



***Carindale Writers' Group Meeting  
24<sup>th</sup> September 2009***

Start 9:30

**Welcome to:**

**Present:** Jeff, Dorothy, Len, Gary, Judith, Bev H, Leslee-Anne, Chip, Brian, Wendy, Debby, Dawn, Naomi, Io, Beverley, Shirley

**Apologies:** Sandy, Marilyn, Hilary, Richard, Bill, Mike,

**News/ challenges/ discussions/correspondence:**

- Chip provided some amazing statistics about computer usage and then spoke to us about the threats that come to our computers through the internet, making us more aware of the risks of viruses and spyware. One sage word of warning concerns how invitations to 'twitter' on some web sites may be part of a scam to gain access to your computer. It's scary how dangerous it has become over the years and how easy it has become for pc users to fall victim to the many traps on the internet. Who's now saving to switch to Apple?
- Dorothy has invited us to her housewarming party at her new apartment on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October at 11a.m. Please bring a plate to share and a folding chair if you have one. Dorothy's address will be sent by separate email.
- It didn't get discussed at the meeting through my oversight, but the reply we received to Brian's request for serious answers to the way the 'One Book, Many Brisbanes' competition was conducted this year was anything but satisfactory. Completely ignoring the content of the letter, the reply was a 'form' letter to advise that the arrangements for next year have yet to be finalised. I had some interesting emails back when I sent the letter on to members – none complementary of BCC and some unprintable in this newsletter. It will, however, be interesting to see what they do about the inclusion of already published authors in 2010.

**Morning Tea:** Judith kindly supplied morning tea and treated us to her delicious home made pikelets with jam and cream that were a thousand times tastier than the ones that come in a plastic sealed bag from Woolworths. Thanks so much for the lovely treat, Judith.

### **Feature Readers:**

**Debby** read another extract from her memoir. This time it was the years 1966-1969 and featured some incredible characterisations of her ex teachers. Because Debby grew up in Ireland, we are always interested in seeing both the similarities and the differences between her school days and ours. As usual for Debby, the reading was entertaining and the critique feed back highly encouraging. In particular, I enjoyed the background history that Debby includes and would like to have this exploited more fully, perhaps through dialogue between characters of various factions to show the for and against different movements. Not an easy task, I know, when it's a memoir.

**Naomi** read the opening chapter from her novel in progress, which has the very interesting working title of 'The Men in Black Suits'. A thriller in the style of Stephen King or Dean Koontz, the story shows great pace and sense of mystery. Who are the men wearing black suits and shiny black shoes? What is the mysterious power of magnets? And who in the world are these old codgers, Ma and Pa, and what are they doing with the magnets to ward off the danger of the men in black? Can't wait to hear the next chapter, Naomi!

**Jeff** inspired another history lesson on Napoleon when he read a further extract from his manuscript. In this chapter, entitled 'The Review' Napoleon arrives in Camp to inspect the troops. Jeff's writing flows beautifully and you feel taken back in time as he reads. Still, there's always room for improvement, and there's always someone to find the modern phrase or expression that requires rooting out if the novel is to be completely authentic...That's our job, Jeff. I believe yours is to continue to keep us entertained with more chapters until we reach the end of the story. I'm already sold on it!

**Ian** gave us an overview of his story before he read the opening chapter for 'A Jewish Witch'. Sometimes this is good to do if the subject matter is complex. Ian's story definitely falls into that category as its set in the religious turmoil of the witch hunts of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and contains many religious texts and concerns of the times. The critique that followed Ian's reading suggests the challenge for Ian, who obviously has done much research on his subject, is to bring the characters to life so that what occurs in their mêlée is seen through their eyes (not the narration), which will make it more exciting for the reader.

**Wendy** previously faced the same challenge as Ian. When she read to us at the last meeting the feedback told her that her main character wasn't jumping off the pages and making an impact on us that would give empathy for his struggles. This meeting, Wendy read again and this time she took a chapter that she had placed further on in the

story and re-wrote it as the opening. Suddenly we got the picture of Joe, his temperament, his motivation and his psychological state which meant that we (the readers) like him a lot (what's not to like in such a strong hero?) and we became involved in his struggle. Amazing isn't it, how we can bury the best stuff in our stories, not knowing how much weight these words carry. Now I'm really hooked, Wendy.

**Debby** had a little computer trouble at the beginning of the meeting and we were reconciled to missing out on a promised slide show. However, everything cleared up just in time for Debby to give a very clever presentation based on a collection of private number plates strung together with text to make an extremely rib tickling story. Talk about laugh! It was a great way to end another great meeting. Thank you, Debby.

**Feature Reader for next meeting:** Dorothy, Bev H, Len and Leslee Anne. Also, I'm hoping Leslee Anne will give an overview of the seminar she attended during the Writer's Festival.

**Exercise to work on if you have time:** If you've been working on a synopsis, please feel free to share it with us.

If you have time to spare, you might consider writing a short story, one page in total, showing two characters with the following attributes. You must try to include all of the characteristics in your story.

One character is:

- Female
- Aged between 18 and 85
- Well educated
- Good looks
- Confident or Nervous (this must be the direct opposite of the other character)
- Facing extreme danger in unusual circumstances

The other character is

- Male
- Aged between 18 and 85
- Little education
- Rugged looks
- Confident or Nervous (this must be the direct opposite of the other character)
- Facing extreme danger in unusual circumstances

**Happy Writing Everyone!**

**Next meeting is the 8<sup>th</sup> October.**

## Chip's Computer Tips

Here's a fascinating project by the National Library which is converting some Australian newspapers since 1860 to a digital format, a great resource for those wanting to trace their family tree as all of the BDM are listed as well.

<http://newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/home>

### Another Free Cleaner

Ready to clean up your PC--but don't want to spend money on it? Freebie Comodo System Cleaner can clean out several major problem spots. It's simple to use, does its job quickly, then gets out of the way.—[www.comodo.com](http://www.comodo.com)

When you click the download button, it will ask you whether to install or save. I suggest saving it to a folder first. Make a folder named *Cleaners*, then put this and your other cleaning apps all together. Install from the folder after downloading.

The program has three main modules: a Registry cleaner, a privacy cleaner, and a disk cleaner. The Registry cleaner finds problems and errors in your Registry and gets rid of them, while the privacy cleaner rids your system of traces left behind by Internet browsing and by applications. The disk cleaner kills various caches, log files, unused icons, and more. Also included are other useful utilities, such as a duplicate file finder and a small application for showing you system information.

What distinguishes Comodo System Cleaner from similar programs is its extreme simplicity. It's as straightforward a program as you'll find. Click a few buttons, and you're done. You won't have to fiddle around with options or make confusing menu choices.

If you're looking for a simple way to clean your system, with little muss and fuss involved, it's a good bet. Comodo has other free cleaners, too, that you can download if you like this one.

*Chip*

### What Does Running Your Computer Cost you?

If your computer and monitor are on when you walk away to answer your phone or have a cuppa, it is costing you more to operate than your kitchen appliances. Figure 700Watts an hour with printer and monitor. If the system stays on all day and until you retire at night, you will have added about 9800 Watts to your SEQEB bill.

Multiply this by your 3 months billing and you will be paying for an extra Megawatt of energy. If you are using a cable network or ADSL2, you are paying for that, too. Everyone is paying different rates these days, but one thing for sure is that you are paying more every year. The habit of leaving your computer on will cost you hundreds of \$ over the course of a year.

What to do. Simple. First, put your PC into sleep or standby mode when not in use. You either have a keyboard button to do this or right click on your monitor>Properties>Screen Saver,>Power>Standby. You can also set it to do this automatically if your PC sits idle. Just open Power Schemes in your Control Panel and set your options. Your instructions also tell you how to

wake up your machine—it might be hitting any key or a mouse button. Standby uses 5 Watts per hour, so probably over a year's time, this option would cost you less than \$10.

Turn off your peripherals, too. Turn your printer and monitor off when not in use. They don't need to be on standby. Your monitor usually has an on/off switch on the front panel. And make sure your peripherals are off, not on standby, at night.

*Chip*