



***Carindale Writers' Group Meeting***

**11 March 2010**

Start 9:30

**Welcome to:** Rebekah visiting from the U.S.

**Present:** Jeff, Dorothy, Marjorie, Chip, Brian, Debby, Io, Naomi, Karen, Richard, Nick, Marilyn, Don, Judy

**Apologies:** Bev, Leslee-Anne, Wendy, Len, Rolando, Hilary, Gary and Dawn.

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

1. We have a guest speaker coming first up in the morning at the next meeting. Annette Henderson will be talking about her experiences in remote Africa. She's a great speaker-Bev has heard her interviewed on the Book show on ABC radio. She will be bringing copies of her memoir, 'Wild Spirit' along and they'll be available for \$25 each in case anyone would like to purchase.
2. Karen attended a self publishing information session at Mt Gravatt which gave attendees a disc with some links and tips that may assist us all. Karen has very generously donated the disc to our library collection. Thanks Karen!
3. The Great Aussie Jigsaw: Richard has finished the discs complete with labels and book style formatting. When the disc opens, the National Anthem also plays. Great job Richard and a big Thank you from everyone for all the time and energy you've put into making it so professional. Don has also informed us that the ebook version is almost ready to go on Zulu Express. Excellent News!
4. With Leslee Anne away we've decided to put the library on hold until she returns (unless anyone would like to put their hand up for the role!). Debby has a copy of The Writers Marketplace if anyone would like to borrow it next meeting.

## **Feature Readers:**

As Bev unfortunately couldn't make it along this week (and she was our feature reader) we moved straight onto the exercise... a story set in a season but described without stating which season it is... evoking an atmosphere.

Debby started off the session with her tale entitled 'Snow Surprise' ... which did give us a little clue as to the season it was set in ;) . It was a tale of a family's experience of winter including snow, igloos, chilblains and bears. It definitely evoked an atmosphere and had good rhythm as well as touching moments of a caring Mother sticking up for her Son as he experiences the trickery of other neighbourhood children. It was suggested that perhaps the present tense didn't quite feel right at times. Judy suggested it's a good idea to read your work aloud and record it so you can then play it back and see if it sounds right. Generally present tense is good for action as it draws the reader in where as past tense is more reflective.

Dorothy then followed with 'Death in the Snow' Two winter pieces already! Does this mean we're all sick of our hot summer??? Everyone agreed Dorothy's tale was quite moving with excellent descriptions and observations and a lovely touch that it was written from the Wolf's point of View. Someone also mentioned that they loved the last line of the story, but I didn't write it down, sorry everyone! If you would like to hear it again you might need to ask Dorothy.

Writing continued to flow as Marilyn read her piece entitled 'Jake's Adventures' about a valiant dog who is making his way home with a note tied to his collar to alert everyone at home that a search party is needed for his injured master. It had a wonderful sense of detail and you could see the story 'march through your head' as someone aptly described. The story was very well researched and positive comments were made about the references to the Australian bush.

Chips' story of a woman awakening and getting out of bed didn't have a title (I don't think so anyway, apologies if I missed it Chip!). But it did have six clues throughout that gave away which season it was set in. Most of us got close with either early summer or late spring. Rebekah thought it was especially interesting as she felt the character was timeless, as if she was the season herself... and thought it was definitely part of a bigger story to be told.

Marjory read a tale of Carrie and Sam, a husband and wife very much in love. Tragically Sam passed away at a very young age but before he died he asked Carrie to wait for him and that he'd come for her. Carrie did wait, and Sam did come back for her forty years later after her 85<sup>th</sup> birthday. The story had a strong sense of intimacy and evoked a lot of emotions. It was thought that maybe there could be a little more 'showing' rather than 'telling' and that a little more time could be spent earlier in the story establishing just how close Sam and Carrie were so the reader could understand why Carrie would wait so long for her Sam. Thanks Marjory, very touching.

Rebekah was next, and even though she only had an evening's notice, she worked on the start of a story of a girl awakening to a cold rainy morning for the exercise (everyone's stories seem to flow into each other this week, how strange!). Rebekah suggested a good book for writing exercises titles 'Writing down the bones' by Natalie Goldberg.

**Morning Tea.** Thanks Dorothy.... Awesome biscuit-like Malt sticks... if that's what they were... although I only had one, I promise.... Then I went back to eating all that lovely fruit.

Even though Bev couldn't make it along to the meeting, she did email her story, 'Promises' to Richard. What a trooper Bev! This was quite a touching and emotional story of Abigail who was waiting for news after her husband Simon was injured in a car accident. Until the end of the story most of us had assumed that Simon had died in the accident. We weren't sure if this was the way Bev had intended it so as readers get the pleasant surprise that he was in fact alive even though he was badly injured in hospital. Other comments were that there was relief at the surprise that the story had a happy outcome and also the scene at the beginning of the story was very well written with a strong sense of intimacy setting the scene to make the terrible news to come even more devastating.

Between Bev's story and another of Brian's tales of Martin Moran, we entered into a short discussion about the use of swearing in writing after a question from Nick as to whether or not he should include it in his book. Opinions were quite split, ranging from people wondering whether it is really necessary when there are other tools to evoke the same emotions or describe a character as being unsavoury to people feeling that as a writer you should be true to the character, if they would swear, you should include it. Other comments were that if it is only being used for shock value, why bother because people don't find it shocking anymore and also that you should think about your potential reader when considering whether to include or not as they are the one's who will ultimately read through it or put it down if they're offended. So no consensus, but a lot of food for thought!

We ended the meeting with another rousing Tale from Brian's Martin Moran entitled 'The Rescue' which followed on from last session when Martin saved his love, Siobhan from the seedy beachcomber Totti. Martin, being the noble character he is decided he couldn't leave Totti unconscious with the tides rising and returns to the cave to save him, only to find him standing knee deep in water crying out to be saved. The scene frustrated Martin as he yells out to Totti to simply walk out of the water, but Totti, being terrified of water was frozen to the spot. A heroic rescue ensues as Martin once again saves the day. Beautiful Brian, as one

someone said, 'Please just keep reading for us', and another, 'The dialogue is so authentic and finally 'with a minimum of words, Brian delineates fully rounded characters very well.

I'd now like to end this newsletter with a conversation overheard between Brian and Chip...

Chip: 'Do you realise that three stories today have started with a woman waking up?'

Brian: 'It's about time they did'.

Hilarious. Thanks to everyone for their writing, comments and contribution to make yet another interesting, eventful and informative session.

**Feature Reader/s for next meeting: No feature reader as we have special guest Annette Henderson.**

**Exercise to work on if you have time:** We thought we'd put the previous idea of rewriting the ending of someone's short story on hold until Bev returns... so instead next week why not try writing a story in 7 sentences. Tricky!

*And a final note just to remind everyone that I'm on holidays for the next few weeks if someone else could fill in for me as note taker and newsletter writer until I return for the April 22 meeting.*

*Thanks, Naomi*

**Happy Writing Everyone!**

**Chip's Computer Tidbits**

### **Printing Tip from Chip**

#### **How to print a varying number of pages from a document:**

Most Word users know how to print multiple copies of a document: Just change the *Number of copies* setting to the number you need, then click *OK*.

Okay, but what if you want to print multiple copies of select pages? For example, suppose your five-page document ends with a registration form. You need only one copy of the first four pages, but you want three copies of page five.

The secret lies in the *Page range* section of Word's Print dialog. As you may know, by selecting the *Pages* option, you can specify which pages of a document you want for this particular print job. For example, you might enter, which would print pages 1, 2, 3, and 5.

But you can also use this option to print multiple copies of individual pages. So in my aforementioned example, to get three copies of page five and one copy of everything else, you'd enter the following:

In other words, each time you repeat any given page number in that *Pages* field, Word will print an extra copy of that page.

## Change the Function of Your Laptop's Power Button

I don't have any statistics on this, but most of the laptops that cross my desk have one thing in common: pressing the power button puts them to sleep (i.e. standby mode) instead of actually shutting them down.



That's pretty weird considering that many laptops also have dedicated "sleep" buttons. Fortunately, it's easy to change the power button's function, which can be programmed to make the laptop sleep, shut down, or hibernate. Here's how Vista users can make the change:

1. Click *Start*, type *power*, and then click *Power Options*.
2. In the left hand sidebar, click *Choose what the power buttons do*.
3. You should see two pull-down menus alongside *when I press the power button*. One is for when the laptop's running on battery power, the other for when it's plugged in. Choose the setting you want for each scenario.
4. Click *Save changes* and you're done.

As you may have noticed, this screen also lets you change the functions for the sleep button (if your laptop has one) and for what happens when you close the laptop's lid. So you can kill a couple button-birds with this particular settings stone.