

Carindale Writers' Group Meeting

22 July 2010

Start 9:30

Present: Beverley, Jeff, Karen, Mei Yen, Rolando, Lydia, Len, Chip, Dorothy, Judy, Nick, Marjory, Wendy, Naomi, Jeff, Rebekah, Amy, Thea, Dawn, Shirley, Marilyn, Heather, Maria, Hazel, Ed.

Apologies: Brian, Sandy, Richard, Leslee-Anne, Debby, Jane,

News/ challenges/ discussions/correspondence:

1. **Project "All Shorts":** Bev, Rebekah and Lydia have been hard at work sourcing printing and editing costs for our All Shorts book and today they were able to announce that the project is financially viable. Bev is now short listing editors, and will also contact the Pyjama Foundation to discuss being the beneficiary of any additional funds we make from sales. We then moved onto discussing whether there will be any content restrictions on submissions. It's been agreed that the planning committee will bring anything that raises alarm bells to our attention. Nick also raised the need to include a disclaimer for all contributors to sign; a good idea which can be discussed in more detail at a later point.

On that note, here is yet another reminder that **the final deadline for submissions is this Thursday 29th July**. Please email to Bev in a format as requested by Rebekah in her email late last week.

2. Karen is currently working on an article based on Brisbane. She would to know what you think are five quintessential experiences of Brisbane city and its surrounding areas. If you would like to contribute please email Karen at thewordonfood@optusnet.com.au

3. Karen and Chip also reminded us of the importance of backing up. It really is one of the worst feelings in the world to realise your computer has crashed and taken all of your hard work off to literary heaven. So, if you don't back up your work, Chip's computer column at the end of this newsletter could be an educational read.

4. Dorothy brought up the question of potentially limiting memberships to the group. While it's fantastic that our group is thriving, it does pose the problem of members not being able to have regular feedback on their work. It was decided that we won't take any new members until the end of the year and will re-evaluate the situation then.

5. Stemming from this discussion, Dawn suggested the idea of setting up a voluntary email group for those who would like to give as well as receive feedback more regularly. The way this would work is: 1. Members let me (Naomi) know if they would like to be part of the group. 2. I will send out a list to participating members with everyone's names and email addresses. 3. These members will then be free to email their work to each other for feedback. Please note that if you do add your name to the list, it doesn't mean you have to respond to every piece of work sent to you, rather it will be run on an 'as you have time' basis. This means that if you send something out, you may only get one person respond, or you could get more depending on how much time people have available. Let's trial this for a month or so and see how it goes. Any feedback is most welcome.

Feature Reader:

Rebekah: "Pigeon Postman and the Dragon Delivery"

Overview:

Pigeon Postman and the Dragon Delivery is a short story aimed at sophisticated children around the age of 8. It follows the main character 'Pigeon' on his quest to deliver a letter to the fearsome 'Dragon'. The animal world had long told of terrible tales about dragon and despite everyone's concerns, Pigeon decides to bravely head off on his heroic quest anyway. After many challenges he makes it to the dragon's cave with some surprising consequences.

Critique:

Since coming here from the USA, Rebekah has been fascinated by Australia's art of storytelling. She chose this piece of work to be critiqued because it was a short story and so she could get feedback from us on her own storytelling.

Firstly, she asked what meaning we found in the writing. It seemed we all thought it had underlying lessons including 'Don't judge a book by its cover', overcoming peer pressure and the fear of the unknown as well as bravery and the pursuit of truth. Wow, so many lessons in one short story.

Next, she was interested to know if there were any places we got lost. A few people thought that it wasn't clear that the first section was from the viewpoint of the dragon, and while it was meant to be mysterious, it detracted from the actual story. It was pointed out that illustrations in the book could solve this. Some people also found it confusing when Pigeon meets Dragon. Is it another dragon? Is it a dragon with two heads or is it a statue?

Next Rebekah asked, where we noticed the magic. A poignant place seemed to be where the dragon plunged the red hot poker into the cool water. Bev thought things were changing in the story at this point. Finally Rebekah asked if we found it satisfying. There seemed to be a consensus that, yes, we did, as we were swept away with the language, descriptions and the

lovely ending, which would be good for bedtime. Final thoughts were that for a sophisticated child it would be riveting and could be easily made into a screenplay or children's series. Rolando suggested asking schools to read it to children to see which age groups it appeals to.

This meeting's exercise: It seems everyone was too busy working on their submissions for the All Shorts book to complete the last exercise but we did have some additional readers.

We started with Shirley who thankfully found her work from last meeting's exercise. "The Lost Child" was a sad story about more than losing just a child. It included a line about Qantas' recycled air that somehow continues to circulate through your body long after the plane has landed, which a lot of us related to. Next we got a reminder that Leslee-Anne may be far away in distance, but not in spirit as Judy read her story of a car accident and a brother in need as an ambulance carries him away. There were lots of comments about the very tight writing in this one, so if you read this, congratulations Leslee-Anne.

We then welcomed first time reader Hazel as she shared an excerpt from her finished novel "The Soprano"; the discovery of an Australian opera singer. If she had any nerves before reading to the group, I hope they settled after the great response she received. It seems everybody thought it was polished enough to go straight to a publisher.

Judy was up next with "Songs of the Lachlan"; and it certainly came alive as she told of a childhood of yabbing, climbing trees and tucking dresses into bloomers to climb surrounding trees. The descriptions and metaphors were simply beautiful, with a haunting and nostalgic ending. Karen enjoyed it so much she had waves and waves of goose bumps. Yet another piece that I'm sure we'd love to see in the All Shorts book.

Marjory closed the meeting with "MacArthur Let Me Down" exploring the massive influence that teachers can have on their students. It included an interesting quote that a few people had never heard before 'Whistling women and crowing hens are of no use to god or men'.

Feature Reader for next meeting: Lydia

Exercise to work on if you have time: Bring along the first page of your contribution to the 'All Shorts' short story book project. How exciting!

**Until next time... happy writing everyone,
Naomi**

Now for Chip's Computer Tips

Backing Up

There are lots of ways to back up your data and photos, but which are safest, easiest, fastest?

First, both Mac and Microsoft offer backup systems. But these are limited in what they do. You can't restore your data if you change the parameters of your hard drive. For example, if you reformat or change the partitions, you will not be able to restore your data. So I would back up by other means.

Backup options: external hard drive, CD's, DVD's, and memory sticks. The external hard drive offers the greatest capacity. You can get a 100gb HD for under \$100 and the case for around \$25. Just plug it into any USB outlet. When you back up, I suggest you make and name a folder. Then simply copy and paste into that folder. Don't compress or use any application to do it for you. This way you can copy it back into any of your regular folders. Lifetime: minimum of five year if used daily, otherwise indefinite. I have CD's that still can be read after more than 15 years.

I also suggest that you personalize all your folders and put them on another drive or partition in your computer. That is one way of backing up, too. Use some other categories than "My Documents" and the sub-categories, such as "My Music", etc.

If you use CD's or DVD's, use CD-RW's and DVD-RW. This means that you can read-write to them. You can add or delete anytime. Again, copy and paste directly; don't bother compressing or using an MS or MAC program.

I like the memory sticks best of all. They are the fastest and easiest to use. Now they come with quite large memories, up to 20Gb. But probably a 12Gb for \$30 or so will do nicely. How long do they last? You can put on and erase data about 1,000 times before they start to lose their capabilities. If you added a few hundred Mb's per week, it would be 10 years before you reach its capacity. If you never deleted (only copied from it) any data, the memory stick will last indefinitely.

These devices can also store programs, applications and other data directly from websites on the Internet. You don't have to download to your main hard drive.

When should you back up? Periodically. I do it weekly.