our readings.

Thank you also to Dorothy who provided a lovely cake for our morning tea, to acknowledge the July birthdays in the group.

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Today's featured reader was Rebecca Wuth.

Rebecca writes in the fantasy genre. She read for us today the first chapter of Book One, called Chrysalis.

The story opens as a journey ends, with hints that the travellers have survived a struggle for their lives, though others dear to them did not.

The heavily pregnant Tara (full name Leitara) arrives with her midwife attendant at the home of Tara's aunt, a woman she barely remembers. Tara and her family had lived a long distance away, in relative seclusion from others of the Coronal people. Now that the protection of her parents is gone, Tara knows she will be bought and sold like any other commodity in the society which bred her, but the grief and destruction she has just survived make her resigned to it. The midwife, Ainize, wants to protect Tara for as long as possible from the great changes that lie ahead of her, after her twins are born.

Already the listeners are deftly drawn into a feeling of compassion for the chief character and her circumstances. The clothing worn and the mode of transport as described contribute to the book's setting in another time. The author's use of regularly-occurring descriptive words in a different language is an inspired scene-setter.

We really know we are in another world by the introduction of an attendant known as a whisp. The whisp is a mid-sized hairless and misshapen creature, apparently incapable of emotion. Strong and obedient, it immediately follows the orders given it, as long as the instructions are not too complicated. Most households of the Coronal people have one or two such servants.

The midwife and the whisp help Tara to a large sunken bath to begin her ablutions after her exhausting journey. Tara then orders the woman out and asks the whisp to turn away while she bathes. Her luxurious wallow comes to an abrupt end when a male, unknown to her, walks casually into the bathroom and begins chatting to her. Tara is frightened at first, then annoyed at this intrusion. She commands the youth to leave. He doesn't, and Tara becomes puzzled when he acts as though he has every right to call on her in the bathroom.

The youth, not much older than Tara herself, introduces himself as Dantane and reminds Tara they are cousins. Now that she knows he is a family member and the way he talks so comfortably to her mean that her initial fear of him passes.

She is not yet comfortable with the whisp, though. The people who had served Tara's family were real people, *lokari*, many of them real friends. But they are all gone, writes the author, 'gone to the teeth and blades of the Lost'.

The silence of Rebecca's audience as she read the beginning of her story showed their rapt attention.

Providing encouragement through sharing and discussion

When the critiques came in, observations from around the table were uniformly positive for Rebecca's writing. This is a story that has been very well thought through with regard to its plot and detail. The characters are well-drawn, sensual even. Good dialogue means the story unfolds well.

Some members asked why there was a suggestion of suitors for Tara when the father of her twins might be somewhere in the background. We learn that a religious significance is invested in the pregnancy. The young Tara will not officially come of age or become marriageable in her society until she has been delivered of her twins.

The consistent use of modified words from the Basque language is extremely effective in transporting the reader into another world. Some thought the references were Arabic, particularly when coupled with detailed descriptions of the clothes worn by the characters and the indoor furnishings of the surroundings they inhabit.

Other members of the reading audience felt they needed to know where the story was set. The 'where it is' and the 'when it is' are not yet stated. The answer to this requires patience to allow the story to evolve when you're just setting out at the start of a good read. A published book would provide this information on the back cover synopsis. In a first chapter the writer doesn't need to reveal everything; can't, in fact. Within the usual word count of a 90,000 word novel, there are many more words available in second and subsequent chapters for the story to develop and background to be revealed.

A good balance was achieved by the author between narrative and dialogue. A small observation was made that the author might possibly have used rather more adverbs than might strictly be needed. For the author to consider the convention of indenting dialogue on a new line was raised. She writes according to the rhythm of the flow. To write the dialogue so that it occurs in the same paragraph as narrative is often what feels right to her.

Tension is created well in the story because the author doesn't give away too much at the outset. Tension also arises through the cultural dichotomy in the intimate bathroom scene when the young lady reacts with initial fear to the presence of the young man, who doesn't understand his cousin's unwillingness to have him there.

Many of the audience admitted to being drawn in to the story although its fantasy genre was a new departure for them. The names of the characters are striking enough to make us realise from the outset that the world inhabited by them is very different from our own.

The excellence of the imagery evoked was matched by the professionalism of the writing and proof reading, observed one of the audience. The character of the whisp gave another the creeps.

We are keen to hear more of this story and look forward very much to reading the book when it is completed. Well done, Rebecca!

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Our **featured reader** for the next meeting on Thursday 21st July is Leslee-Anne Hewson.

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Our suggested exercise topic for today was *A day in the life of a council bus driver*.

Jeff P. began with his story of riding the 3pm bus with a bunch of unruly school children. They constantly rang the bell to stop the bus, even though none of them wanted to get off at the next stop. The driver threatened to take them to the police station if they didn't behave.

Annette's article followed next, read aloud by Brian. A Scene in the Life of an (out-of-work) Shakespearean actor was cleverly written, featuring 'my theatre, sadly a mere bus'. A normal trip is made entertaining by the excerpts from Shakespearean plays quoted in every situation by the driver.

Karen read next, giving us a poignant story of a relative who grew up a larrikin and finally found his niche late in life as a bus driver. It was fate that none of his 60 passengers suffered injury as he succumbed to a stroke when his Route 204 bus was stationary.

Dorothy came next with A Bus Driver's Lot Is Not a Happy One. We accompany Wally the bus driver on his school Route 372 as he encounters his regular horde of noisy children. He knows them all, along with their dirty noses and pet mice which have also travelled the bus.

Chip's story was written from the viewpoint of the driver on the Route 180 Express. If passengers were slow getting on or off the bus the trip took longer than usual. The driver would have to miss his break to keep to his schedule. Weekend nights were the worst. He would have to hose down the aisle to wash away the vomit from drunk passengers. The risk of attack was ever-present.

Len wrote about bussing actors to and from their filming in the Valley of a Thousand Hills when he was growing up in South Africa. There was a certain amount of excitement in being asked to stand in occasionally, but also concern about running risks, because the driver didn't have a bus licence.

Rolando's exercise covered the occasion when he attended an interview to become a bus driver. He was over-qualified. The interviewer told him sharply to leave the jobs to the people who can only do that type of work. Rolando attempted to take the bus home and found to his relief that he wouldn't have liked the job anyhow.

Brian wrote of the misanthrope ('hater of humankind'), a grumpy old man who wore his wife's frilly floral bloomers to work. They were large enough to hold a cushion to his backside to soften the bumps as he drove the Route 29. Merriment overcame his passengers when his trousers slipped down to reveal his underwear. An epiphany struck the driver when he too, saw what was so funny.

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Next we moved on to work from writers who had contributions to offer on topics other than the suggested exercise.

Hilary cleverly addressed a favoured Dickens novel in her story Riding Home, knowing that as she reached the last pages she would not meet again the characters from David Copperfield, who had been brought so vividly to life for her.

Chip wrote chillingly of a con-artist in the making; a young American in 1945 who buys an ex-soldier's uniform from the Army & Navy surplus store, in order to prevail upon the patriotism of his countrymen to hitch rides along U.S. Route 80 and cadge free meals as he pretends to be going home from the war.

Providing encouragement through sharing and discussion

Jeff once again visits his French soldiers as they prepare, on 24 October 1805, to leave Ulm after the battle. How they pack and carry all their own personal kit and food is described in detail. The soldiers are directed to march past the bivouac of their esteemed leader Emperor Napoleon so they can sneak a look into his airy yet spartan quarters.

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We then took the parts to read aloud Peter's short film script which he has written as a competition entry. Debby read the female lead and Brian the male lead while Peter narrated.

Peter's film presents as a simple interview, staged so the female interviewer can take public revenge on the male interviewee, a cult leader who was responsible for her disfiguring burns and for the deaths of her sister and several of his other 'wives'. Her way of exacting retribution brought gasps from the audience.

We wish you good luck with your script in the competition, Peter.

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The suggested exercise for next time is to use the verbs *slithered*, *slammed*, *slapped* in a single article. I'm sure you will use your own unique interpretation to employ these verbs in your 500-word piece. We can expect some interesting stories for this exercise!

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Authors' Month in July is being promoted by Brisbane City Council. One of the events to take place was a 2-hour seminar at the Holland Park Library on How to Publish Your Book. The presenter was Dan Kelly of Boolarong Press.

The four stages in preparing your manuscript for publication are as follows: appraisal, proof reading, editing and typesetting. The costs for these four stage for your average 200-page novel will come to about \$2700. The greatest single element is typesetting. At \$7 a page it amounts to \$1400. Appraisal can cost \$300 - \$400 per manuscript. Proof reading will cost anything from \$55 - \$85 an hour. The cost of good editorial input makes up the balance.

Dan Kelly suggests that recommendation by word of mouth is the very best marketing ploy you can have. Begin by inviting at least 100 people to your book launch. Inform your local newspaper and radio station they have an author (you!) in their midst and get them to interview and promote you. Target your local bookshops and any other outlets where your books might sell, for instance camping goods stores or hospitals, depending on the appropriateness of your subject.

Finally, be prepared to spend a lot of time visiting bookfests and writers groups to promote your work.

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Rachel Ward, well known actor, director and scriptwriter, was recently asked which she considered the most challenging – writing, directing or acting. Her answer? “Undoubtedly writing. Writers are very much undervalued in the creative process. Directing, if you have a good script, is relatively easy. There are skills that directors bring – an aesthetic, a sense of movement, etc – but if you have a great script, you can make a great film.”

COMPETITION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please note the Carindale Writers' Group cannot guarantee the legitimacy or otherwise of bodies who notify us of competitions. We simply pass on to you, our members, the announcements for your information in the hope you may find an outlet that appeals to your writing style and helps to boost your work.

1. Mental Health Association of Qld announces the following competition for Mental Health Week. MHW 2011 Creative Arts Competition has the theme "Be Open - Be Aware - Be Understanding - Be There"

There are separate categories for Short Story, Poetry, Drawing & Song Writing. Entries close at 5pm Wednesday 31st August, 2011. **Note:** you must CTRL + Left Click on the relevant links below to submit your entry and upload your creative work.

[Short Story Application Online Submission](#) [Poetry Application Online Submission](#)
[Drawing Application Online Submission](#) [Song Writing Application Online Submission](#)

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2. FableCroft Publishing is seeking speculative fiction stories on the theme "Apocalypse Hope". The stories must in some way address the idea that after the apocalypse (whatever and wherever in your universe that might be), there is a future for the peoples who survive it. The rest is up to your imagination. Stories should be between 2,000 and 10,000 words. Submissions close September 30, 2011. Payment will be AUD\$50.00 and one contributor copy of the print book. Further royalties will apply for e-book revenue.

<http://fablecroft.com.au/books/apocalypse-hope/call-for-submissions-apocalypse-hope>

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3. Peter Cowan Writers' Centre call for entries in the 2011 Julie Lewis Biennial Literary Awards.
POEM: Up to 50 lines; THEME: Open; AGE LIMIT: Open.
PRIZES: 1st - \$400, 2nd - \$200, 3rd - \$100.
CLOSING DATE: 31 August 2011
ENTRY FEE: \$10.00 each entry or 3 entries for \$25.00.

Send entries to
The Receiving Officer
Julie Lewis Literary Awards
Peter Cowan Writers' Centre Inc
PO Box 239
Joondalup WA 6919

For online details see <http://www.writingwa.org/articles/PO2011-Julie-Lewis-Bie>

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4. Creative Print Publishing Ltd. have announced the July Unpublished Fiction Authors Print Ready Competition. The closing date for this competition is the 31st July 2011 23:59 BST.

July 2011 – Action

This is a no fee competition that stretches over 12 months. Each month a different genre; each month a winner. Winners are offered a contract, paid royalties, and receive full promotion and marketing strategies.

Only print ready novels of genuine merit will be chosen. Full details of rules, genres and how to submit are on our website <http://www.creativeprintpublishing.com/publishing/competitions.php>

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Chip's Computer Tips

By FN KARMATZ

Quickly Zoom In and Out of Any Windows 7 Application

Windows: With Aero, Microsoft added a nifty magnifier tool to Windows 7 that enables you to zoom in — regardless of the application — on the fine details on the screen. For faster zooming, here are some keyboard shortcuts.

To quickly zoom in to any part of your screen, hit the **Windows** key and **+**. By default, the Magnifier will zoom in 100% increments, but you can change this in the tool settings. Hold down the **Windows** and **-** keys at the same time to zoom back out.

As some commenters pointed out, although Vista has the Magnifier tool, the full screen zoom doesn't work the same way as it does for Windows 7.

Other quick keyboard shortcuts, once you have the Magnifier tool up, include:

- CTRL + ALT + L to bring up the lens display view
- CTRL + ALT + D to dock the magnification area
- CTRL + ALT + F brings you back to the full screen mode.

In some applications, such as your web browser and Photoshop, you can use CTRL + and CTRL - instead to zoom in. But if you ever want to get a closer look at something in Windows 7 and the CTRL + shortcut doesn't do anything for you, try using the Windows key instead of the CTRL key.

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Newsletter composed by Debby Raymond 2debby@inet.net.au