



Carindale Writers' Group Meeting

8 July 2010

Start 9:30

Present: Beverley, Karen, Mei Yen, Gary, Michael, Elaine, Noelene, Jane, Rolando, Lydia, Len, Chip, Dorothy, Judy, Nick, Marjory, Brian, Wendy, Naomi, Jeff, Debby, Rebekah, Amy.

Apologies: Sandy, Heather, Nick, Richard, Dawn, Leslee-Anne

News/ challenges/ discussions/correspondence:

1. More on the “All Shorts” project: Rebekah met with the QWC to discuss options that might work for our collection of short stories from book size to typeface, paper stock etc. Bev sent around a list asking for submissions and their approximate word length. At the moment submissions will be due on Thursday 22 July (that’s tomorrow, eek!).

2. Rolando has donated a copy of his motivational book and CD entitled “The Business of Hairdressing and Customer Service”. If anyone would like to borrow it please get in touch with Len, our interim library guru until Leslee-Anne returns.

3. Karen’s article “Bites of Burgundy” appeared in the latest issue of Luxury Travel Magazine. Congratulations Karen. The photos were gorgeous as well!

Today’s meeting started with a fun story from Gary; read with great enthusiasm by Brian. Using members of the Carindale Writers’ Group as characters but with a fictional plot, it had everyone almost rolling on the floor with laughter. Entitled ‘Kick Start’ Gary described a typical Carindale Writers’ Group meeting but with a twist. In his version he had come along to read his writing only to have Bev rip him to shreds about the poor quality of his work. A riotous debacle ensued as other members of the group joined in the heckling. It wasn’t until right at the end that we found out it was all a dream; Gary had actually fallen asleep in the meeting only to be awoken by Bev to be told it really was not his turn to read next. Amidst the laughter at the end of the reading (the real one that is!) there were many calls for this one to appear in the All Shorts collection of stories. I think it would set a great tone for the light, inclusive and jolly atmosphere that all our meetings have. Thanks Gary.

Feature Reader:

Naomi: Chapter 1 from her novel “The Collectors”

Overview:

The Collectors begins with the main character of Candice embarking on a train journey. A journey she’s taken many times before. Today, it seems, is an important day for her. We don’t know why or even where she’s going but we discover it doesn’t look to be good. Against her best judgement she decides to help out a new traveller as she knows all too well the trouble he’s about to encounter.

Critique:

It sounds strange referring to myself in the third person... so I’m going to use the first for the moment.

The Collectors is a novel I’ve finished writing and am now working through the first edit. I wanted some feedback on how much more work is required for it to be ‘polished’. I received some excellent feedback that will help me finalise without too many changes. I’ve realised that just an extra sentence here or there can really sort out a lot of the issues I was having. Thanks everyone.

Key points to notes were that I hadn’t made it clear that the main character Candice had taken the train journey many times before and that’s why she understood exactly how her new travelling companion felt, and in turn, what she needed to tell him. There were also some discrepancies with the train sometimes seeming like an old steam engine and sometimes like a newer electric train.

Rebekah suggested a useful reflection exercise called GOTE; a technique actors use to understand and better portray their character; something that can be translated to writing as well. I’ve researched this on the internet and found an explanation in case anyone would like to use it. Rebekah, I hope this does it justice. The ‘G’ stands for Goal: What is the character’s goal? What drives their actions? ‘O’ stands for Obstacles: What gets in the way of the character’s goals, and therefore creates the all important drama in our writing. Next is ‘T’ for Tactics: How is the character going to overcome these obstacles to achieve their goals? And finally, ‘E’ is for Expectations: Does the character expect to achieve their goal? The character should always believe they can achieve their goal; otherwise they wouldn’t be pursuing it. This needs to come out in our writing as well.

On the positive side I did receive a lot of comments that I’ve built the suspense well and you all wanted to know what happens next, which is exactly the type of book I love to read so it’s very encouraging that it’s something I’ve been able to achieve.

This meeting’s exercise:

This week’s exercise was to write a short story with the ending “He turned and walked away through the rain” and it brought out many themes and plots. From Dorothy’s ghostly tale of Valentines Street to Rolando’s witty and perhaps controversial “Kevin’s Storm”; a reflection

on Kevin Rudd's recent speedy fall from grace. Amy bravely read for the first time (well done Amy!) with her contribution describing an assassin preparing himself for his job at hand. With excellent suspense and imagery there were also calls for this one to be entered into the All Shorts book.

Next up was Chip with melancholy tale of the Pastor who was always able to select the right words for any occasion but could feel no emotion at the graves of his wife and child who were killed in a fire. Len followed with a tale of conspiracy and sinister murder plots and Brian told of Simon Crouchley, an unfortunate insurance salesman who, despite his best efforts couldn't win a trick. A new face, Jane, joined us this week and without having a lot of time to prepare she read a passage reminiscent of the hurricane that swept through Galveston in the 1880's; as a man rode home to find his home demolished he searched for his wife only to find her hand, with wedding ring still intact, poking out from amidst the rubble.

Gary's action packed piece 'Tin Soldier' was next, inspired by a newspaper article and Bev's 'Not Strangers When We Met' didn't leave a dry eye in the house... or was that just because I couldn't see anyone else through my streaming tears! My goodness Bev, I'd like to see that turned into a longer story. Brian finished with a twist to the exercise with his story about a queen and her nemesis ending with "He turned and walked away through her reign" very clever, and I must say a good ending to the meeting.

Feature Reader/s for next meeting: Rebekah

Exercise to work on if you have time: Turn last meeting's story (create a short story with the ending: "He turned and walked away through the rain") into a script.

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

Now for Chip's Computer Tips

Microsoft retires Windows 2000, Windows XP SP2

[Windows 2000](#) and [Windows XP Service Pack 2](#) officially get dragged to the Recycle Bin today.

Those two old editions of Microsoft's operating system won't magically stop working at the stroke of midnight. But today ends the company's support for each: It will no longer release new security fixes or provide technical assistance for them. So if you want to keep running them, you're on your own.

Good. It's time to say "buh-bye" to both releases.

Windows 2000 [looked obsolete back in 2005](#), five years after its debut; giving its largely corporate users another five years of support was more than generous enough. Microsoft is a for-

profit company, not a public utility; it is within its rights to direct its resources towards products it sells today.

By way of comparison, Apple has a habit of only [supporting the current and previous version of OS X](#)--the [2005-vintage OS X 10.4 Tiger](#) saw its last update in May 2009. Things aren't that different with the open-source Linux operating system: Even the ["long term support"](#) releases of Ubuntu Linux, such as [the recently reviewed 10.04](#), only come with three years of updates.

Windows XP SP2 -- the name refers to the massive, [desperately needed Service Pack 2 security update](#) Microsoft shipped in 2004 -- represents a different matter.

Six years approaches eternity in the life of a home-computer operating system -- few home PCs stay in service that long. Plus, Microsoft released its next and final Service Pack patch for XP, [Service Pack 3](#), more than two years ago. And Windows XP itself remains under "extended support" -- that is, patches for vulnerabilities only -- until [April 8, 2014](#).

(I can only imagine the howls of outrage that will come in four years, given the strange devotion some XP users have to what has become [a living fossil of an operating system](#).)

But many people have told me they couldn't install SP3 -- just as many told me they had problems with SP2, and much like how others have complained about problems adding such comparatively minor updates as [a new version of Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser](#).

There's not much I can do in those cases besides recite such traditional remedies as "install it in [Safe Mode](#)" -- in part because the victims of these malfunctions rarely provide a description more detailed than "it didn't work" or "the computer crashed." The odds are they had some preexisting condition on their PC that would have caused trouble eventually -- but that's of little consolation to these folks, many of whom also didn't back up their data.

Others may not have bothered. Microsoft [blandly labels SP3](#) "an important update that includes previously released security, performance, and stability updates for Windows XP," suggesting that users who downloaded earlier fixes already got its benefits. You'd have to click through [a more technical document](#) to see how many of SP3's patches are ["hotfixes"](#) that may not have been distributed automatically through Microsoft's Windows Update service.

Instead of scolding home users still stuck on XP Service Pack 2, I'd rather try to help them. Have you experienced and overcome obstacles installing XP SP3, or have you helped a friend through those issues? Please share your experience, and what worked for you, in the comments.