



***Carindale Writers' Group Meeting  
12<sup>th</sup> March 2009***

**Welcome to:** Welcome back to Michael after his serious health problems. We hope you will be a regular at the meetings again, Michael. Welcome also to new members, Irene, Rhonda and Courtenay; we thank you for choosing us as your writing group.

**Present:** Dawn, Jeff, Brian, Chip, Beverley, Leslee Ann, Gary, Judy R, Debby, Sandy, Dorothy, Richard, Michael Mc, Wendy, Melinda, Josie, Courtenay, Irene, Rhonda.

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

- The subscription payment to Australian Writers Marketplace Online was finally sorted out and all contributing members have received the password. We have also been given a new membership number for Queensland Writers Centre, which I will send after this meeting. I have yet to check if our old password works on the QWC site with our new membership number.
- We decided to suspend membership to FAWQ for this year as the majority of members felt the expenditure wasn't warranted or beneficial to the group
- **Dawn and Desley** have kindly agreed to take charge of the E-Book anthology and Dawn has contacted Judith for the updated edits.
- **Leslee Anne** is helping Dorothy with the library resources. The list for new books was re-circulated and Leslee Anne will report back to the next meeting with costs etc.

**Feature Readers:**

**Debby** was the first feature reader for the meeting and was possibly the best prepared reader we have had for some time, presenting her memoir, which was written from the point of view of a child growing up in Ireland, complete with a power point presentation of her pictorial graphics.

It was such a pleasure listening to Debby reading these first chapters of her autobiography, particularly since her lovely Irish accent complemented the words so well. Debby's photographs accompanying the text were an added bonus, as were her definitions of Irish names.

No wonder it was such a glowing critique. Debby not only brought to life her own personal milieu but also captured the social times during the non-technical peace of the early 1960s. Of particular merit was the way Debby set the scene, showing the environmental details and then showing what was taking place in her young mind at the time. This led to many humorous asides and the fact this was often given as hindsight remarks (in a more adult voice) kept the pace cracking along, allowing Debby to turn what can sometimes be boring to all but immediate family members into a story that many of us felt had far wider public appeal.

If there was anything coming out of the critique to help Debby make her story shine more, it was to stay mindful of using the senses, particularly to evoke smells, touch and sounds, and to take every opportunity to build the characters of other people as well as herself to show how she fits in the puzzle of her life.

Congratulations, Debby, on the great introduction to your autobiography, thanks for sharing it with us, and please read more from it on another occasion.

**Melinda** was the second feature reader. With the title of “The Ecology Post Graduate Survival Guide” and a sub heading too long to remember, but equally enlightening, we immediately sensed we were in for some good old fashioned cynicism directed at the pitfalls of University, in particular directed against the completion (in time) of post graduate dissertations.

Melinda kept us all, even those of us without the experience, well entertained with her black humour. Although the critique was divided, with some feeling the sentences could benefit by cutting back to bare form and others feeling they were reflective of the rambling mind of a post graduate researcher, all of us agreed that Melinda could submit the piece to on-campus student newspapers as it would surely strike empathy chords in the way intended.

Way to go, Melinda!

First time member, **Rhonda**, also read a vignette memoir. Rhonda’s haunting piece took us back to a time when whales were a commodity, their slaughter was a spectacle, and, unbelievably, considered suitable for an impressionable child. The story has all the right elements for pathos – a pristine beach in Bryon Bay (the irony that this region is now a favourite ‘green’ destination adds another dimension to Rhonda’s story) an innocent child and the blood and guts of a gentle giant of the sea. This is definitely a plot to expand. Thanks for sharing it with us, Rhonda.

**Homework:** Have you identified your premise? Tell the group what you believe it is and then read a part of your story supporting it. Some writers begin with a premise and others only realise what it is as the story unfolds from their subconscious. In either case, by half way through the story it should be obvious to you and your readers.

Well, we did have one member who rose admirably to the challenge of this meeting’s home-work. Jeff came up with what we all agreed made sense as his premise re his major work in progress set in the Napoleonic Wars. Good on you, Jeff. Obviously it wasn’t an easy task though, so aren’t you glad that’s behind you

now? Never mind, **Next Meeting's set exercise** should be easier. Using the prompt: *He had never seen anything like it ...* as the opening, write a short story of approximately 250 words.

- *Don't forget, you may choose, instead of writing for the exercise, to read a page of your work to ask for specific feedback in a forum-like session. Don't be shy if you have a pressing challenge you'd like to share with your peers.*
- **Feature Readers for next meeting, 26<sup>th</sup> March.** : Richard, Sandy and, depending on time, Brian and Judy.

Happy writing and see you all then.  
Beverley

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