

# southern

# write

Newsletter of the SA Writers' Centre Inc

May 2005

You are invited to the launch of

# The SA Writers' Festival



by Elizabeth Mansutti



Tuesday 24 May 2005 at 7pm,  
immediately following SAWC's AGM which starts at 6pm

Come and listen to Elizabeth's amazing perspective of the last twenty years at the SA Writers' Centre. Her topic:  
The Great Southern Write: Can it be something in the water?  
"A festival to celebrate the work of South Australian writers. What does a community gain from knowing its own writers? What can we learn from their reflections on our past, present and future? Where can they take us in their realms of fiction and fantasy? What essence do they offer to fill a special corner in our existence?"

Biography: Elizabeth Mansutti was on the original committee which set up the SA Writers' Centre twenty years ago. She has been writing professionally since the early 70s and her credits cover most genres. She has conducted writing workshops for adults and students from Broome to Brisbane, Darwin to Launceston, and many places in between. She has remained fascinated by people's desire to write and surprised and delighted by much of their writing.

*The SA Writers' Festival will be held in September 2005.*

# Inaugural National Indigenous Writers' Festival

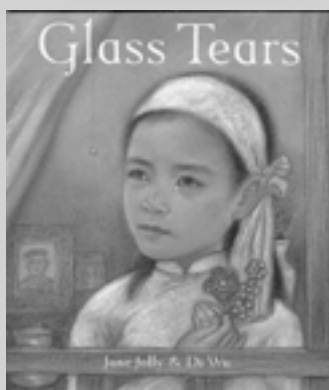
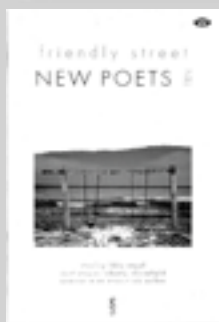
During NAIDOC week: 8–10 July 2005

The SA Writers' Centre alongside the South Australian Indigenous Writers' and Storytellers' group will be holding the Inaugural National Indigenous Writers' Festival during the 2005 NAIDOC week (8th -10th July). Indigenous Writers and Publishers from across Australia will gather in Adelaide to participate.

The Inaugural National Indigenous Writers' Festival will have panels on: Storytelling, Fiction, Poetry, Children's Fiction, Indigenous Publishing Houses, Playwrights, Songwriters and much more. This Festival will showcase South Australian Indigenous artists: Mona Tur-Kennedy, Buck McKenzie, Sonja Kurtzer, Kenny Laughton, Mandy Brown, Georgina Williams, Fabienne Bayet-Charlton, Doris Katinyeri, Kunyi McInerney, Jared Thomas, Suzi Hutchings and Jardine Kiwat.

*Fully funded by the Australia Council for the Arts, this is a free event for everyone.*

# Centre Information...



## Disclaimer

The information in this publication is presented in good faith as a service to SA Writers' Centre members. While the information is believed to be correct, the Centre takes no responsibility for its accuracy. No liability is accepted for any statements of opinion or any error or omission. Although advertising material is accepted for this news-

## So Very Resourceful

Many thanks to writers, groups and publishers who donated books to our Resource Library this month.

## Donations & Resources ...

**Friendly Street** *New Poets Ten*, *Stealing*—Libby Angel; *Deaf Elegies*—Robert J Bloomfield and *sparrow in an airport*—rob walker, Wakefield Press 2005 and *Blur* Friendly Street Reader #29, Wakefield Press.

**Paula Vince**, *Quenarden: The Dark Secret*, Apple Leaf Books, 2004.

**Mike Ladd**, *Blast: Poetry and Critical Writing*, Iss No. 1, 2005.

**Jane Jolly**, *Glass Tears*, Limelight Press, 2005, illus. Di Wu.

**The Chinese Pen**, Winter 2004, Contemporary Chinese Literature from Taiwan.

**Citrus Press**, *Remember When: How to Unlock Your Life Story*, by John Hockney, 2005.

**Overland**, *The Spirit in Australia*, #178, Autumn 2005.

## Newsletter Folders

Thank you to the following folders who helped with the April newsletter: Cailean Darkwater, Lynn Brooks, John and Coie Dikkenberg, Margie Hann Syme, Graeme Rickard, Jo Dey, Joanne Moretti, Ann Timony Jenkin, Jo Vabolis and Lindy Warrell.

## Aust/Vogel Literary Award

If you are under 35 years on 31 May 2005 and have an unpublished work of fiction, Australian history or biography over 30,000 words you could be eligible for the \$20,000 prize. Details at [www.allenandunwin.com/vogel/entry.asp](http://www.allenandunwin.com/vogel/entry.asp)

## Donation

Thank you to Bookwise International who donated \$200 towards the recent RE:VIEWS Conference.

## Wheelchair/ lift access

is available at the 26 York Street rear entrance.

Alternatively, come in from Rundle Street via Buongiorno's Caffe to reach the lift.



## 3-Day Novel Race

The most fabulous literary marathon in the Southern Hemisphere will be run on the Queen's Birthday Weekend. The 3-Day Novel Race demands aspiring writers from all corners of the continent of Australia to create a literary masterpiece in just 3 days or just 72 hours or a magnificent 4320 minutes.

1st Prize: \$1,000 cash + mentorship + e-book publication

2nd Prize: \$500

3rd Prize: \$250

For more information contact Fiona on tel 8406 8469.

Guidelines available from the SAWC.

You may begin writing no earlier than 8pm on the Friday, 10 June 2005 and must stop writing on or before 8pm, Monday 13 June 2005 of the Queen's Birthday Weekend. Completed manuscripts should be delivered by post to the City of Salisbury address post-marked no later than Wednesday 15 June 2005. Entries must be accompanied by a statutory declaration signed and witnessed by a Justice of the peace confirming that the novel was wholly written over the Queen's Birthday Weekend.

Outlines and any preparation such as research prior to the 3-Day Novel Race are permitted. None of the actual novel should be written either before or after the Queen's Birthday Weekend.

Collaborations are allowed. There is a limit of no more than two authors per 3-day Novel Racing Team.

The 3-Day Novels can be written anywhere. There are no restrictions on genre or literary form.



## Book Editor Wanted

I have written a 350 page non-fiction book that needs an editor to bring it to a standard for acceptance by a Literary Agent or Publisher. The manuscript has been assessed and its summary and excerpts can be found at: [http://www.manuscriptsonline.com.au/authors\\_and\\_excerpts.htm](http://www.manuscriptsonline.com.au/authors_and_excerpts.htm)  
If this is YOU, can you please email me at [rodr@sagric.com.au](mailto:rodr@sagric.com.au) and I will contact you.

# Dashing Off A Novel

by **Brian Forté**

**T**he idea of writing a novel is surprisingly popular. It seems that nearly everyone who reads a novel or two entertains the notion that they might, one day, sit down and write one themselves.

Of the reasons given for these notions never advancing beyond a Sunday afternoon's daydream, lack of time is the most prevalent.

After all, even assuming research and planning for one's Magnum Opus is complete, everyone knows that writing a novel is a painstaking, almost all-consuming task which will take months if not years. Or is it?

In 1845 the French novelist and playwright, Alexandre Dumas, famous even today for such novels as *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*, wagered that he could complete the first volume of his then projected three volume work *Le Chevalier de Maison Rouge* in 72 hours including time for sleeping and eating. He emerged from his study with his completed manuscript a mere 66 hours later.

Ernest Hemingway wrote *The Torrents of Spring* in a fit of inspiration that kept him going from the 20th to the 26th of November 1925. Just to show that it wasn't a fluke he wrote *Rasselas* in 7 days in 1951. This time, however, it was the need to pay for his mother's funeral rather than the touch of the muse which kept him going.

For more than ten years Walter Gibson, who, as Maxwell Grant, was chiefly responsible for the pulp detective character known as *The Shadow*, produced a complete 60,000 word novel every fortnight. His most spectacular show of speed occurred on a holiday in Maine. The log cabin he had commissioned as a hideaway was barely started. With nowhere else to stay and a new *Shadow* novel due in three days he ordered the builders to throw together a desk and a chair. His workspace secured he sat down and, whilst the cabin was being built around him, wrote the new novel in the three days he had left.

*The Running Man*, a novel originally published as by Richard Bachman but

eventually revealed to be by Stephen King was written — and eventually published with almost no changes — in 72 hours.

Even Shakespeare himself was apparently not free from the need to produce work in a hurry. Tales suggest that more than once, fellow members of his company locked the great Bard in an attic and would not let him out until a completed play was passed, page by page, through the gap under the door.

So, it seems the old standby of 'not enough time' is no excuse for all those would-be novelists not producing their tomes. Given the right motivation anyone should be capable of producing a novel in a week.

Getting the right motivation, however, seems to be rather difficult. How many of us are ever hit with inspiration sufficient to keep us standing in the kitchen writing on top of our fridges for three days, as Hemingway is once reputed to have done. How many of us have held the wolf from the door as desperately as Thackeray, Walter Scott or Dumas were forced to? Each of these three were, at various times, writing almost literally one day ahead of their creditor's demands for money.

All is not, however, lost. Something of the impetus needed to produce at such great speed is the guiding idea behind the literary marathon known as a Three-Day Novel Contest.

On the Canadian Labour Day weekend of September 1978, Pulp Press International, a small press in Vancouver, British Columbia, held the first of its now infamous Three-Day Novel Contests.

The rules were simple. One registered an interest and paid the entry fee before the contest began. Then, on the three days prescribed by the rules, you chained yourself to your typewriter or word processor and wrote.

Outlines were permitted prior to the contest; only the actual writing of the novel was restricted to the three specified days. Collaborations were permitted, but no more than two authors per novel were allowed.

The kick which made this contest an acceptable substitute for inspiration or economics, was the first prize. The winning novel was released as a genuine published book the following northern spring.

In 1988 Landin Press, a small Adelaide-based publisher, decided that what was good enough for the Canadians was good enough for us and ran the first Australian Three-Day Novel Contest during that year's Adelaide Festival Fringe.

The only notable differences to the rules used in Canada were an undertaking to publish the winning novel before the end of the Festival, and a requirement that the novel contain some reference to Adelaide's Festival of Arts. For the 1990 Three-Day Contest the requirement was broadened to simply some reference to Australia.

Landin Press's contest only ran twice but the Canadian Three-Day Novel Contest is still running. Pulp Press International became Arsenal Pulp Press in 1982 and continued to run the contest until 1991, when they handed the marathon literary competition over to Anvil Press. Anvil Press ran the competition for the next eleven years. In 2003 the competition found new digs at Blue Lake Books. This was a short-lived residence, however, and the contest is now running independently as the International 3-Day Novel Contest. The 28th marathon runs from September 3 this year and details can be had at <http://3daynovel.com/>.

More immediately, the **Salisbury Writers' Festival** will bring the Three-Day Novel Race back down-under during the June 2005 Queen's Birthday long weekend. And their substitute for inspiration or economics? \$1,000; a follow-up mentorship with one of SA's published authors; and e-publication. [For more information see page 2 of this newsletter.]

So all would-be novelists out there have no excuses left. Next time you hear someone, as they put the latest blockbuster down on the easy table, sigh that they are sure they could do something just as good if only they had the time, give them a nasty grin and tell them they have. After all it only takes three days.

*Brian Forté is an Adelaide-based journalist and writer of more than two decades experience. He's written for the standard array of newspapers, TV shows and on-line publications. He's also written courseware, technical documentation, training manuals and corporate reports.*

# Kylie's journey...

*My daughter Kylie was diagnosed in grade three with dyslexia and she has been recently diagnosed with Asperger's Disorder—or high functioning autism.*

**T**oday, Kylie's remarkable perseverance, courage and integrity of character shines through and she has been able to overcome social and academic barriers.

From an early age, Kylie found the school structure and the social interaction with peers extremely challenging. In grade three Kylie would pull her desk away from the rest of the students and only feel comfortable in a space facing the wall. Over the years, her anxiety level would be overwhelming and sometimes frightening, resulting in refusal to go to school and withdrawal behaviour. From Grade 4 Kylie began to create a world by trying to transfer the dialogue and imagery in her mind onto paper.

With the challenge of dyslexia, Kylie struggled to retain and recall the spelling of words from both short- and long-term memory. Learning grammar and meaning intent was also very difficult. However, this did not deter Kylie from writing and, at the age of eight, she wrote her first story: *The Land in the Clouds*. We could barely decipher what she had written however, we encouraged her and praised her efforts.

As a family, we moved from the country to the city when Kylie was eleven years old. Kylie was feeling fearful of the change, especially of making new friends. On the way in the car, she began to form in her mind a story. It was a fantasy, of a land overwhelmed by darkness. She called it *The Children of the Legend*. Into this dark and confused world, which is literally falling apart both physically and spiritually, come a strange mix of humans, aliens and robotic creatures to bring love, hope and peace. And the concept which brings victory through the adventures is friendship. Friendship for a person like Kylie with Asperger's Disorder is one of the most difficult areas of social accomplishment. Although Kylie struggled in her real world to reach out and connect, in her inner world—her story—she wove a plot and subplots about the power of friendship. Her characters reflected in turn her own journey through fears of the unknown, losing and gaining friends, striving to find a sense of

purpose and meaning in life, and even when 'though the road is no longer clear—there is always hope.' (Deny—Dream Master).

In grade six Kylie received from the school a word processor she called Arthur. Arthur opened another world for Kylie, for now she could really pursue her passion: she could write faster and she could write anywhere. In year 7 we bought Kylie a lap-top. By now, Kylie could type very fast. Both her right and left hands move together in unison so she had to touch type. The laptop went everywhere with her and everywhere Kylie wrote her story. I remember visiting her school at lunchtime. Children were playing and laughing and there was Kylie sitting under her tree typing. Now and again, she would look up and stare at the children, then bend her head to once again type furiously. She became known as the Laptop girl. Gradually, through sheer practice, Kylie's spelling improved. She taught herself new ways of retaining words - not in lists but within the context of a story. Kylie would read and reread books, teaching herself how to write. Slowly, structure, plots and subplots began to take place. I would often hear Kylie acting out the scenes in her books. Her voice would rise and fall in pitch and intensity, her body movements acting out scene after scene in her mind. Then I would hear the tapping of the keys as she typed copious notes.

At school, children would approach Kylie and ask her what she was doing. Kylie would answer that she was writing a book and one day the book would be published. Kylie would then take on the role of storyteller—wide-eyed the children would listen and ask if they could buy the book. As her book filled up the files on her computer, the list of children wanting to buy her book grew. As parents, we were concerned about the reality of the situation but sometimes it is best to encourage hope against the odds, because hope gives children the courage to believe in themselves.

Year 9 was a dreadful year for Kylie and the whole family. Kylie was not coping anymore with the school structure and the overwhelming anxiety of how to meet social and academic challenges (at the time we did not realise that she had Asperger's Disorder.) She was very depressed. Kylie felt that she had failed in succeeding in what all her peers were doing—school.

Kylie would talk to me with tears in her eyes and say that she loved learning but school had become too hard. Searching for answers my husband, Philip, and I withdrew Kylie from school and placed her in Open Access College. Although she felt safe and secure in her room—the four walls also represented loneliness. The teachers at Open Access College were very supportive and understanding. They were willing to be adaptive in their approach to suit her needs, building on her strengths and competence. For six months, once a fortnight, a teacher would come and take Kylie out for lunch. The mentoring relationship provided affirmation within a school structure and provided Kylie with the courage to continue.

As the depression lifted, Kylie began to think of others and, from the confines of her room, she wanted to encourage other children not to give up. Therefore, every couple of months she made up gifts called a Box of Hope, consisting of a card of encouraging words and a colourful toy in a colourful box. The gifts were sent through the OAC to students who were struggling with illness, disabilities, loneliness or depression. Kylie's sense of confidence grew. Through the encouragement of her teacher, Annette Bulling, she initiated a small group called INSPIRE. 'I wanted to help kids who want to write to share ideas, learn from each other and draw from each other's creativity.'

At the beginning of year 10 (2004) Kylie decided to rewrite her entire book, *The Messengers—Children of the Legend*. She was not satisfied with the standard of the work she had begun four years ago. During a visit to our home, Kylie timidly showed a teacher her book. The teacher was astounded and suggested that she utilise her story as a year 11 unit—Language and Community Studies. Kylie was so excited she decided to attend writing courses. For the little girl who once could barely write—now a world of opportunity was presented to her. No longer having to cope with anxiety, Kylie's motivation to learn improved dramatically. A month later, Jenny Jarvis, her teacher for the unit, said that the work she was submitting was such a high standard that she recommended Kylie submit her book and her research as a Year 12 SACE level.

Last year Kylie completed Year 10 plus two year 11 units and one year 12 unit. To

# PLR, ELR & Tax ...

Kylie's excitement she received a 20/20 score for her year 12 unit and an award of excellence from the college. Kylie has matured considerably: she now has a good grasp of the complexities and challenges of publishing a book and is willing to continue learning both the art of writing and the patience to see the fulfilment of a dream. Kylie does not want to give up and this year she is writing the second book in the trilogy of *The Messengers*. Kylie is willing to walk through the process step by step. Personally, I think it would be good to process her material now and not wait until she is an adult for there must be significant advantages for a book written through the eyes of a child.

For five years, her room became a golden/green marbled palace of Pennadot, or the house of flames or a forest of Monday. For five years Kylie has been writing words, discovering keys to unlock the door of her mind so that her words were woven into the lands and characters who lived in a world suspended in space in I'an's throne room. So now Kylie has begun the journey of meeting people who could help her through the awesome task of taking the words she wrote on her laptop into the hands of the children on her waiting list.

*Vanessa Leane*

*vleane@dodo.com.au*

## LOOKING FOR A PUBLISHER?

**SID HARTA PUBLISHERS** not only offers a full manuscript assessment service but publishes titles in the traditional sense, and also offers Partnership Publishing.

Unlike Self Publishing, Partnership Publishing provides the distribution network, manages the project from line editing, typesetting, proofing, printing, book design, often co-funds production, provides promotional support including a personalized page for the author's work and a short biography. Sid Harta can arrange for author launches/talks to promote their title.

There are many problems with the alternative, Self Publishing, which places the onus for the above entirely on the author and, in consequence, most fail.

This is NOT Vanity Press. SHP only publish works that have merit.

Contact SHP at: [author@sidharta.com.au](mailto:author@sidharta.com.au)  
or visit our website for submission details at:  
<http://www.publisher-guidelines.com> and  
<http://www.sidharta.com.au>



Postal: SHP, PO Box 1042, Toorak Road,  
Hartwell, Victoria 3124.

## Payments to Australian

### Creators and Publishers 2005/6

If you are an Australian book creator (author, editor, illustrator, compiler, translator) or an Australian publisher, you may be eligible for a payment under the PLR (Public Lending Right) and/or (Educational Lending Right (ELR) schemes.

The PLR scheme makes payments to eligible Australian creators and publishers on the basis that income is lost from the availability of their books for use in public lending libraries.

The ELR scheme makes payments to eligible Australian creators and publishers whose books are held in educational lending libraries (i.e. school, TAFE and university libraries).

Both programs also support the enrichment of Australian culture by encouraging the growth and development of Australian writing and publishing.

The main requirements for eligibility for PLR and ELR are:

- book creators must be either Australian citizens or residents in Australia.
- books must have an International Standard Book Number (ISBN) and have no more than five creators.
- creators must be entitled to receive royalties from the sale of the book (creators in receipt of a one-off fee may be ineligible).

Claim forms are now available for the 2005-06 PLR and ELR programs. Claims may be made for books published in 2004 or earlier. It is not necessary to submit a new claim for books already registered, unless a new edition has been published.

Requests for claim forms or further information is available from:

- online at [www.dcita.gov.au/lendingrights](http://www.dcita.gov.au/lendingrights)
- by telephone on (02) 62711650 or TOLL FREE 1800 672842
- by fax on (02) 62711651
- by email [plr.mail@dcita.gov.au](mailto:plr.mail@dcita.gov.au) or [elr.mail@dcita.gov.au](mailto:elr.mail@dcita.gov.au)
- by mail at Lending Rights,  
GPO Box 3241, Canberra, ACT 2601.

Deadline for claims: 30 JUNE 2005  
(No late applications will be accepted.)

## Attention-Taxation Ruling

Carrying on business as a professional artist (TR 2005/1). The ATO has now produced clear guidelines on the principles to be applied in determining whether an artist is carrying on business as a 'professional artist' or hobbyist. The guidelines are of great relevance to artists and recognise 'that because of the nature of art activity, arts businesses typically have different characteristics to those found in other businesses'. More information is available from NAVA who have been campaigning on this issue for many years ([www.visualarts.net.au/](http://www.visualarts.net.au/)) and from the ATO website <http://law.ato.gov.au/atolaw/view.htm?docid=TXR/TR20051/NAT/ATO/00001>

[Information provided by the Arts Industry Council (SA) Inc.]

## Altair Australia Pty Ltd Professional Editing

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[www.altair-australia.com/altair/editing.html](http://www.altair-australia.com/altair/editing.html)

Time bookings essential

## Seaview Press Interviews

Susan Rintoul or Bill Phippard of Seaview Press will be available on the first Friday of the month: 6 May, 3 June and 1 July to talk to authors personally about their manuscripts—specifically book production and/or editing and indexing. Seaview Press acts only for self-publishers. Appointments at the SAWC of up to an hour will be free but bookings are essential.

Please ring 8235 1535 to book or email [susan@seaviewpress.com.au](mailto:susan@seaviewpress.com.au)

# Opportunities...

## Handbook Resources

The SAWC has copies of the following resources on grant rounds, scholarships and opportunities: *The South Australian Youth Arts Board Grants Handbook* [www.sayab.org.au](http://www.sayab.org.au); *Australia Council Support for the Arts Handbook 2005* [www.ozco.gov.au](http://www.ozco.gov.au) and *Arts Funding Arts SA Guide 2005* [www.arts.sa.gov.au](http://www.arts.sa.gov.au). Come in and pick one up or contact the funding bodies directly.

## Lu Rees Archives Collection ...

of Australian Children's Literature has nearly 14,000 items including 300 files on individual authors, illustrators and editors. The Archive is a collaborative partner in Austlit which involves 8 universities and the National Library of Australia and aims to provide electronic access to Australian literature. Log on at [www.austlit.edu.au](http://www.austlit.edu.au).

## 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Young Aussie Writers' Awards

A chance for budding writers to use their imagination and hone writing skills in a variety of genres including stories, articles, lyrics and cartoons etc. More info and tips at [www.pearsoned.com.au/schools/magazines](http://www.pearsoned.com.au/schools/magazines). Deadline: 30 June 2005.

## Mentored Residencies

Receive a two-week residential fellowship at Varuna with dramaturgical support from Playworks. Details at [www.varuna.com.au](http://www.varuna.com.au). Deadline: June 31.

## Wet Ink ...

is a new Adelaide-based magazine of writing seeking submissions for its first issue (to be published December 2005). 'While South Australia possesses a vibrant and potent literary culture, no local publication exists to present our work to a national (and international) audience. *Wet Ink* intends to fill this void. By establishing itself as a quarterly magazine of high-caliber writing [both national and international], it can present the exciting and dynamic face of South Australian literary culture to the rest of Australia and abroad.' It will be nationally distributed, and its advisory board includes renowned writers J.M. Coetzee, Thomas Shapcott and Eva Sallis. Short fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction and general-interest essays are all welcome. Submissions from new and emerging writers are particularly encouraged. Guidelines at SAWC or post to Wet Ink, P.O. Box 3162, Rundle Mall, Adelaide SA 5000. Deadline: 1 July, 2005.

## Page Seventeen ...

is a new print literary magazine produced by Celapene Press. Contributions of short stories or narrative nonfiction (3000 words), poems (50 lines), haiku & B&W photography/illustrations. Send email submissions to [submit@pageseventeen.com.au](mailto:submit@pageseventeen.com.au) or to PO Box 566, Cockatoo, Vic, 3781. Guidelines at [www.pageseventeen.com.au](http://www.pageseventeen.com.au). Deadlines 30 June & 31 December.

## Pendulum ...

a national literary anthology is seeking poetry (50 lines); short stories, extracts of novels, interviews and articles (3000 words); and artwork (including photography and illustrations). Maximum 3 submissions. Artwork by hard copy submission only. Hard copy submissions must be typed on A4 paper, double-spaced, with a cover letter including the contributor's contact details and a SSAE. Email submissions by attachment with the contact details in the body of the email. Post to Pendulum Professional Writing & Editing Department, Chisholm Institute, PO Box 684, Dandenong VIC 3175. Email submissions to: [pendulum@fathen.net](mailto:pendulum@fathen.net) Deadline 31 May 2005.

## SA Stumpy Festival Awards

Submissions are accepted in free form and bush poetry, prose and original bush song as well as entries for the Bush Poetry State Championships for SA residents. Info and entry forms at [www.lm.net.au/~stumpy/](http://www.lm.net.au/~stumpy/). Email [stumpy@lm.net.au](mailto:stumpy@lm.net.au) or phone 8532 6483. Deadline: 1st June 2005.

## Skive Sold ...

to American Publishing Mogul. This small but popular ezine produced by Matt Ward has sold for US\$10,000. Read more on the website: [www.skivemagazine.com](http://www.skivemagazine.com) and check out guidelines for submissions.

## papertiger's imprint soi 3 ...

seeks submissions of poetry manuscripts, selected works for anthologies and proposals from Australasian poets writing in English. Guidelines at [www.papertigermedia.com/guidelines/soi3\\_guidelines.html](http://www.papertigermedia.com/guidelines/soi3_guidelines.html)

## Gawler National Short Story Competition

Submissions on any theme are invited. A shortlist of stories will be selected for publication in an anthology which will mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gawler Public Library. Prizes as follows: Under 12 yrs: \$50; 12 – 18 years: \$75; Adults: \$100. Deadline 30 June. More info at [www.gawler.sa.gov.au](http://www.gawler.sa.gov.au) or contact Denise McCann at Gawler Public Library, PO Box 130, Gawler 5118 or by phone on (08) 85229213 or email: [library@gawler.sa.gov.au](mailto:library@gawler.sa.gov.au)

## Blast Magazine ...

has come back from the dead and is seeking new contributions of poetry and critical writing. Subscriptions \$20 per year for two issues. Contact editor Ann Nugent at PO Box 134, Campbell, ACT, 2612. Mike Ladd has donated a copy of *Blast*, Iss. 1 to the SAWC for those interested. It contains Mike's essay 'Feeling/Idea/Language/Form' which he referred to in his recent workshop with First Draft writing group.

## Writers Ahoy

The theme for the next *Sleepers Almanac* is 'the nervous system'. Guidelines at [www.sleeperspublishing.com](http://www.sleeperspublishing.com). 'If you have a manuscript sitting in your bottom drawer, have a think about sending it our way.'

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## Seeking Volunteer Writers

'Australia is a big place and here at about-australia.com we want to know it inside and out. From your local weekend markets to your holiday in Kakadu – we want to know it all! If you have a travel story to share with our readers or info on your local region, don't be shy, we'd love to hear from you. Visit our website at [www.about-australia.com](http://www.about-australia.com) and click on 'Submit a Story', or write to [editor@about-australia.com](mailto:editor@about-australia.com). (Publications credited to author.)'

## Positive Words ...

creative writing magazine is seeking submissions of short stories and poetry for upcoming issues. The theme for June is 'Books' and for July it will be 'Junk Mail', but work on any theme is always welcome. Contributors receive a complimentary copy of the magazine. For more information send SSAE to The Editor, Sandra Lynn Evans, 466 Old Melbourne Rd, Traralgon 3844, Victoria.

## Call for Papers

Asia Pacific Journal of Arts and Cultural Management is having a special issue on the Indigenous art market and its management, providing an opportunity for debate of Indigenous Australian philosophies and world views to do with the Indigenous art market. Topics of interest could be of interest to academics in business, humanities, anthropology and sociology. Competitive paper submissions should follow the usual journal submission guidelines. More info at [www.artsman.journal.unisa.edu.au/index.asp](http://www.artsman.journal.unisa.edu.au/index.asp) Deadline: 15 September 2005.

## VIC Premier's Literary Awards

\$180,000 in prize money is on offer for the best Australian books, essays, screenplays and drama published or produced in the twelve months ending 30 April 2005. The awards aim to promote literary endeavour and a reading culture through honouring Australian literature, ideas, innovation and learning. There is a new category in 2005: The Grollo Prize for Writing about Italy and Australia (\$15,000). Deadline: 3 June 2005. Entry forms and guidelines at: [www.slv.vic.gov.au/pla/](http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/pla/) or (03) 8664 7277 or email [pla@slv.vic.gov.au](mailto:pla@slv.vic.gov.au)

## Correspondence Course

The ANPC is delighted to offer a playwriting course by correspondence with award-winning playwright and teacher, Timothy Daly. This unique tape-and-individual-feedback course has been designed to assist writers outside the Sydney metropolitan area and overseas. Participants receive a fortnightly series of audio tapes, detailed notes and writing exercises personally read and responded to by Timothy. Feedback sessions may be arranged by post or email. Course outline at [www.anpc.org.au](http://www.anpc.org.au) Registration: \$400. Contact Jane Powles on (02) 9555 9377 or email [info@anpc.org.au](mailto:info@anpc.org.au). Ask about *Getting Started: A Tape For Playwriting*, which explains how you can build up the skills you need to write for theatre (\$35 + postage).

## ABC Radio Regional Production Fund ...

commissions work from experienced radio producers and talented content providers who live outside the major capital cities. They are looking for documentary features, series, music segments, drama, comedy, serials and much more. If you have an idea for a complete and delivered program which fits within an existing ABC radio format, an original script, a collection of oral histories etc, then contact Deb Leavitt, ABC Radio on 08 9220 2781 or email: [leavitt.deborah@abc.net.au](mailto:leavitt.deborah@abc.net.au)

## Artistic Director wanted

Express Media provides quality literary, arts and media programs for young people. They're looking for a new Artistic Director to take creative control of the organisation's artistic program, as well as managing grants and performing the managerial co-executive officer role. A detailed position description, selection criteria and information on how to apply is available at [www.expressmedia.org.au/e\(x\)\\_m\\_artisticdirector.pdf](http://www.expressmedia.org.au/e(x)_m_artisticdirector.pdf) Applications close Friday, 13 May.

## Are You Game?

The Australian interactive games industry has developed substantially over the past ten years and created opportunities for game developers, publishers, writers and designers in game art. The Australian Writers' Guild recognises the need for representation and education in interactive writing and has included a new category in their annual AWGIE Awards for interactive media that encompasses CD ROM & DVD, games, websites, mobile phone games and any other interactive digital media where the use of writing is an integral part.

In addition to this, the AWG, SA Branch is excited to announce a new course designed to explore the skills, knowledge and understanding required for an entry level position as a writer for the games industry. Presented over two days, this will be a professional workshop where participants will gain an overview of writing high concept design, using storytelling objectives that put the user in the driver's seat in interactive media.

*Workshop dates: 28-29 May 2005 at the SA Writers' Centre. Application forms and details are available at [www.awg.com.au](http://www.awg.com.au) or email [sa@awg.com.au](mailto:sa@awg.com.au) or contact Gabrielle Aujard on 8232 6852. Applications close on Monday 23 May.*

## Winners of The Poetry Unhinged Competition

for the following categories were:

**Young poets award** (7-12 years of age):

1<sup>st</sup> Brooke Heading for 'Some Are';

2<sup>nd</sup> Caitlin Copley for 'Surprises Under My Bed'; 3<sup>rd</sup> Julia Nowecki for 'My Dog and I' and 4<sup>th</sup> Riley James Kerrison for 'My Christmas Day'.

**Bush Poets Award:** 1<sup>st</sup> Bob Magor

for 'The Nursing Home Breakout';

2<sup>nd</sup> Jill Wherry for 'Hooves'; 3<sup>rd</sup> Max Merckenschlager for 'Says Martin Cash'; 4<sup>th</sup> Olive Gamble for 'Hard Times'

**Multicultural award:** Winner - Kate Hawtin for 'kori mou'.

**Open Section:** 1<sup>st</sup> David Mortimer

for 'Train to Noarlunga'; 2<sup>nd</sup> Alison

Manthorpe for 'The Investigator's Bosun to his Grandson' and 3<sup>rd</sup> Ann Tregenza for 'Passing Time'.



# What's On...

## May Poetica

Presented by Mike Ladd, Radio National 729AM, Saturday at 3.05 pm, repeated 9.05 pm Thursday.

7<sup>th</sup> Adrienne Rich: *The Fact of a Doorframe* – selected poems.

14<sup>th</sup> *Erebus*: New Zealand poet Bill Sewell's powerful sequence of poems about the crash of Flight 901 in Antarctica.

21<sup>st</sup> Seamus Heaney – reads his poetry accompanied by Liam O'Flynn on Uilleann pipes.

28<sup>th</sup> Don't Fence Me In: a tongue in cheek programme featuring the works of the Cowboy Poets.

## The Hills Poets ...

meet every second Sunday of the month, 3.30–5.30 pm at the Crafers Inn, Crafers. There will be no meeting in May (Mother's Day). The next meeting will be on Sunday 12 June. If you are interested contact Jill Gower on 8339 5119.

## Meet Chris Drummond ...

A chance to meet the creative director of Brink Productions to discuss directions and opportunities for local writers. If you would like a glass of wine please bring a bottle to share. Wednesday 4 May at 6pm at the SA Writers' Centre RSVP: 8232 6852.

## Jodi Picoult

Will appear at the Domain Theatre, Marion Cultural Centre, Oaklands Park, Tue 24 May at 7.30pm (\$7.70 per ticket) thanks to the efforts of Dymocks Marion, Marion Library Services & *The Advertiser* Big Book Club. Bookings are essential on 8375 6855.

## History Week Dinner

Tuesday May 17 at 7pm \$35. Making a meal of HISTORY: three courses, three authors in the Watergarden Restaurant at the Glenelg Jetty Hotel. Guests include Alison Painter, *Brewers and Hoteliers: the Johnstons of Oakbank*; Geoff Manning, *Manning's Place Names of SA*; and Robert Martin, *Under Mount Lofty*. Contact Jan at Holdfast Books on 8294 0347.

## The Writers' Workshop ...

led by Helen Halstead, meets upstairs at Holdfast Books on the 1st Saturday of every month at 1pm. All fiction writers who are prepared to read and offer constructive criticism of each others' work are welcome. Contact Jan on 8294 0347.

## Vanuatu in July

Imagine it's winter, getting darker and colder and you wish you could be somewhere warm, somewhere you could write, read, socialise when you felt like it. The Writers Trip to Vanuatu for seven balmy nights offers workshops (optional) and spouses/partners welcome (optional). Contact: Chris Mansell [writerslink@ozemail.com.au](mailto:writerslink@ozemail.com.au)

## WASTE ...

is a sensational, high-impact anthology of short stories which Paroxysm Press will be launching, Thursday, 26 May at Jive nightclub, 181 Hindley Street from 8pm. A great line-up of Australian authors: Luke Davies, Ian Messenger and Allan Boyd. Performing short fiction on the night will be Kami, Martin Downey (Melb) and Hop Dac (Melb) with more to be announced. Plus poetry from Kerryn Tredrea and Miss Jessi, music, gold-coin entry & all Paroxysm products at launch prices. Email [paroxysm@paroxysmpress.com](mailto:paroxysm@paroxysmpress.com)

## Dromkeen Comes To Adelaide

You are cordially invited to a Soiree at the SAWC, Thursday 5 May 2005, 6–8pm to view 'gems' on display from the Dromkeen Collection, see Children's book illustrators at work, purchase the Albert Ullin art cards featuring leading Australian children's book illustrators, select from a range of children's books on sale during the evening and enjoy a medley of SA wines and finger food. RSVP to Rachel Last, 0417 155 675.

## Meet the Author

The Barossa Council public library is excited to be hosting their next Meet the Author Literary Event with Stephen Orr, author of *Hill of Grace*. Stephen will be appearing at Peter Lehmann Wines cellar door on Wednesday 4 May 2005 at 6.30 pm. *Hill of Grace* was shortlisted in the Festival of Literature Award for an unpublished manuscript by a South Australian emerging writer. Tickets can be purchased from any branch of the Barossa Council public library and Timeless Books at Angaston. Wine and savoury refreshments prior to the event, followed by supper, tea and coffee are included in the ticket price of only \$10. Bookings essential on 8562 1107.

## Bakehouse Theatre

2005 sees the South Australian Writers' Theatre emerge from its teens to celebrate 20 years of fostering and encouraging quality play writing for the SA stage. As part of the celebrations over the five months of the 2005 season, the popular Sunday with SAWT script-in-hand performances present a feast of exciting new writing from established and emerging playwrights. 1 May: performance of Scott Hatcher's *A Horse Named Resurrection*, 12 June: Ross Barrett's play, *Harps in the Air*. 1pm at the Bakehouse Theatre, 255 Angas Street. \$6 includes soup and crispy rolls; food for thought from the guest speaker; the play for the day as main course and a digestif of audience participation in the post-play discussion. Enquiries to Paula Carter on 8255 1078 or email: [theatre@chariot.net.au](mailto:theatre@chariot.net.au)

## WordStorm: 2005

The Northern Territory Writers' Festival will sweep through Darwin from the 16-19 June. Showcasing Australian Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers alongside writers from South-East Asia. Writers include: John Marsden, Frank Moorhouse, Sue Woolfe, Dorothy Porter and Alex Miller. Contact the NT Writers' Centre on 08 8941 2651 or email [info@ntwriters.com.au](mailto:info@ntwriters.com.au).

## Adelaide Festival of Ideas

7–10 July 2005. Fifty thinkers and activists from around the world have been asked to respond to this question: What is to be done? Details at [www.adelaidefestivalofideas.com.au](http://www.adelaidefestivalofideas.com.au)

## Emerging Writers' Festival

6-8 May at the Victoria Hotel, Melbourne. Poets, zinesters, novelists, scriptwriters, bloggers, journalists and more—the best Australian writers you haven't heard of—yet. A draft program and registration form are now available on the events page: [www.expressmedia.org.au/events.html](http://www.expressmedia.org.au/events.html)

## Friendly Street

May 3 from 7.30 pm features SA poet Peter Lloyd plus two winners of the recent Spring Poetry Prize. Entry is \$4 and an open mike session follows. Friendly Street meets on the 1st Tuesday of the month at the SAWC, and the next featured poet is the mysterious local poet and one-time muso, Graham Catt. Call Gaetano on 8231 4757.



# Congratulations...

**Heather Britton** was commissioned to write *50 Years of Mount Edelstone, 1952-2002*, to record the heritage of Henschke's famous vineyard.

**Moya Costello's** piece on experimental writing in the SAWC's 2003 *Handbook* has been published in *Text*, the online journal of the Association of Australian Writing Programs: [www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/april05/costello.htm](http://www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/april05/costello.htm).

**John Fletcher's** novel, *Gods of the Inferno*, second in *The Inheritors Trilogy*, HarperCollins, 2004 under the pen-name Fletcher Anthony, has gone into reprint. *Eye of Stone* (Volume I of *The Inheritors*) has also gone into reprint. Volume III, *Spirits of the Earth*, was released on 1 April. 'April Fool's Day comments may be taken (like the book) as read,' JF.

**Annie Fox** has received the New York Festival's 2005 International Television Programming and Promotion Silver World Medal for Youth Programs 7 - 12 Yrs. Last year she won the AFI Award for Best Children's Series 'Wicked Science'—Episode 6 and was awarded Ambassador In The Community by Flinders University.

**Ian Gibbins** had excerpts from his poem 'ward rounds' published in *arts + medicine* magazine (iss. 1, 2005). Five sections from the poem will be displayed around the wards at Flinders Medical Centre as part of the 'Words on Walls' project sponsored by the Arts in Health program.

**Jill Gloyne** received two awards: a Highly Commended for her poem 'The Crab' in the CJ Dennis Poetry Award at the Laura Folk Fair and 1<sup>st</sup> prize for her poem 'Insomnia' in the Logan Writers 2004 International Short Story and Poetry Competition.

**Sascha Hutchinson** has been awarded a May Gibbs' Children's Literature Trust Fellowship in Canberra throughout May. She will be using this opportunity to develop her work as an author/illustrator and will also spend time working in schools.

**Susan Leisavnieks'** short stories, 'A Knock at My Heart' and 'The Queen Who Would Not—A Story of Understanding', have been accepted for publication in *The Reclaiming the Night Anthology Project*.

**Patricia O'Grady's** book, *Meet the Philosophers of Ancient Greece*, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, Hampshire, England, 2005, has just been released.

**John Malone's** stories, 'And Then There Was One' and 'Gilbert Goes On A Diet', appear in *Blast Off*. His poems 'How The Pelican Got His Bill', 'Geometry' and 'Plane' appear in *Touchdown* [both School Magazines].

**David Mortimer** had five poems included in the April 2005 edition of e-journal *malleablejangle*: 'Pigeons against an Oil-grey Sky', 'Oops!', 'Two Photos of W B Yeats', 'Irony of Light' and 'No-Man's-Time'.

**Ioana Petrescu's** prose poem, 'The Next-Door Neighbour', was published in the *Journal of Australian Studies* #83, 2004 (published by Curtin University of Technology on behalf of the International Australian Studies Association).

**John Powell** has been asked to write a permanent column in the monthly web magazine, *Bonzer*. The website is, [www.bonzer.org.au](http://www.bonzer.org.au)

**Alma Iris Ramirez** had two short stories, 'The Lump Under My Mattress' and 'Our Women, Our Mothers', published by the University of Texas. 'The Mad Old Woman', a short story, will be featured in *Bonzer!* this month.

**Ros Schulz's** poem, 'Hunger Strike', was published in *Social Alternatives*, Dec. 2004 and her short story, 'The Holly', was published in April *Bonzer*.

**Lidija Simkute's** poems, 'This House' and 'Neon Screams' have been chosen for *Blue Giraffe* anthology. Lidija's essay in Lithuanian, 'Blessed are thou among Women', on archeomythologist Marija Gimbutas and a poem, 'In Summer Rain', were published in *Literature & Art Draugas* in USA (March, '05). An article, 'The Singapore Fringe Festival', in Lithuanian was published in *Musu Pastoge* Australia, (March, '05) and *Literature & Art* in USA (April, '05). Lidija has been invited to read her poetry at the 'Linzfest' in Linz and Vienna throughout May with improvisational incidental music by Viennese musicians Helmut Neudlinger & Bernhard Rehn.

**rob walker's** 22 poem collection *sparrow in an airport* was launched on 17 March

*If you've had publishing success, let us know! Please supply your information for the Brag File page in writing or by email by the 15th of the month - [admin@sawriters.on.net](mailto:admin@sawriters.on.net)*

at SAWC as part of Friendly Street's *New Poets Ten* with Libby Angel and Robert J Bloomfield. His poem, 'speech of parts', is in *BLUR* (Friendly Street Reader 29), which was launched on the same night. His poems, 'sparrow in an airport', 'microworld' and 'orange man', are soon to appear on *The Breath* ezine (Canada.) His poem, 'The Mouth', is published in *New England Review* #21.

**Sean Williams'** short story, 'The Magic Dirt Experiment', was published in *Mitch 4: Short Stories From Aussie Writers Who Should Know Better*; his series of haiku under the names 'Daihaiku' & 'Haikaiju' were published in *Daikaiju: Giant Monster Tales* and a short piece was published in the anonymous erotic collection *Consensual a Trois*.

## The Children's Book of the Year

**Awards** has selected the following SA Notable Books: Younger Readers: *Soraya the Storyteller* by **Rosanne Hawke** (Shortlisted); *Orphans of the Queen* by **Ruth Starke**; *Princess Tamsin* by **Annette Wickes**, **Omnibus Books** and *Just You Wait* by Megan de Krantzow, **Omnibus Books**. Older Readers: *The Running Man* by Michael Gerard Bauer, **Omnibus Books** (Shortlisted); *Sleep Rough Tonight* by **Ian Bone**; *Leaving Jetty Road: Best Friends Learn to Love, Live and Let Go* by **Rebecca Burton** and *The Last Muster* by Leonie Norrington, **Omnibus Books**. Early Childhood: *Where is the Green Sheep?* by **Mem Fox** (shortlisted); *Pudding and Chips* by **Penny Matthews**; *Best Friends* by Sue Walker, **Omnibus Books**, *Piglet and Mama and Seven More Sleeps* by Margaret Wild, **Working Title Press** and *Too Many Monkeys* by Margaret Wild, **Omnibus Books**.

The following poems from Friendly Street Poets were published in *Art State* #08: **Judy Dally's** 'Nilpinna Love Song'; **Cameron Fuller's** 'Adelaide from Near Distance' and **Kerryn Tredrea's** 'Running with Knives on a Slippery Surface'.

# Literary Competitions...

☞ **15 May 2005**  
Mount Arrowsmith Novel Writing Contest. An international novel writing contest open to Australians writing in English. 1<sup>st</sup> prize \$1000. Entry fee \$10. Open theme. See website for details. [www.graham123.com/arrowsmith.html](http://www.graham123.com/arrowsmith.html) or email [novelcontest@shaw.ca](mailto:novelcontest@shaw.ca)

☞ **20 May 2005**  
Abe Amaterstein Short Story A national competition with over \$2000 worth of prizes. Winner will be published in *Overland* journal. Entry fee \$8. More details at [www.abeshortstory.org.au](http://www.abeshortstory.org.au) or call (03) 9662 3744.

☞ **21 May 2005**  
Nutshell 17—International Yellow Moon Literary Competition. Categories: Cinquain, Idyll, Limerick, Humorous/nonsense poem, Tetractys. 1<sup>st</sup> prize \$70/60. 2<sup>nd</sup> prize \$30. Entry fee \$5 or \$10 for 3. More info at [www.yellowmoon.info](http://www.yellowmoon.info).

★☞ **27 May 2005**  
Katharine Susannah Prichard Science Fiction/Fantasy Awards. Open: Prizes \$200 / \$50. Shire of Mundaring Young Writers Award \$75 / \$25 + certificates. Fee \$5. 1500–3000 words. All forms of SF are welcome.

☞ **27 May 2005**  
Shoalhaven Literary Award. Short story, max 1500–3000. 1<sup>st</sup> prize: \$1000+2-week artist residential at the Arthur Boyd Bundanon Centre. 5x2<sup>nd</sup> prizes \$250, 5x commended awards. Info at [www.shoalhaven.net.au](http://www.shoalhaven.net.au).

- ☺ indicates a competition listed for the first time
- ★ indicates a competition with sections for young writers
- ☞ indicates the SA Writers' Centre holds the entry forms

As a service to members, the SAWC holds entry forms and guidelines. Call in and collect copies for 20c each or send one business-sized stamped self-addressed envelope, plus one loose 50c stamp for every TWO competitions requested (to cover photocopying and handling costs). The closing date for each competition is placed at the beginning of each entry.

☞ **31 May 2005**  
Horror Writing Competition. Short stories that frighten and unsettle, any theme from well used: zombies, vampires, ghosts to highly original. Categories: Flash fiction, max 1000 words; Short stories, 1500–8000 words. Entry fee: \$10/\$5. More info at [www.darkanimus.com/hwa.html](http://www.darkanimus.com/hwa.html).

☞ **31 May 2005**  
Elegy—International Yellow Moon Literary Competition. Categories: Prose, Haiku, Tanka, Haiku Sequence, Poem to 28 lines on the theme of nature. 1<sup>st</sup> prize \$100 + publication. Entry fee \$5 or \$10 for 3. More info at [www.yellowmoon.info](http://www.yellowmoon.info).

☺☞ **31 May 2005**  
KT Publishing 6th Annual Short Story Competition. Theme open, 2000 words. 1<sup>st</sup> prize \$350. Entry fee \$7.50. Entry forms at [www.ktp.com](http://www.ktp.com).

★☞ **10 June 2005**  
Young Writers Award Open to all students (there are six categories from junior primary to high school). Submit original poetry or prose on any topic. More information

and entry forms at [www.theadvertiser.com.au/nie](http://www.theadvertiser.com.au/nie).

☺☞ **17 June 2005**  
Karrinyup Writers' Club Biennial Competition. Short stories to 2000 words, 1<sup>st</sup> prize \$200. Poetry to 60 lines, 1<sup>st</sup> prize \$200. Entry fee \$5.

☞ **30 June 2005**  
Ginninderra Press Short Stories for Children. Theme Lost. 2000–3000 words in length. Suitable for children 8–12 years. A shortlist of 10 stories will be published in an anthology. 1<sup>st</sup> prize \$250. More info at [www.ginninderrapress.com.au](http://www.ginninderrapress.com.au)

☺☞ **30 April 2005**  
Tarralla Short Story & Poetry Competition. Open theme. Stories to 3000 words, 1<sup>st</sup> prize \$500. Poems to 50 lines, 1<sup>st</sup> prize \$200. Entry fee \$5. Enquiries to [tarralla@fastmail.com.au](mailto:tarralla@fastmail.com.au)

☺ **30 June 2005**  
BBC World Service Short Story Competition. 1800–2100 words. To be read aloud on radio. More info at <http://bbcworldservice.org/> or send story to [theword@bbc.co.uk](mailto:theword@bbc.co.uk)

☺☞ **30 June 2005**  
FAW Hunter Regional Denis Butler Literary Awards. Short Story to 3000 words. Traditional Rhyming Poetry or Bush Verse to 48 lines, Free Form poetry to 48 lines. 1<sup>st</sup> prize for each section \$200. \$5 per entry

☺☞ **30 June 2005**  
Poems invited for new 'Digital Spirit' *Studio* Collection. Theme: explore and reflect on the search for meaning, faith and revelation in dramatic changes of 21<sup>st</sup> century.

☺★☞ **30 June 2005**  
16th Annual Young Aussie Writers' Awards. Winners will be published in *School Magazine*. More info at [www.pearsoned.com.au/schools/magazines](http://www.pearsoned.com.au/schools/magazines) website.

☺☞ **1 July 2005**  
Scala's 12th Festival of Original Music Song Competition. Original songs in any style up to 5 mins. Entry fee \$20. Categories include Lyrics; Live Performance; Demo Open and Instrumental. More info at [www.scala.org.au](http://www.scala.org.au) or call (08) 8431 4063.

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# When I Was Very Young....

by Phil Cummings

I had my haircut today at eleven o'clock. Whilst I was in the chair I was listening contentedly to the snip snip snippety snip of the hungry scissors hovering around my ears. The young hairdresser obviously felt the need to break the silence. To make conversation, she politely asked, "So, not working today, sir?"

I don't like these conversations. I never know how to respond.

"I work from home," I replied evasively.

Her snipping slowed. "Do you run a business?" she asked searchingly.

I shrugged my shoulders. "Sort of."

She stopped snipping and looked at me in the mirror, eye to eye. "Sort of?" she frowned. "What do you do then?"

A conversation like this is like a good mystery. The more I keep her in suspense or evade the issue the stronger is her desire to find out what my secret might be.

So I gave in. "I write books for children."

She went suddenly quiet. Then she finally said, "I'd love to write a book. But when I was a kid ..." (I looked at her. You bloody well still are!! I thought.) "... I never read any of the good books."

I'm not quite sure what she meant by that. She made the books she read sound like naughty little children!

She smiled at me. "I bet you read good books and I bet they inspired you to become a writer."

I didn't say anything. I had to get out of the chair. My hair was cut.

At that point I wished I had more hair. I wanted to sit with her and tell her that I did read some 'good' books. Books I loved and loved so much that I still have them as treasures today.

I certainly didn't have a lot of books as a child. I grew up as the youngest of eight children. We lived in a tiny rural town on the Yorke Peninsula and we worked a farm there until I was eight. There were no libraries.

My primary school years I spent reading books called Wide Range Readers. I will never forget one teacher reading, *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* to the class. The mean Banksia Men terrified me!

One birthday, however, my Nanna Luce gave me a small, blue, hardcover book. It was *When We Were Very Young* by A.A. Milne. She read it to me and did little skips and claps in time with the rhythm of the language. Needless to say I read it thousands of times. I could never quite get the skipping right though. Particularly heading toward Buckingham Palace (that's what I called the institute hall in our small town)... when Christopher Robin went down with Alice. The spine of the book is terribly frail and I keep it in a box with some other old books of mine.

In fact, I still have all the books I treasured most as a child. As I said, there aren't many. They sit here beside me in a little pile: comic books, *Boys Own Annuals*, and even a small soft cover book that I was given in hospital when I broke my leg. It is a 'picture story book' from 1964.

I am so glad I kept these books. To anyone but me they probably look tatty, old and quite uninspiring. Most of them wouldn't be considered 'good' books.

Despite the lack of literary quality of many of them they still give me that 'feeling', that 'warmth': I'm sure you know what I mean, that wonderful quality in books that is sometimes unexplainable.

Perhaps I should take them and show them to my hairdresser. She might like to see the 'wealth' of my early literary experiences as a young child.

I'm sure she would be surprised for they are a strange mixture of things.

I am sitting with one open next to me as I type. It is called *Timothy's Book Of Aircraft*. I flip through the pages and see pictures of flying cars and a new passenger jet called The Comet 4 that can carry 76 passengers!

This fascinating book is a 'Collins Wonder Colour Book' and was published in 1962.

The one beneath it is a *Boys Own Annual*. And beneath that there are two Disney comics.

Now they are just a few from my small pile and certainly no classic pieces of literature but I loved them! I loved them



because some of them made me laugh. Others I loved for the sense of adventure they offered. The sense of wonder of what was happening out in the wide world away from the small farm and the tiny rural town in which I was living. I think the main reason I love them though, is because my father would sit and read them to me at night by the fire in the kitchen. I remember sitting close to him with the smell of the wheat and the dust and sheep from his clothes drifting around me. These were the warm times, the gentle times of being with him and my mother and they leave me with a cocktail of memories and emotions that I could never forget and long to write about.

Being a writer, I consider myself so fortunate to be able to have the opportunity to maybe offer some of what I experienced as a child in my love of books. I guess I sit and hope that somewhere at night in a home around and about a child is sitting with their mum or dad or aunt or sister or brother and is having one of my books read to them. I hope they feel what I once felt. I hope they love books, not just mine. Maybe someone will tuck one away and keep it because it meant something to them.

Anyway, I'm going down to see my young hairdresser and I'm going to drop one of my books off for her. She has a young child—I hope she reads to him and I hope he thinks it's a 'good' book!

*Phil Cummings has written many books for children from picture books to novels. He is presently working on a novel for children based on his childhood adventures on the farm. [www.philcummings.com](http://www.philcummings.com)*

# Membership Application Form

SA Writers' Centre Inc PO Box 43 Rundle Mall 5000 ABN 40 783 458 265 Ph (08) 8223 7662 Fax (08) 8232 3994 Email: sawriters@sawriters.on.net

Name/Organisation .....

Address .....

Suburb/Town .....

Postcode .....

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\$99/\$88 organisation (inc GST)

Renew

\$55 waged (inc GST)

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**Southern Write Newsletter  
May 2005**

COPY DEADLINE  
June 2005:  
15 May 2005

**SA Writers' Centre Inc: Providing resources, support & encouragement for SA Writers  
Fostering the development of writing culture in South Australia**

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Government  
of South Australia



The SA Writers' Centre is assisted by the Australian Government through the  
Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

#### Opening Hours:

9.30am–5pm Monday–Friday  
Wheelchair/lift access is available at  
26 York Street – rear entrance  
Stairs at 187 Rundle Street, Adelaide, 5000