

write turn

a publication of the nt writers' centre



Meet the Publisher

Following on from our inaugural Meet the Publisher, the NT Writers' Centre once again brings together representatives from some of Australia's most respected publishing houses for a weekend of professional development in both Alice Springs and Darwin. Workshops and face-to-face consultations will let you in on some enduring tricks and emerging trends of the trade.

This year, participating publishers include: IAD Press, Text Publishing, Penguin, Niblock Publishing and HarperCollins Publishers. Representatives from these houses will cover the genres of non-fiction including memoir, fiction, children's/young adult fiction. You don't need a finished manuscript to participate in the weekend. However, in terms of the consultations, priority will be given to those with manuscripts that are at an advanced stage. The Meet the Publisher weekend will happen in Alice Springs/Darwin September 4 - 7, 2009. Bookings essential - limited consultation times available. Cost (includes consultation): \$150 waged; \$120 waged members; \$80 concession; \$60 concession members.

'The people who make it are the people who can't talk themselves out of it - the people who have a need to write the next story, even if the last one got rejected.'

Author, Nick Earls

'It's not enough to have a great manuscript - it's got to be really fantastic, and if it's really fantastic, it'll find a home - and that's the way it's always been. You only need one person to love it, and one publishing house. There are books that are routinely rejected and then finally picked up by a publisher who makes them a success.'

You need to have writing style, something to say, and personal determination, because writing a novel's a marathon.'

Author, Toni Jordan

'Writers should be more comfortable with rejection. There are benefits in being turned down if you aren't ready.'

Publisher, Louise Swinn

'One thing I believe absolutely ... is that really high quality work tends to bust open all the market-driven, eco-rat bullshit and find a publisher to love it and take it on, even if they're not absolutely sure they can sell it. We all crave that, really.'

Mandy Brett,
Text Publishing

greetings from sandra



Hi members,

I've just been on leave for most of July so don't have a lot to report in this letter. I had a great time hooning about on the Kiwi slopes with my snowboarding son. We hired a campervan in Christchurch and zigzagged across both islands with an essential pilgrimage to the Marlborough wine region thrown in. Yes, it was very cold, but we were prepared with layers of clothing and thermals under our thermals.

And I promise I won't whinge about the cold in Alice Springs any more.

We have an exciting few months coming up and Natalie has covered it all in the new, slick newsletter. Of course, she was trying to top the graphic design challenge laid down by our Michael in the Alice office – the e-bulletin is looking very swish nowadays! While on staff, we'll be bringing on a new Office Manager in the Darwin office who will cover some of the administration and publicity tasks of the NT Writers' Centre.

I hope you're all getting prepared for Meet the Publisher in September (see inside for details). Materials need to be e-mailed in advance. However, before that, we have a number of activities taking place in Darwin around the festival, while Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs will be cooking up more festival action over the coming months. Hope to see you soon!

Best,

Sandra

members' news

Congratulations to Michael Whitting, whose short story, *She Brings The Light In*, was short-listed for the Alan Marshall Short Story competition.

Northern Territory writers have also done very well in the last round of Varuna Longline scholarships. Meg Mooney and Toni Tapp-Coutts have been selected for the Different voices Workshop (2). Sally Bothroyd, Natalie Sprite and Andra Putnis have all been awarded a place in the Longlines/Litlink readings and review program.

Well done, also to Prith Chakravarti for the release of his poetry book, *Man Moon Earth*.

In *Get Your Book off the Ground* Anthony Santoro and Suzanne Male share their knowledge on crucial literary skills from story planning and characterisation to maintaining reader interest and overcoming writer's block. You'll also find out about self publishing, how to handle rejection and the secret to writing success. For more info, email: anthony@writersworld.com.au

write turn newsletter of the ntwriters' centre

Editors: Sandra Thibodeaux &
Natalie Sprite

Production & Layout: Natalie Sprite

advertising

1/8 page = \$40

1/2 page = \$100

Inserts = \$30 per 100

Please note, specific regions can be targeted.

Deadlines for advertising

Bookings: the middle of the month or by arrangement. Adverts in electronic form are preferred. Please provide as 300dpi tiff or jpg files.

new members

Greg Boxsell
Annie Drum
Regan Lynch
Marise Riddell
Essington School
Catherine Perversi
Michelle Hawkins
Ilinda Brunner
Charlee Eklund
Ros Moyer
Ian Klutke
Charlotte Watson
Sophie Meeth
Terry Howison
Ruth Primrose

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fringe @ the bank



truth tellers

Wed 12 – Fri 14 August 4–6 pm &
Wed 19 – Fri 21 August 4–6pm

Pop in to the old Commonwealth Bank around close-of-business and have an encounter with a *teller of truth*. Queueing has never been so worth it with poets, novelists and other tale tellers ready to enrich your day with a little literary joy. Writers-in-residence will share a story or a poem, a paragraph or a tall tale. Enjoy this rare, and free, opportunity to be inspired (and to inspire) within the walls of a Darwin icon.

If you think you have what it takes to be to be a teller of truth and would like to be paid to write, contact us at the Writers' Centre on info@ntwriters.com.au

investment

*love in a time of loss, loss in a time of greed,
your baby or a shard of glass in the body of
the woman you love.*

A moved reading of ten powerful new works by some of the NT's leading playwrights in unexpected and suggestive spaces within the old Commonwealth Bank.

The plays to be performed are: *The Consultation* (Terence Howison), *Dead Ringer* (Danielle Loy), *Drew's Siezure* (Chris Raja), *Margin Walker* (Luke Scholes), *On a Hot Tin Roof* (Michael Watts), *Gambada and Wardangarri* (Lynette Lewis), *The Sound of Waiting* (Mary Anne Butler), *Rapid Creek* (Marian Davis), *Possess* (Matt Haubrick) and *Smidgen of Silence* (Tania Lieman).

This event is FREE. Bookings Essential (due to capacity issues): Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th August, 2–4 pm,



Mary Anne Butler, whose play 'The Sound of Waiting' will be performed as part of Investment.

"If you tell yourself you are going to be at your desk tomorrow, you are by that declaration asking your unconscious to prepare the material. You are, in effect, contracting to pick up such valuables at a given time. Count on me, you are saying to a few forces below: I will be there to write. The point is to maintain trustworthy relations."

Norman Mailer, *The Spooky Art: Some Thoughts on Writing*

meet the publishers....



text
fiction

Mandy Brett is a senior editor with Text Publishing where she has been since 2002, working on both fiction and trade non-fiction titles. Previously she was Editor and Publisher at IAD Books, handling trade titles as well as education, reference and dictionaries. She has also worked as a freelance editor, as a production editor on a small magazine and, for a number of years, as a computer programmer at Penguin Books.

Text Publishing was founded in 1994. We are noted worldwide as publishers of high quality fiction and narrative non-fiction; in 2006 and 2007, three of the twelve titles shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize were originated and edited at Text.



penguin
children / young adult

Laura Harris is the Publishing Director, Children's Books at Penguin Australia. She has been with Penguin for ten years and has worked with Morris Gleitzman, Melina Marchetta and Mem Fox, to name a few.

She previously worked for HarperCollins Publishers where she commissioned books for adults and children. She has been a judge for the *HQ Magazine* Short Story Competition, published various articles and reviews and lectured in Editing and Publishing.

Laura also spent a few years living in a small Greek village that had three discos! Though surrounded by creative, talented people in her work, she has checked with her doctor who assured her she doesn't have a novel in her!



harpercollins
non-fiction / memoir

Amruta Slee began her career as a reporter at *The Sydney Morning Herald* before moving to television as a researcher/producer for Channel Nine, and then back to print as a feature writer for *The Sun-Herald*. In 1991 she moved to New York where she wrote for several US, UK and Australian publications including *The New York Times*, *The Times of London*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *HQ magazine*. She has contributed to two anthologies, *Dick for a Day* and *To Be Real*.

In 1998 she moved back to Australia to become a feature writer/deputy editor of *HQ magazine*, and then deputy editor at *Good Weekend* where she wrote and edited for four years. In 2004 Amruta moved into publishing as an associate publisher of non-fiction for HarperCollins.



Niblock Publishing is a publisher and provider of publishing services. Niblock's interests cover a range of topics including tropical gardening and horticulture, tropical architecture, 'Top End' history, local Indigenous languages and children's books. Niblock Publishing published Andrew McMillan's *An Intruder's Guide to East Arnhem Land* that won this year's *Territory Read*, the NT Book of the Year.



IAD PRESS

IAD Press is Australia's national Indigenous publishing house.

IAD Press publishes books by Indigenous people on Indigenous languages, arts, histories and cultures. IAD Press also publishes biographies, poetry, natural and oral histories, children's books and Young Adult Fiction.

what publishers want....

Amruta Slee is the Associate Publisher for non fiction at HarperCollins and will participating in the Meet the Publisher forum in September. Write Turn spoke to her about what it is that makes her want to sign a writer.

It changes. Non fiction is divided into a whole range of categories. From cook books to gardening, military history to narrative non-fiction.

Can you talk a bit about narrative non-fiction? A lot of our members write memoir or biography. What is it you look for in a manuscript like that?

I'm just looking for a good story. Sometimes it's a matter of the right book at the right time. Occasionally, I read something and I feel, in my gut, there is a market for this.

What do you think are the elements of a good story?

Feel good factor is important. I think this is part of the reason for the success of Chris O'Brian's book, *Never Say Die* (HarperCollins, 2008). People like reading about people they admire. Something about him, he was authentic. Authentic stories come to you. You can't really look for them.

What is it that makes you want to publish a book?

Did the story grab me? Is it told in a way that's interesting? Is the writing good? Is the writer open? This is important. I always look for writers who are willing to improve. Writing does take time and a writer needs to be open to listening to what publishers are telling them.

Should a writer write for a market or write what they are passionate about?

Writers should be writing about what they're interested in. But if they're thinking of writing about a particular subject, do a bit of research - go into a bookstore, if there's 300 books about it already, there's no point writing 301st version. Unless, of course, you can find a new angle.

It's hard to quantify what makes a book sell. The worst question is, 'Why won't you publish my book?' It's like somebody saying, 'Why don't you love me?' There's an X factor. Something that catches your eye. Sometimes, it's that someone's found an original angle. Often it's the relationship you set up with the writer. A manuscript is just the start of it. A book takes a long time to build. It's a collaboration. Very few people are natural writers and even fewer know what's interesting to other people. That's part of what publishers do.

How is the economic climate affecting publishers? Does it change the kind of books you look for?

Not really. Australian publishing at large, has survived where others haven't. Because Harper Collins is a multinational, we can see it clearly. The UK and the US are struggling, but we've had a couple of really good years.

I read that in the Great Depression, there was a resurgence of romance and westerns, that pulp fiction became popular because people wanted escapism. Is that happening now?

Not pulp fiction. But I suppose the feel good factor is there. People definitely want that. Which is hard for me, because I quite like dark and troubled endings. But maybe that's one... (continued pg.11)

seminar program

alice springs: sept 5

darwin: sept 6

9-10:30 The Publishers: Representatives from four major publishing houses discuss what they publish, what they look for in a potential new work and the processes of submission and publication

10:30 Morning Tea

11:00 Q & A Session

12 - 1 Lunch

1-2:00 Since We Last Met: At the last Meet the Publisher, two NT writers met the publishers who went on to publish their debut novels. Here is their journey from Meet the Publisher to the much-awaited book launch.

2:15-4:00 Genre Groups: Participants gather in genre groups to hear from the relevant publishers: YAF and Children's; Fiction/Non-Fiction (including memoir). The relevant publisher leads a discussion on issues that are particular to that genre - e.g., what makes a good kids' book; how to structure a memoir; what makes a fiction character memorable.

consultations

alice springs: sept 4

darwin: sept 7

One-on-one consultations between writers and publishers will occur on Friday (4th) in Alice Springs and Monday (7th) in Darwin. These are included in the cost of the seminar. If you would like to have a consultation, you need to e-mail a synopsis of your work, the first chapter and a cover letter explaining why you would like a consultation and the stage you are up to now (e.g. 1st draft completed). These materials need to be sent to info@ntwriters.com.au by Monday 10th August.

opportunities... awards...

AVANT PRESS SHORT STORY COMPETITION

Closing 3 August

Unpublished short stories up to 2000 words to the theme of 'The Edge'. Prizes \$250/\$150/\$75. Winners and up to three commended entries published in the 2009 Avant Anthology. Entry \$5 for one story, \$8 for two stories.

E: vae@bhatafe.edu.au

DAVID HAROLD TRIBE FICTION AWARD

Closing 7 August

An \$11,000 award for the best original piece of short fiction (3,000–3,500 words). E: www.arts.usyd.edu.au/departs/english/prizes/prizes.shtml

MANCHESTER FICTION PRIZE

Closing 7 August

Stories up to 5000 words. First prize £10,000, entry fee £15.

E: www.manchesterwritingcompetition.co.uk/fiction/index.php

SOCIETY OF WOMEN WRITERS POETRY COMPETITION

Closing 12 August

Entries must be unpublished and in English. One entry per entry form. Entry fee \$5.

1st Prize \$300 2nd Prize \$200 3rd Prize \$100

Send entries to Ms Beverley Earnshaw, 15 Hamer St, Kogarah Bay, NSW 2217

W: www.womenwritersnsw.org

THE BRUCE DAWE NATIONAL POETRY PRIZE

Closing 14 August

Endowed by Bruce Dawe, one of Australia's best-loved and most widely read poets, the annual \$1500 award aims to encourage poets throughout Australia. The prize is judged by the English Literature staff at the University of Southern Queensland. Winner will be announced in the first week of October.

E: dawep prize@usq.edu.au

2009 BOROONDARA LITERARY AWARDS

Closing 28 August

Open short story of 1500–3000 words. Judged by Robert Hillman. First prize: \$1500 Winner will be announced in December and published in the awards anthology. Entry form from website.

W: www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/leisure/culture_arts/literary_program/literary_awards

2009 ABR REVIEWING COMPETITION

Closing 31 August

First prize: \$1000 and publication of the review in ABR and at least two future commissions. Second prize: \$250 plus publication. Third prize: the Short Oxford English Dictionary, Deluxe Edition, courtesy of Oxford University Press.

All categories of books are eligible, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, children's and young adult books. Reviews should be 800 words. The book being reviewed must have been published since January 2007.

E: abradmin@vicnet.net.au

T: (03) 9429 6700

W: www.australianbookreview.com.au

SISTERS IN CRIME - SCARLET STILLETTO AWARDS

Closing 31 August

2009 Women's Crime & Mystery Short Story Competition
HarperCollins Publishers First Prize: \$750 (plus the coveted Scarlet Stiletto trophy)

Kill City Second Prize: \$400

Readings Books Films and Music Third Prize: \$300 (voucher)

Olvar Wood Late Starters Award (50+): \$650 (Weekend package at Olvar Wood Writers Retreat. The winner would be responsible for their airfare to Brisbane or Maroochydore if from outside Qld)

Allen & Unwin Young Writer's Award: \$400

The Kerry Greenwood Malice Domestic Award: \$500

The Cate Kennedy Award for Best New Talent: \$350

The Dorothy Porter Award for Innovation: \$300

SCRIPTWORKS Great Film Idea Award: \$200

Pulp Fiction Funniest Crime Award: \$150 (voucher)

Benn's Books Best Investigative story: \$200

Story length: 5000 words max. Entry: \$10

Further information: Scarlet Stiletto Awards, PO Box 121, Bittern Vic 3918 (note changed address)

P: 0412 569 356 (Carmel Shute)

W: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~sincoz/>

FIRST NATIONAL REPUBLICAN SHORT STORY COMPETITION

Closing 31 August

2009 is a milestone as it will be 10 years on 6 November 2009 since the republican referendum was lost. To commemorate this event and to remind Australians of what they still don't have the Australian Republican Movement is calling for speculative fiction short stories between 2000 and 4000 words that portray an Australian republican future in a positive light and demonstrate the absurdity of a hereditary monarch as the Australian Head of State in twenty-first century Australian society. Stories must be original and unpublished. 1st prize: \$611.99

More information, entry forms and daily blog of creative stimulus material at <http://republicanfiction.blogspot.com>

Entry fee \$11.99

(Cheques or postal order payable to Australian Republican Movement)

Send entries to: Australian Republican Movement, PO Box 87, Geebung QLD 4034

GWEN HARWOOD POETRY PRIZE 2009

Closing 1 September

A single poem or suite of linked poems not longer than 80 lines.

First Prize: \$1500 plus three minor prizes of \$150 each.

Judges: Sarah Day and Tim Thorne.

Official entry form required. Entry forms downloadable from: <http://www.islandmag.com>

or send SSAE to Island, PO Box 210, Sandy Bay, Tas, 7006.

Enquiries to Gina Mercer, Editor, Island magazine

P: (03) 6226 2325

E: island.magazine@utas.edu.au

2009 ROLF BOLDREWOOD LITERARY AWARDS

Closing 19 September

These awards honour Rolf Boldrewood, the pen name of Thomas Brown, the author of Robbery Under Arms, one of Australia's

grants... competitions ...

first major novels. The competition aims to foster the writing of prose and poetry with an Australian content. Send prose (fiction, article or essay) to 3000 words, or poetry to 80 lines. First prize \$600.

Entry form from website.

W: www.mrl.nsw.gov.au/

CRICKET POETRY AWARD 2009

Closing 25 September

Poets are invited to submit a poem celebrating an aspect of life in and around the game and sport of cricket, in settings of backyard cricket, beach cricket, club cricket or social cricket. Poets will be asked to use cricket as the vehicle to unsettle preconceptions, generate new ideas and consider our contemporary culture. There is a \$20 fee to enter and a first prize of \$2,000. Entries open 1 September and close 25 September.

W: <http://www.publisherscup.org.au/cricket-poetry-award>

THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPT AWARDS 2009

Closing 12 October

This competition was created to provide encouragement, support the efforts and celebrate the outstanding work of screenwriters that places the spotlight on script to screen.

The screenplay winner of the International 2009 Script Awards competition will be awarded a US\$150,000 value Film Critical Path TM Development Package containing the pre-requisites for Greenlight presentation to Production Funding, Scholarship, and Cash Prize.

We are very excited and grateful to all of our judges who believe in the need for a screenwriting competition of this calibre. Our goal is to create opportunities for screenwriters, recognizing excellence in the industry on a global level.

W: www.InternationalScriptAwards.com

AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW POETRY PRIZE

Closing 1 December

The ABR Poetry Prize is one of Australia's most lucrative (with a first prize of \$4000) and respected awards for poetry, and guarantees winners wide exposure through publication in ABR.

The five previous winners of the prize were Stephen Edgar, Judith Bishop, Alex Skovron, Ross Clark and Tracy Ryan.

The guidelines and application form are now available on the ABR website. Poets must reside in Australia or be Australian citizens living overseas.

Each entry must be a single poem of no more than 100 lines. Multiple entries are permitted, and all poems will be judged anonymously. A shortlist comprising a maximum of six poems will be announced and those poems published in the March 2010 issue of ABR. The winner will be announced in the April 2010 issue.

Read last year's winning and shortlisted poems on the ABR website.

W: www.australianbookreview.com.au

NEW AWG SCRIPT ASSESSMENT SERVICE

The Australian Writers' Guild is proud to announce the launch of their enhanced Script Assessment service for film and theatre.

For further information, please call 02 9319 0339.

THE CALIBRE PRIZE & YOUNG CALIBRE PRIZE

Closing 1 December

Australian Book Review (ABR) and Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) are delighted to seek entries for the fourth Calibre Prize for an Outstanding Essay. The Calibre Prize, with a first prize of \$10,000, is one of the world's major essay competitions. The inaugural Young Calibre Prize which is open to those who are 21 or under. The first prize is \$3000. The Calibre and Young Calibre Prizes are intended to generate brilliant new essays and to foster new insights into culture, society and the human condition. We welcome essays from leading authors and commentators but also from emerging writers. All non-fiction subjects are eligible: from life writing to literary studies, history to politics, biography to philosophy, natural history to popular science, travel writing to environmental studies. Multiple entries permitted. Calibre essays must range from 3000 words to 10,000 words. Young Calibre essays must range from 1000 to 3000 words. ABR will publish the winning essays. The guidelines and application form are now available on the ABR website.

W: www.australianbookreview.com.au

VARUNA'S NEW PARTNERSHIPS WITH PUBLISHERS

Varuna - The Writers' House is thrilled to announce two new major programs presented in partnership with Australian publishers - Publisher-Supported Professional Development Residencies, and Varuna Publisher Fellowships. All info: varuna.com.au

youth

The National Young Writers' Festival is Australia's premier event for emerging writers, publishers, performers and trouble-makers. Several thousand of the country's most challenging and original young minds will descend upon Newcastle for a five day creative bender. Far from the seas of white hair, book signings and celebrity author worship you might expect, the NYWF is a DIY, hands-on conversation between equals.

Join us in bogan stubby-holder poetry, radical new forms of decentred publishing, hyper-nerdy discussion of plot & character development, passionate debates on the cultural and political futures of the country, and some of the best parties you've stumbled across in a long while. Check the full program of entirely free events here.

The NYWF takes place as part of the This Is Not Art (TiNA) festival which adds independent musicians, journalists, artists, performers, activists, nerds and lovers-of-ginger-beer to the mix. It's a combination of cutting-edge performances, panels, collaborations, experiments, workshops and parties. It's unique. It's free. You should come and be part of it. 1st-5th October!!

John Marsden Prize for Young Australian Writers 2009 is open!

Entries close August 28, 2009.

Write a short story, poem or first chapter of a novel and you could win up to \$4500 in prize money plus be published in the December issue of Voiceworks magazine.

For more info, go to www.expressmedia.org.au

linda jaivin



Linda Jaivin is an internationally published author of fiction and non-fiction (*The Monkey and the Dragon*, *Confessions of an S&M Virgin*), a translator from Chinese and a playwright. Her six novels include the comic-erotic cult classic *Eat Me* and *The Infernal Optimist* (short-listed for the 2007 ASL Gold Medal). Her newest book is *A Most Immoral Woman*, a tale of sexual and other obsessions set in China and Japan in 1904. After her immense popularity in Alice Springs, we're bringing Linda Jaivin back to the NT for a series of workshops in partnership with the Darwin Festival and Darwin City Council Libraries.

a most immoral evening

Step back in time with the vivacious Linda Jaivin, author of *A Most Immoral Woman*, in a perfect culinary and colonial setting as she recounts some of her fascinating life, and reads from her latest book. *A Most Immoral Woman*, set in early 20th Century China, traces the love affair between influential journalist George Morrison and a seductive heiress.

Hosted by the ABC's Leon Compton at Char Restaurant, Admiralty House, 70 The Esplanade on Thursday 20th August, 6:30–9:30 pm. Tickets are \$80 and include sensational 3-course meal and glass of champagne upon arrival. Bookings essential: info@ntwriters.com.au or 89412651

workshops

seniors workshop :
friday 21 august - all day

In celebration of Seniors Month, Linda Jaivin presents a free, full day's workshop for aspiring writers of historical fiction. Casuarina Library, Friday 21 August. For more information and to book, phone Barbara on 8920 0216.

writing historical fiction :
sat. 22 august 10am - 1pm

Rip that bodice, sink that warship, fight the Civil War (any civil war), throw the Christians to the lions if you like - but do it in style. This three-hour workshop on historical fiction will show you how to craft great fiction from historical fact. Topics covered will include how to find the right story, how to research it, knowing when to close the source books, the creation of credible characters and the literary and ethical challenges posed by basing a story on real people and events. Cost: full \$50/member \$40/conc \$30/conc member \$25.

come to your senses
saturday 22 august 2 - 5pm

The Art of Sensory Writing: The smell of sun-warmed skin, a lipstick smudge on a glass, the cottony softness of melaleuca - evocative writing is sensual writing. It draws on and appeals to all our senses. This workshop, taught with a lively mix of discussion and short writing exercises, is for anyone who wants to learn how to write with their eyes, ears, skin, nose and tongue. But do bring a pen and paper.

Prices and bookings as 'Writing Historical Fiction'. Do both workshops and receive a 20% discount on total cost of workshops. Bookings essential: info@ntwriters.com.au or 89412651

Wet Ink - the magazine of new writing has teamed up with Griffith Review to offer a subscription special to inspire. Subscribe to both magazines and get an extra 15% off normal subscription prices [that's a 25% discount off cover price]. Go to www.wetink.com.au While there, also check out their special deals on back issues.

...from the heart

After the high pressure festival zone and brief winter hibernation, things literary get moving again. Jan Cornall ran an excellent workshop that re-energised several writers and their projects. She hopes to return to Alice next year for a month long residency and run a couple of workshops. Also wanting to return after a festival workshop that could have twice sold out is Arnold Zable. Put

aside a weekend with him around festival time next year.

September in Alice is infused with things literary and poetic: 'Poets on a Plate' – lunchtime readings at selected cafes as part of National Poetry Week; readings, open mic and the launch of a chapbook of some emerging NT poets; and the popular Meet the Publisher weekend of consultations and

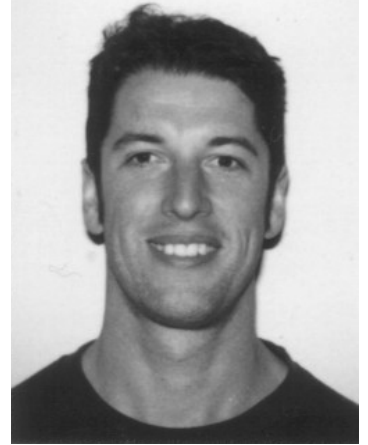
seminars. Read within for more details.

Pop into the office for a cuppa and a chat. Peruse and borrow from the NTWC library or pick up a festival t-shirt.

From the heart,

Michael.

Alice office hours: 10am–4pm, Tues & Weds, RedHOT Arts Space, cnr of Bath St & Stott Tce.



Alice Springs Manager
Michael Giacometti
ph: 8952 3810
alice@ntwriters.com.au

half way there

a new play by mary anne butler

Thursday–Friday 27–28 August, from 8pm
Rooted firmly in the harsh outback of the Northern Territory, this is a dark, funny play about love, broken dreams and hope.

Presented in Alice Springs by the Red Dust Theatre, this play is also touring Cairns, Darwin and Townsville.

Venue: Centralian College Theatrette

Cost: \$25 / \$17 conc.

Tickets from Araluen. T: 8951 1120

poets on a plate

lunchtime readings at select cafes

Monday–Thursday, 31 August – 3 September, 12.30pm
Grab a sound-bite for lunch. Local, award-winning poets and storytellers will provide food for thought. Presented by the NT Writers' Centre as part of National Poetry Week.

Venues and poets: TBA

earthy delights

rootsy music & sensuous spoken word

Saturday 12 September, 10am – 4pm

Kick back, relax, wander in, wander out, lie down, stare at the sky, sit, cross your legs, laugh, drink chai, eat bush foods and enjoy the wondrous spell where music and words intertwine in a program of earthy delights. Acoustic grooves, award-winning storytellers, rhythm by the metre. An Alice Desert Festival event.

off the page

spoken word, book launch & open mic

Friday 4 September, 7pm – 9pm

An evening of vibrant poetry and spoken word to close National Poetry Week. Featuring local award-winning poets, the launch of a new chapbook of emerging NT poets, and you ... come on, don't be shy ... on the open mic. Venue: TBA Entry \$5.

"It seems to me that since I've had children, I've grown richer and deeper. They may have slowed down my writing for a while, but when I did write, I had more of a self to speak from. After all, who else in the world do you have to love, no matter what? My life seems more intricate. Also more dangerous." Anne Tyler

writing and seeing s. cunningham

Author, publisher and editor, Sophie Cunningham recently visited the Northern Territory as a guest of NTWC. Here's an excerpt from her recent article, previously published in *The Age*, June 20th.

In a writing workshop I ran in Darwin recently, one man wrote of heat so great it made 'cattle watery'. This was the start of my journey across Australia, through the words and geography of the Northern Territory. The image of melting cows made no sense to me – but all the Territorians in the group knew the man was talking about the heat haze that lies over everything and consequent shape shifting. Other stories were similarly full of unfamiliar imagery: bull dust, that fine dust that lifts, like a mini dust storm, obscuring all vision; or details on the perils of tyres puncturing on rough roads. I wasn't sure that this made for a compelling story. Could you just carry a spare?

My workshopers were patient with me, they explained: it's not uncommon to blow several tyres in a short space of time. Even if you carried two spares you could be stuck, literally, hundreds of miles from nowhere, for several days. One of the writers – a man from a remote community in Arnhem Land who'd traveled hundreds of kms to attend the workshop – told me that now that chains rather than local businesses run petrol stations, they no longer keep tyres on the premises. If you get a puncture you have to call a company that drives a tyre out to you at exorbitant expense. God knows what happens if you don't have a phone or it's out of range.

These robust and alien topics got an

airing at the readings, *Off The Page*, on a Saturday night in Nightcliff. The open-air terrace was packed to the gills. There was lots of booze. The headline act was former rock journalist and author of *An Intruder's Guide to East Arnhem Land*, Andrew McMillan. Then there was me. After that it was an open-mic affair. People stood up for hour after hour to read poems about the local politics; about the difference between living in dry Alice Springs and wet, tropical Darwin; about broken hearts; food; land rights; fishing; and camping in the wilderness. People weren't polite and they weren't afraid to raise their voices. Some acted out different characters; one woman talked to her toddler between alternate lines of poetry; and others, in time-honoured tradition, were shy and stared at their feet. I felt I was in the midst of an exuberance for writing that's not as keenly expressed all the way down south, here, in the UNESCO City of Literature. I sat, hot and sweaty, by turns entertained and appalled, feeling like an uptight city type who needed to loosen up. And, over the next two weeks of driving, talking to people and teaching that is what I did.

Before I headed to Katherine the next morning, I had breakfast with a friend I'd worked with many years ago in Melbourne. Darwin seemed to suit her, but as I got in my car to head 300 km to the south and the first of my stops on the 1500 km drive to Alice Springs, she said to me: 'Don't stop for anyone, not even if they have blood on them. Bradley King Murdoch might be in prison but he has mates.' I was taken aback, partly by the idea of not stopping, partly by the suggestion that



it's not unusual to see people collapsed by the side of the road. I also suspected many of the people I might see would not be white like Murdoch, but black. I started to think about a piece I'd published in *Meanjin* 67:4 last year by the Alice Springs-based writer Eleanor Hogan, in which she wrote about stopping to help an Indigenous man by the side of the road. Suddenly the piece came into focus more clearly: the policeman's surprise that Eleanor had stopped to help; his comment that another woman had pulled off the road up ahead to call an ambulance. The latter is what my friend told me to do when I asked how I should handle it if I did see someone in distress. I did ponder, over the many hours of driving, what I would do if tested – but I never was. Nonetheless, my friend's anxiety about Murdoch-style nutters was infectious and over the next few days as I drove down the Stuart Highway, I found I was haunted by the story of Peter Falconio's murder and the long night his partner, Joanne Lees, spent lying in the scrub so as not to be found.

Stay tuned for the next installment of Sophie's adventures in the NT.

book clubs: rachel tumminello



Do you belong to a book club or know someone who does?

In August we are offering an evening with author Linda Jaivin for members of book clubs only. This witty and entertaining author will talk about her work and engage the audience in discussion. This is part of a program to provide opportunities for Book Clubs to participate in the NT Writers' Centre activities. Most of all, it will be fun! We would also be happy to visit your book club to talk about NT Writers' Centre and next year's Wordstorm Festival. Please call Rachel on 8941 2651 for more details.

(from pg 5)... of the reasons that *Never say Die*, sold so well. People were comforted by Chris's story, even though he died. He was a very warm presence.

You see the effect of the recession in other areas. We're not releasing the flash, beautiful cookbooks at the moment. Instead, we just rereleased *The Commonsense Cookbook*. And people responded. It's sold really well.

What kind of royalties can a first time author expect?

A lot of that is decided in the acquisitions process.

Can you talk a little about that?

When a proposal is ready, the publishers present a proposal to the sales department and the heads of marketing. We look at it in terms of: is this a book we can sell and is it a book that will sell in the marketplace? What kind of publicity can we do? What is the marketing plan for this book? What level are we publishing at it? How many are we aiming to sell? That's what decides how much the author is going to be paid. Then, I go back with an offer. And then, sometimes it's not the kind of book that will go well at HarperCollins. We're a big company. Some books are better off with a small publisher because their lists are smaller, so it will get more attention.

Should a writer be presenting a marketing plan with their manuscript?

It doesn't hurt for a writer to think about marketing but it shouldn't be the priority. If a writer has expertise in an area or a community that will buy their book, that's something they need to tell the publisher. But otherwise, not really. We have an experienced marketing division here... I do think book publishing is a mystery. It really is a dance between art and commerce. Most publishers will do what they can to push the arts side, but they need to address commerce too. Look, everybody's happy when a book sells. There's no point publishing a book that nobody buys. Apart from anything else, it's so demoralising for the writer.

What led you to publishing?

I'd been in journalism for a long time. Done everything else I could, in a way. I'd worked overseas, worked on some great publications here ... I love books. I like making stories and I think I'm good at spotting them and I think both those skills can be used in book publishing.

What can writers do to best prepare to meet a publisher?

Books need to be ready as you can get them. You're going to be under a lot a pressure once the book is accepted, getting drafts in, looking at covers, doing publicity rounds.

I was told that for non-fiction, writers should approach publishers before they've written the book and just present an outline.

Write the book you want to write, submit half of it, be prepared to listen. Be flexible. If you're writing about an experience you've had, you really need to ask yourself: how will this translate into a book? Will the experience fan out, or is it really just a magazine article? A lot of books that come to us, really, they're a magazine article and nobody's going to pay \$30 for a magazine article.

nt writing groups darwin / palmerston

DAGS: The Darwin Authors' Group is an informal network of Darwin-based writers with a common interest in sharing and discussing the craft and business of writing. Writers of all genres welcome. The group generally meets at the Frog Hollow Centre for the Arts Conference Room on the second Thursday of each month. All welcome. For further information contact Bronwyn Mehan: b_mehan@bigpond.com

POW: Palmerston Own Writers meet at the Community Room, Palmerston Library, on the first Wednesday of every month from 5:30-7pm. All welcome. Contact Sandra Parker on [t]: 8988 2172 or [e]: sandra@parkershouse.net.

The Fellowship of Australian Writers contact is Ted Kilpatrick on [t]: 8948 1216. The FAW meets on the first Saturday of the month at the Millner Electorate Office, Rapid Creek Shops, 2-5pm.

Australian Society of Authors contact in Darwin is Helen Pavlin [t]: 0402 482 384.

other regions

A NEW GROUP FOR ARNHEM LAND: A new group of writers is now meeting in Nhulunbuy. For more information, contact Ian Maclean on E: ian@nightskysecrets.com

ALICE WRITERS' GROUP Currently the group is meeting at 5.30pm @ redHOT Arts on the first Tuesday of the month.

KATHERINE REGION OF WRITERS: Contact Jill Pettigrew: wjip@clearnet.com.au for more information.

nt support networks

The Society of Editors (NT) welcomes editors and writers interested in networking and sharing information. Contact: NT Society of Editors. E: editors_nt@yahoo.com.au.

The Northern Territory Film Office provides expert advice on locations, policy, industry contacts and production matters, and offers support to the Territory through annual grants programs. (t) T: 8951 1162. email: film.office@nt.gov.au

The Australian Writers' Guild is the peak national organisation for performance writers working within the screen, theatre, radio and performance industries. [w]: www.awg.com.au.

If you know of local writers' groups open to new members, please let us know!

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