



Carindale Writers' Group Meeting
10th September, 2009

Start 9:30

Welcome to: the lovely Naomi, who takes the honour for being the fastest writer to respond to a Carindale Writers' Group invitation to attend one of our meetings. Who said that about being in the right place at the right time? Me? I'm full of clichés aren't I? We're all looking forward to hearing the promised sample of your writing at the next meeting, Naomi.

Present: Jeff, Bill, Annette, Ian, Judith, Shirley, Bev H., Leslee Anne, Chip, Brian, Wendy, Mike, Dorothy, Len, Io, Naomi, Beverley A., Dawn.

Apologies: Sandy, Nick, Hilary, Debby, Richard, Anne

News/ challenges/ discussions/correspondence: Another meeting without a whisper of anyone having a novel published or the film rights being sought... Awww shucks, but never mind, I've heard on the grapevine since then that one of us recently received a 'highly commended' for an entry in a local writing competition.

Who?

Well, let's just say it's a member whose work is consistently read with flair and attention to diction and we will be expecting to hear all about it at the next meeting.

Hurrah! It's been a long time coming, but Dawn advised she has (finally!) received most of the stories for the **Great Aussie Jigsaw anthology**. If you are still doing some last minute writing could you please send your completed manuscript as soon as possible; we need to sort out our word count. It was decided to use the same font and layout we used for our last anthology, *Leap in Time*, and Dawn has said (most kindly) she will convert all the texts to this layout before we start on the proof reading, for which we require a panel of confident volunteers proficient in grammar and punctuation and with a good eye for finding typos. We are looking to lessen the load by dividing the word count equally and will acknowledge this debt to the respective proof readers at the end of each story they work on. Note that you don't have to be a contributor to the collection to play a role in this important aspect of publishing. The stories will be sent by attachment and returned the same way. They will then go back to the writer to approve any changes. Oh, and by the way, if you have already given assistance to a particular writer with editing, that writer may request your services for the final proof reading.

Let's get cracking on this, as we should be aiming to have it completed for Christmas gifting by the middle of November at the latest.

Feature Readers: **Wendy** came prepared, seeking feedback on a rewrite for the opening of her novel. Wendy's writing is notable for the way her storylines interweave her characters and their surroundings in a symbiotic relationship that seeks to transcend the action. Although, as some people suggested, it may be rewarding to absorb this dense literary style slowly – perhaps in solitude to allow for complete understanding – why would you want to miss out on the pure pleasure of listening to Wendy's beautiful reading voice? It was interesting to hear Wendy say she has taken the (previous) advice of a group member to change the gender of one of her main characters, as it seemed (after she thought about it) the right thing to do. I've not had to do that myself (as yet), but it does seem sensible to pursue the idea if a character has a better role to play by having a sex change – and how easy is it to make Sam into Samantha anyway? Wendy's story is set on a post apocalyptic island and someone made the point it could be said the theme is that “nature changes but human nature doesn't”. Off the record, and after the meeting, I've been considering the notion that we have to gradually get to know and understand Wendy's characters. Maybe feeling empathy for them from the opening is not the way we should be reading. Perhaps the storyline is such that *we should be outside the action until we are led to feel empathy*. Like reading a report of a disaster means more to us once we find some (even tenuous) connection in the personal sense.

The words linger well after your reading, Wendy. Thank you for that.

Judith read more of her story based on the true experiences of one of her ancestors – the convict William Richardson –sent out to Port Philip for a minor crime. “The Reluctant Pioneers” began as Judith's entry to the *Great Aussie Jigsaw* anthology and since it's inception has grown from short story to novella (maybe eventually novel length). Such is the standard of Judith's writing and research that a recent enquiry by her to have the manuscript assessed was met with a hasty reply from said publisher to send the whole manuscript as soon as it's written. Judith can be justifiably proud of this achievement as it bodes well for the story being a sought after genre, and having appeal for more than one publisher. Well done, Judith!

Morning Tea: Another delectable treat! Where else can you get such good value for \$2? Thanks to Annette for an amazing morning tea. All home made by Annette, including hot sausage rolls with sauce and melt in the mouth little fruit cakes. Yum, yum... Yet another brilliant example of multi-tasking writer skills!

Following morning tea, Mike kicked off with a bit of self deprecating humour with the (almost but not quite) tongue in cheek “I am having a nice day, I *really* am!” If we didn't already know from the newspaper reports that our hospital system was in dire straits, by the end of Mike's reading we would have been left in little doubt of it. Just there to have a skin cancer removed turned out to be a little more than Mike bargained for. Send it to the Minister, Mike. Maybe he'll have a laugh too. Not!

Gary's reading, "The Male of the Species", painted a not very flattering picture of a misogynistic, racist male, whose every word, recorded as dialogue and sounding like a conversation overheard, was more damning of himself rather than the subject of his tirade – the anonymous female called 'Sophie'. A very sophisticated example of your writing, Gary. Good work!

Newish member, Len, read for the first time and had most of us wearing puzzled expressions for the opening paragraph or so of his reading. I believe some of us thought something had suddenly gone wrong with our hearing. Not so. It was simply because Len has started his collection of short stories using Afrikaans language, so it wasn't until he switched to English that the penny (as they say) dropped. Len tells us he began telling his stories to his children and is now telling them to a new generation of children.

Now we have that worrisome prologue out of the way, we can look forward to hearing more about the characters (people and animals) that populate these whimsical stories. Thanks Len.

Brian was the final reader for the meeting and entertained us with a thriller/ suspense short story that, as usual, kept us guessing until the end and then left us gasping at the audacity of it. I regret to say I missed recording the title of this story. I think I was being a little over-awed about that magical briefcase of Brian's that always seems to hold yet another well written story. I keep thinking of Felix the Cat and his bag of tricks...

Hope there's heaps more in there to share, Brian.

Feature Reader/s for next meeting: Debby. Ian will be reading an extract from his new story with the intriguing title of 'A Jewish Witch'. Naomi has indicated she will read for the first time and Io wants some feedback on her new project.

Next meeting on the 24th September.

Happy Writing Everyone!

Did you know there is a web dictionary?

<http://www.webdictionary.co.uk>

You can go to the Project Gutenberg site and download any of 500,000+ free ebooks.

<http://www.archive.org/details/gutenberg>

(from Chip)

Chip's Computer Tips

Spam and Its Possible Death

We are all bothered by receiving spam, computer literates and those not. However, spam may die in the near future. Why? I'll tell you in a moment, but first let me tell you how spam is sent. If spam were sent directly by spammers, they would be detected, shut down and or prosecuted. So, spammers use zombies. Each spammer uses dozens or hundreds of anonymous infected computers, which allows them to avoid detection and blocking lists.

The BBC this week reported the results of a study on the profitability of spam networks. Seven researchers used a zombie network to send spam messages advertising a fake pharmaceutical website .

Out of nearly 350 million messages sent, only 28 people attempted to buy something, which the researchers estimate would have returned about \$US 100 a day. Not bad money, but hardly worth the effort of setting up a fake site, arranging the merchant facilities and getting on to the Storm botnet.

The return also assumes all the potential purchases were genuine. There's a good chance many of them would have been fraudulent, which would have further eroded the returns. If those returns are typical, then we're probably seeing the end of mass spamming.

Ezines (from Chip)

If you want a market for your short stories or articles, you might want to try ezines rather printed magazines. Publish online. Here is a list from ezinesearch.com. The ezines are broken down by category, with the number of ezines in that particular category. Fiction, for instance, lists 336 publications. There are 93 publications that use short stories.

You can open any of these ezine websites and read what their submission requirements are and whether they pay or not. You can peruse them and decide for yourself if your work fits their criteria.

My own experience with them has been mixed. Of several pieces I have submitted, the non-paying ones accepted my work. The paying ones did not, but I received acknowledgements for my submissions. Usually the ezines have a 'hit' list. They tell you how many people looked at your story (whether read or unread).

Here's a typical fiction ezine:

TITLE:	The Writer's Tavern
DESCRIPTION:	We're an ezine of multiple genres: fiction, thriller, suspense, drama, romance and fantasy to name a few. We deal with men's and women's issues and even showcase artists. We welcome submissions from all writers, so long as they're daring, adventurous and original. Our goal is to attract readers of all kinds and give them a permanent seat at our reading establishment.
FORMATS:	HTML (Web) -
FREQUENCY:	Quarterly

KEYWORDS:	<i>fiction, horror, drama, fantasy, writers, read, stories, submit, redrum, artists, sci-fi, publish</i>
ACCESS:	Web: http://writerstavern.com/index.html

If you think you want to publish your piece with them, just send it to the editor.



*Thank you once again Chip, for your valuable contribution to the newsletter. Very much appreciated!
(Bev)*