

Carindale Writers' Group Meeting

26 August 2010

Start 9:30

Present: Beverley, Jeff, Marjory, Rolando, Heather, Karen, Len, Sandy, Lydia, Judy, Brian, Chip, Michael, Wendy, Shirley, Naomi, Dorothy, Gary, Leslee-Anne, Jeff, Maria

Apologies: Hazel, Richard, Dawn, Nick, Marilyn

News/ challenges/ discussions/correspondence:

1. Project "All Shorts": We're ahead of schedule! A big pat on the back goes out to everyone for sticking to deadlines and generally supporting the publishing committee. We're now working through the second group of edits and Lydia has been able to secure a printer at excellent rates. We also had a first look at a mock up for the cover. Working with the 'Allsorts' liquorice theme, Rebekah has evolved the idea from working with photos of liquorice (since after getting some feedback, people seemed to think the book might be a cook book!) to a beautiful impression of liquorice allsorts. For those of you who weren't at the meeting, it was very colourful, attracting attention but also very professional and appealing. Well done, we can't wait to see the final product.

2. The Pyjama Foundation: On the theme of project Allshorts, Bev invited Tanya, the marketing and fundraising manager from the Pyjama foundation; our books sales beneficiary, to come along and explain how our donation will be used. The Pyjama Foundation is a children's charity that recruits, trains and supports Pyjama Angels; volunteer members of the community who work with children and foster families. Funds raised from 'Allshorts' will help the Pyjama Angels deliver their 'Love of Learning Program', a literacy-based mentoring program which aims to improve literacy levels of children in care, as well as providing a stable influence in their lives. Tanya advised that any improvement in literacy has been proven to have a positive impact on a child's life.

3. Email critique group: So far we have 7 people who have expressed interest in an email critique group. We're gathering support! I think we probably need just 3 more to make it a

viable exercise. So if you've been thinking about it but haven't yet let me know you'd like to be included, drop me an email.

Feature Reader:

Karen: "A Daisy Chain of Sundays"

Overview:

'A Daisy Chain of Sundays' is the start of Karen's foray into writing a book about her 12 month

house swap overseas. Initially, not sure whether she wanted it to be an account of the experience or a 'how to' book, Karen came along with an introduction prepared, as well as three typical days from her family's year away. She wants the final product to be filled with light and shade, including both good times and bad. At the moment she hasn't included any of the challenges or drama from the trip. This was more of a feeling process, so she could figure out how the book will take form, meaning and message and how it will eventually be presented.

She did initially say that the book would be typically suited to a female audience, but after the responses from the men within the group, I'm not so sure that will still be the case!

The message Karen would like to portray throughout the book is the joy of reconnecting with the people you love and getting away from material things in search for the simple life.

Critique:

Following the critical feedback response process with Rebekah as facilitator, we were first asked where we found meaning in the story.

Responses were varied, but overall there seemed to be a lot of warmth and emotion coming from the way Karen describes her food experiences. The way food has been woven into the family's experiences makes for a very magical and nostalgic yearning for simple pleasures. As someone said at the time, it was like she was painting a food picture. It was also mentioned that the detail used made us all slow down and want to take our time and dawdle through our days. The turns of phrase used were almost like poetry and you could shut your eyes and be there. Someone else thought that listening to Karen read became almost like meditation as she so elegantly combined the richness of life with the richness of the food. Brian's final comment was that it was an 'epicurean masterpiece'

Next Karen asked if the introduction was thought provoking.

There seemed to be agreement that most of us were touched by the sentence asking 'If you only had one day left, how would you use it?' with suggestions that it might be a great starting

point for the introduction. Also, that the last sentence about making your very own daisy chain of Sundays was perfect. Then, the question was asked, when talking about facing challenges, could you compare the challenges you're leaving to those you are about to face? We'll leave that to you to ponder, Karen. Finally, there also seemed to be consensus that the beginning paragraph of the introduction describing all family members putting their hands together to signify that they're all committed to the challenge they're all about to face was very strong, but perhaps this could be the start of the actual book rather than the introduction?

Some final questions asked for Karen to ponder:

Is it a diary? A story? Or a memoir?

Do you want it to be a how to? Or a story of your experience?

Who are the main characters?

We hope this helps you get a firmer idea of which direction to take next Karen. To quote another of Brian's great one-liners: 'Well done, I'm quite hungry'.

This meeting's exercise: As we had Tania from the Pyjama Foundation visiting today there was no exercise to complete.

Feature Reader for next meeting: Len

Exercise to work on if you have time: Imagine you get a phone call in the middle of the night. Who is it? Why are you being called? 750 words max (but preferably 500).

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

Now for Chip's Computer Tips

I've always recommended the free Open Office Suite from Oracle at OpenOffice.Org. It's easy to download, but may take 10-15 minutes, depending on the speed of your Internet connection. It includes most things MS Office has—word processor, spread sheets, database, drawing tablet and layout templates, and presentation module. The chief advantages over Office is that it will open Adobe PDF formatted documents and allow you to save any of the programs in the suite in any of a dozen or more formats. For example, you can open a *.pdf document and save it as a *.doc. MS Word will not. It is not difficult to use, either, since most of it looks and operates like Word, Excel and Power Point. I use both Office and OpenOffice suites.

Recently, I downloaded an update to Open Office. Shortly after, I received a thank you note from what I thought was Oracle's Open Office. It had an offer of four free CD's—Open Office, Photo & Image Studio, Desktop Publishing Studio, and an Antivirus and Firewall. This all sounded pretty good. So, I clicked on the button to transfer to the site where I could order these.

I was transferred to the CD Earth Software Library Club. To get the CD's I had to fill out a form with Name, Address, Email. Done! Then I got the message that while the CD's were free, I would have to pay the postage from the US to Australia. OK—it was only US\$1.95, which translate to about A\$2.75. Two weeks later I received the CD's by post. And all 4 CD's were included. The Open Office worked with both MacOSX and Windows. However, the other three disks were 14 day trial versions. If I wanted the full-version, it would cost US\$14.99.

One of our CWG members also ordered the Open Office CD and received the same package I did. He never used the trial CD's and forgot about the offer.

A month later, he found he was charged (more than US\$60) on his VISA card for all the CD's. He was lucky that he saw the charge on his bank account and went through all the bank/Visa red tape to disallow the charge.

Here's the catch. When you receive these CD's you get a notation in the 'Club' details that you must return your Trial CD's or contact CD Earth Software Library Club within 25 days of receipt if you decide you don't want them.

I don't think you can call these tactics a scam, but the deceptive sales strategy used seem less than ethical. Our CWG member says that you must give express permission to those who use your credit card and since he did not give it, Visa agreed to nullify the transaction and recredit the charges to his bank account.

In my case, I have not yet had the CD's 25 days. CD Earth has an Australian 1-800 number, which I have called and cancelled the order. I have also returned the CD's to the Texas company Registered Mail (about the cost of a CD). I have also called the bank. It suggested cancelling my credit card and issuing a new one, since they could not put a stop to the order if it goes through Visa.

Incidentally, the OpenOffice suite that you get from CD Earth is registered to CD Earth, not Oracle. So if you do install and register it, CD Earth has all your details.

Over the years, I have ordered a lot of books, CD's and other goods via email and the Net including the various trading sites, but this is the first time I have had a potential problem with an order.

A final Note:

A warning about spam and mail tracker programs

While not part of his column, Chip has forwarded on this piece for all of us to read and heed as well. The man that sent this information is a computer tech. He spends a lot of time clearing the junk off computers for people and listens to complaints about speed. All forwards are not bad, just some. Be sure you read the very last paragraph.

He wrote:

By now, I suspect everyone is familiar with snopes.com and/or truthorfiction.com for determining whether information received via email is just that: true/false or fact/fiction. Both are excellent sites.

Advice from snopes.com

1. Any time you see an email that says "forward this on to '10' (or however many) of your friends", "sign this petition", or "you'll get bad luck" or "you'll get good luck" or "you'll see something funny on your screen after you send it" or whatever; it almost always has an email tracker program attached that tracks the cookies and emails of those folks you forward to. The host sender is getting a copy each time it gets forwarded and then is able to get lists of 'active' email addresses to use in SPAM emails or sell to other spammers. Even when you get emails that demand you send the email on if you're not ashamed of God/Jesus, that is email tracking, and they are playing on our conscience. These people don't care how they get your email addresses, just as long as they get them. Also, emails that talk about a missing child or a child with an incurable disease "how would you feel if that was your child" are also email tracking. Ignore them and don't participate!

2) Almost all emails that ask you to add your name and forward on to others are similar to that mass letter years ago that asked people to send business cards to the little kid in Florida who wanted to break the Guinness Book of Records for the most cards. All it was, and all any of these emails are, is a way to get names and 'cookie' tracking information for telemarketers and spammers, to validate active email accounts for their own profitable purposes.

You can do your Friends and Family members a GREAT favour by sending this information to them and you will be rewarded by not getting thousands of spam emails in the future. Do yourself a favor and don't adding your name to those types of listing regardless how inviting they might sound, Or make you feel guilty if you don't. It's all about getting email addresses and nothing more.

ALSO: Email petitions are NOT acceptable to Parliament or any other organisation - i.e. social security, etc. To be acceptable, petitions must have a "*signed signature*" and full address of the person signing the petition, so this is a waste of time and you are just helping the email trackers