

SA Writers Go International



Lydia Simkute was invited to participate in Fringe Speak at the Singapore Fringe Festival and continues her bilingual publishing successes in English and Lithuanian.



John Fletcher was flown to Germany at the beginning of the year and signed contracts for two of his novels with Rowohlt Publishers.



Eva Sallis' novel, *Fire Fire*, was sold to a Bulgarian publisher, and her books, *City of Sealions* and *Mahjar* will be distributed in the US this year.



Russian translation rights for **Kirsty Brooks'** *The Vodka Dialogue* have been sold to publisher Amphora.



Lucy Clark's titles continue to be published in the UK by Harlequin and translated into French, Italian, Czechoslovakian, German and Polish.



Sean Williams' *The Resurrected Man* will appear in hardcover in the US next week. His new title, *Geodesica: Ascent* with Shane Dix published by Ace Books will be published in the US and has titles translated into Russian and Japanese.

SA Writers' Centre Inc Notice of Annual General Meeting

6.00pm Tuesday 24 May 2005

Please note there are three positions vacant as Kirsty Brooks, Judy Dally and Gina Inverarity are stepping down. Elizabeth Hutchins, John Fletcher, Michael Groff, Stephen Orr and Jude Aquilina are remaining on the Board.

Nominations must be made in writing to the Director by the 22 April, 2005. Individual members nominating must be financial members.

Pursuant to clause 17.6 of the Constitution, notice is hereby given of the 2002 Annual General Meeting of the Association in the Seminar Room of the SA Writers' Centre Inc, 2nd floor, 187 Rundle Street, Adelaide.

Barbara Wiesner
Dated 1/4/2005

Agenda

1. Present and Apologies
2. Minutes of Meeting held 11 May 2004
3. Business Arising
4. Reports: Chair, Treasurer, Director
5. Appointment of an auditor
6. Determination of Honoraria for Board members (currently \$150 / \$200 for executive members)
7. Determination of membership fees
8. Election of Board members
9. Guest Speaker: To be confirmed
10. Close

re:views re:views

‘... an outstanding success ...’

Lian Hearn & Siggy Seuss



An Overview

by Ruth Starke

“It was a fantastic conference. I felt absolutely humbled by the intelligence and thoughtfulness of the two keynote speakers who were erudite, confrontational and amusing. The sessions were enlightening and informative... The whole conference was unrushed and calm and the pace encouraged discussion and reflection. I was able to talk to a wide range of people I had met and some I had never met, but had always wanted to.” Fran Knight

As it got underway in the impressive surrounds of the State Library, it was immediately obvious that the second nation RE:VIEWS conference (11-13 March) was on track to be as successful and as memorable as the first in 1993. Organised by the SAWC in conjunction with Come Out, the conference attracted over 110 delegates from around Australia and overseas, all of whom are involved or interested in the reviewing of children’s literature. With something for everyone, it was also an excellent opportunity for authors to meet publishers (Random, Allen & Unwin, Era, Omnibus, Penguin, HarperCollins and Black Dog Books were present), editors of newspapers and review journals, teachers, librarians and booksellers who select and promote their books, and dozens of reviewers from around the country.

Belgian author Anne Provoost and German critic Siggy Seuss received unanimous praise: librarian/reviewer Jo Coward spoke for many when she said, ‘The best keynote speakers I have ever heard; just superb!’ Such was the reaction

to Provoost’s speech about censorship and how we present the world to children through literature that we’re negotiating for it to be circulated more widely, perhaps through Magpies magazine. In the meantime, the SAWC has copies.

As always, the difficulty was deciding which concurrent session to attend, but all of them allowed opportunity for audience participation in the debates – which doesn’t always happen at conferences – and the frequent leisurely breaks (with delicious food) allowed delegates to mingle and exchange views.

Saturday night’s dinner at Finlayson’s on North Terrace was enlivened by several book raffles and a devilishly difficult literary reviews quiz in which our leading reviewer Katharine England failed to recognise one of her own contributions. Guest speaker Frank Moorhouse told us the bad news we already knew about the decline over the last few decades in press columns given over to reviews in general and children’s books in



Anne Provoost & husband

particular. We remembered this when next morning’s keynote speaker Siggy Seuss told us – and showed us – the enviable press and media coverage children’s literature receives in Germany.

But the last panel of the day – The Editors Speak, chaired by Mark McLeod – delivered some good news. Deputy Editor of The Advertiser, Rod Savage, admitting that his paper wasn’t ‘strong’ when it came to the reviewing of children’s literature, gave advance notice of welcome initiatives aimed at correcting that, while Rayma Turton of Magpies announced that she had taken on board certain criticisms made at the conference and would be making appropriate changes to how books are reviewed in the magazine.

Overall, however, the situation re children’s book reviewing in this country



Frank Moorhouse & Dyan Blacklock

isn’t anything we can feel happy about and certainly hasn’t improved since 1993. Encouraged by the indefatigable Agnes Niuwenhuizen, there was a strong feeling that we needed an advocacy or lobby group to make our voices heard and effect change. This is something that, hopefully, we can get busy on. As one delegate wrote on her feedback sheet: ‘Conferences should result in some change.’

Many thanks to everyone who contributed, and special thanks to our major sponsor CAL (Australian Copyright Council); without its generous funding the conference couldn’t have taken place at all.

‘It was a wonderful opportunity to meet, network, and exchange ideas, and I’m going home inspired!’

‘I’ve gained so much to take back to my colleagues at SAETA and my classroom students.’

‘These presentations and conversations have encouraged me to think more critically and openly about the purpose of reviews, their content and structure. I’m sure it will have an impact on my own writing.’

‘Please don’t leave this conference so long next time! I was challenged and stimulated, and all within great company. Many thanks!’

Mark MacLeod, Christine Harris & Stephen James-Smoult



Opportunities...

EcoVoice

Do you have an article with an environmental theme you would like to share? *EcoVoice*, Australia's Environment Newspaper, is offering free publication to approved articles. All appropriate pieces considered. Preferably 350-500 words. Photos welcome. Email research@ecovoice.com.au for more details.

Autobiographical Stories

Writers are encouraged to submit their stories, approximately 1000 words, about life from a diary or travel log. The *Writers* magazine also includes a calendar of writers' events and interviews. More details at www.sonjagoernitz.com, call (02) 9460 1412 or email sonjag@bigpond.net.au

ABC Short Story Project ...

calls for creative entries from aspiring authors living in regional Australia. Stories of up to 650 words on any subject—should be vibrant and engaging. 30 stories will be commissioned, produced and broadcast on ABC Radio, and the writer will receive a one-off fee of \$650. Writers must live outside the major capital cities of Australia. For more information, go to abc.net.au/shortstories Deadline 29 April 2005.

Young playwrights ...

aged 18-26, are encouraged to apply to be a playwright delegate at the 2005 World Interplay festival, Townsville, Queensland for an opportunity to establish professional and personal networks. Festival dates: 18-31 July, 2005. Cost \$420. Email application to iplay@bigpond.net.au by 30 April 2005.

papertiger:newworldpoetry ...

seeks submissions of text, audio, video, and Flash poetry, plus poetry-related photography and visual art, essays and interviews for issue #05 which will be produced as a CDROM. Submission guidelines at www.papertigermedia.com/guidelines/default.html or email brdionysius@papertigermedia.com Deadline 1 May.

Marian Eldridge Award ...

for an aspiring woman writer. The National Foundation for Australian Women is offering \$1500 to encourage an aspiring writer to undertake a literary activity: a short course of study, complete a project or attend a writers' week / conference. "The

recipient should not be established but someone whose writing shows promise'. For more info call (02) 4422 2208 or email nfaw@nfaw.org Deadline 6 May.

Submissionsofarticles&poetry

are invited for a book to be published at the end of 2005. Theme: Social, Humanitarian and Realism with a preference for thought-provoking articles or essays although strong poetry is welcome. Guidelines at www.wannabee.com.au Deadline 15 May 2005.

SA Stumpy Festival

6-7 August Murray Bridge will host its second annual cultural festival. Writers of free-form and bush poetry, prose and bush songs can compete for prize money and trophies totalling \$2,500. Entry forms available at www.lm.net.au/~stumpy/ or email stumpy@lm.net.au Deadline 1 June.

Middlesex University Press...

Literary Prize 2005 invites submissions of short stories and poetry. First prize: £1,000, 2nd prize £250, 3rd prize £100. Ten winning entries in each category will be published in an anthology. Entry form at www.mupress.co.uk. Deadline 20 June.

Going Down Swinging...

is looking for submissions of audio, poetry, prose, short story and literary cartoons for issue #23. For more submission guidelines, please go to www.goingdownswinging.org.au or check out GDS #22 now available in bookstores and through the website. Written or audio submissions to Going Down Swinging, PO Box 24, Clifton Hill, Vic, 3068. Deadline 30 June.

Wet Ink...

is the only SA magazine for new writing. The editors want submissions for the first issue planned for December 2005. Send short fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction. Guidelines at SAWC. Enquiries to Managing Editor Dominique at wetink@optusnet.com.au Deadline: 1 July.

Creative Writing Resources...

Survey: Writers, creative writing students and creative writing teachers are being asked to participate in a research project on the print, electronic and Internet resources that writers frequently use. For a copy of the questionnaire contact debbi.zott@flinders.edu.au Deadline 31 July.

WANTED

Writer to help work on TV script for new show. Must have an interest in green 'Earth' issues and an affinity with shows like Northern Exposure, SeaChange etc. Please email jamesuz@chariot.net.au about yourself and why you're interested. Young writers are welcome.

dotlit

QUT is relaunching its online literary journal of creative writing, July 2005, with an emphasis on new writing and reviewing including fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, hypertexts, digital storytelling, reviews and scholarly articles. Enquiries to co-ordinating editor Angela Slatter on dotlit@qut.edu.au

Seeking Volunteer Writers

'australia.com want to know everything from your local weekend markets to your holiday in Kakadu—tell us 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. To submit a story visit our website at www.about-australia.com and click on "Submit a Story", or write to editor@about-australia.com'

Attention SA Authors

If you have had any books published between Sept. 2004 and Sept. 2005, send the following details: Title; Author; Publisher; Date; a short blurb and an author photo plus a copy of the book to the SAWC by 15 April 2005 to be included in a brochure promoting SA writers to readers, bookshops and libraries.

Seaview Press Interviews

Susan Rintoul or Bill Phippard of Seaview Press will be available on Thursday 7 April 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. Call 8235 1535 to book or email: susan@seaviewpress.com.au

The Hills Poets...

will meet on Sunday 10 April at the Crafers Inn, Crafers, 3.30-5.30 pm and welcome new poets to come and read their work. Enquiries to Jill Gower: 8339 5119.

What's On...

April Poetica

Radio National 729AM is presented by Robyn Ravlich every Saturday at 3.05 pm, repeated 9.05 pm Thursday. Details from Mike Ladd (08) 8343 4928 or at www.abc.net.au/rn/arts/poetica/

2nd Larkin's Animals – a powerful bestiary by Philip Larkin

9th Shadows at the Gate – selected works by Robyn Rowland

16th Walking on the Wild Side – the music, lyrics and poetry of Lou Reed

23rd Gallipoli Voices – for the 90th anniversary of the Anzac landing, an anthology of poems by Australian, British and Turkish writers

30th Les Murray: The Bunyah Poems, recorded on location at his home.

Writers' Group – Penache

A small group of women writers in the southern suburbs is seeking new members with similar experience. 'We've published fiction and nonfiction, with a focus on novels, short stories, travel and feature articles. We meet monthly to discuss markets and workshop our writing, and would encourage those interested to check us out to see if we're a good fit.' Details: Heather Britton on 8370 7660.

Friendly Street Poets

The next meeting is Tuesday 5 April. Guest poets are Libby Angel and Rob Walker, reading from the latest *Friendly Street New Poets* collection. On 3 May the featured reader is SA poet Peter Lloyd, with guest appearances by winners of the Spring Poetry Prize. Readings start at 7.30 pm, followed by open mike. Entry \$4. Contact Gaetano for details: 8231 4757.

Big Book Club

Dymocks Marion, Marion Library Services and *The Advertiser* Big Book Club are working hard to bring the best authors to SA so that you can meet them and hear their stories in the Domain Theatre, Marion Cultural Centre, Oaklands Park.
19 April, 7pm – **Penny Vincenzi** (free)
24 May 7.30pm – **Jodi Picoult** (\$7.70)
June TBC – **Monica McInerney**
Bookings are essential on 8375 6855.

Helen McKerral ...

will be at Prospect Library, Tuesday 19 April, 7pm to talk about gardening writing and her book *Gardening on a Shoestring* as part of the library's Writers Speak program. All welcome at 1 Thomas St, Nailsworth. Enquiries: 8342 8170.

Fundraiser for Wet Ink

'Please join us at the lovely and intimate Tin Cat Café, Kent Town, Thursday, 14 April from 6.30pm, to support *Wet Ink*, a magazine of new writing. For just \$20 per head, a sumptuous feast of homemade finger food will be provided by Tin Cat's kitchen. Writers include Sean Williams, Kirsty Brooks, Stefan Laszczuk, Emmett Stinson and Stephanie Luke. There will be a raffle and an auction of original artworks by emerging artists to support this new venture. Bookings essential: 8362 4748.

Vibewire.net e-Festival

14–18 April (coinciding with National Youth Week) Vibewire.net is running Australia's first virtual festival of ideas featuring 5 days of interactive online panels on issues around media, democracy, globalization and youth participation. If you'd like to get involved or want more info contact tomdawkins@email.com or call 0416 099 534 or www.vibewire.net.

Writer's Fantasy Convention

Conflux, 22–24 April, is two and a half days of speculative fiction—hard science, fantasy, magical romances and horror. Over 30 published writers, artists, editors, publishers and media experts, including Hugo-winning Bob Eggleton and Marianne Plumridge, will talk about their work and share expertise. More information, including the program and a full list of panellists, is available at www.conflux.org.au or info@conflux.org.au or 0421 005 511.

Books in My Life

Wednesdays at One, at the State Library, 4 May listen to Dr Helen Jones who began researching women's history in 1950. She has written scripts for radio, books (*In Her Own Name: Women in South Australian History*), articles and reviews. Cost: \$6.50. For more details, call 8207 7255.

KernewekLowenderWriters'...

Event, 10–13 May 2005, will run a series of workshops at Kadina and Moonta on poetry, prose, historical fiction as well as 'Meet the Author' dinners and morning teas. For more info contact Tricia Stringer, Moonta Community Library: 8825 1511.

Blast from the Past

14th State History Conference, Whyalla, 28–29 May 2005 will traverse interconnected stories from pastoralists, unionists and companies, immigrants and asylum seekers, explorers and sailors, women, Indigenous communities and miners from SA. Enquiries to Jan Mudge, 8203 9877 or jmudge@history.sa.gov.au

Book Launches

MadeleineHuxtable's first book *The Flight of the Scorpion*

will be launched by
General Peter Cosgrove
at the SA Writers' Centre
6.00 pm Wednesday 6 April, 2005.
All welcome.

...

Penguin invites you to the launch of

Knitting

by **Anne Bartlett**
to be launched by
Nicholas Jose with Sue Hosking
6pm, Friday 8 April, 2005
at the SA Writers' Centre
RSVP (03) 9811 2513 or aimee.lipscombe@penguingroup.com
by 6 April 2005.

...

Wakefield Press invites you
to the launching of

The Dog Rock

by **Mirielle Lenore**
to be launched by Margaret Tulip
6pm Thursday 14 April
at the SA Writers' Centre



Congratulations...

Ashley Arnold's short story, 'Pinch Hitter', won third place in the 2004 Science Fiction Writers of Earth short story competition (see <http://home.flash.net/~sfwoe>).

Kirsty Brooks has sold the audio rights to *The Vodka Dialogue* and *The Happiness Punch* to Vocal Eyes productions and the Russian translation rights of *The Vodka Dialogue* to publishers, Amphora.

Lucy Clark's 25th Medical Romance, *Dr Cusack's Secret Son*, will be released in April, 2005.

Sarah Cook's short story, 'Motherhood—A Rude Awakening,' was selected for inclusion in the Jasmine Publications anthology, *Motherhood*.

Moya Costello had two pieces of her short prose used to illustrate writing technique in Hazel Smith's new textbook: *The Writing Experiment: Strategies for Innovative Creative Writing* (A & U). **Steve Evans**, another South Australian, also had some work used by Smith as an exemplar.

Ross Duffy's short story, 'Beginner's Luck', was a finalist in KT Publishing's 2004 International Short Story Competition.

Matt Freeman made the semifinals of the Talent Scout Television Screenwriting

Contest, a competition run by an LA agent.

Erica Jolly won an International Women's Day Award for her work in education.

John Malone's poems, 'Walking The Dog' and 'How To Catch A Seagull', appeared in *Cricket* [USA] and *Countdown* [School Magazine] respectively.

Ryan Paine's short story, 'A goitre-shaped protuberance', was published in the March issue of *Voiceworks* magazine and will appear in *Studio* magazine later in the year. The same story and another, 'Cows do sleep standing up', were aired on Radio Adelaide's Writers' Radio in March.

Nicole Plüss was awarded an Asialink fellowship and will travel to Bhutan for research on her young adult novel *Piece of Heaven*.

Alma Iris Ramirez had the following stories published by the University of Texas: 'Charro Days', 'My Mother Sings', 'The Mexican Girls', 'School Days', 'But They Just Keep On Coming', 'The Egg And The Evil Eye', 'In The World Of Women And Children', 'The River With Two Names', 'Welcome To Brown Addition', 'Santa Rode a Fire Truck' and 'Rosabel and the Jungle Inn'.

Joan Ridley won second prize in the Bright Light Multimedia Poetry Competition.

Graham Rowlands' poems, 'Manners' and 'The Major', were published in *New England Review* (21) and *The Mozzie* (13, 1) respectively.

Shen's poetry was published in the following journals: 'How it All Came to This' and 'Breaking Through' in *Poetry Monash* #69, and 'Knowing your place' and 'The one that got away' in *Famous Reporter* #30.

Alice Shore's short story, 'There's Something You Should Know', was listed in the finalists of the International Short Story Competition, 2004 run by KT Publishing Qld.

Lidija Simkute was invited to be part of the Writers Connect panel at the Singapore Fringe Festival—Fringe Speak, in February. The theme was Art & War. She has also had the following successes: her poem 'My Father' was published in English in *THE SHOP* - Spring, 2005, Ireland; a series of poems in Lithuanian were published in

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

Draugas, Feb., 2005, USA; a poem and article in Lithuanian on archaeologist Marija Gimbutas were published in *Naujoji Romuva*, #4, 2004, Lithuania, and a recent review/presentation of Lidija's poetry in English by Isolde P. Davis can be viewed at www.slic.org.au

Zenda Vecchio's short story, 'The Plum Tree', has been selected to be read on Words and Music Program, National Radio 91.3FM.

Sean Williams' novel, *The Crooked Letter*, has been nominated for the Australian Ditmar Award in the Best Novel category. He picked up a gong for Pro Achievement for *The Crooked Letter* and for 'efforts in teaching'. *The Crooked Letter* also won Best Fantasy Novel in the Aurealis Awards, Feb. 05.

Valerie Williams received a Commended Certificate for her short story, 'The Last Dance', in the open Short Story section of the Eyre Writers' Awards. She was a finalist in KT Publishing's International Short Story Competition 2004 for her short story, 'Waiting and Watching'. Her poem, 'A Child's Gift', won first prize in the Bright Light Multimedia Fun, Happy Poetry competition run by Bak2Bak Communications Pty Ltd.

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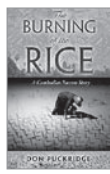
Unlike Self Publishing, Partnership Publishing provides the distribution network, manages the project from line editing, typesetting, proofing, printing, book design, often co-funds production, provides promotional support including a personalized page for the author's work and a short biography. Sid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

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Literary Competitions...

18 April 2005

7th Smiling Politely Competition. Max 1500 words. 1st prize \$1000 plus publication. \$6 entry fee. For more info go to www.smilingpolitely.com.au/newcomp.htm

★ 23 April 2005

Positive Words Short Story and Poetry Competition. 1. Open Short story max 2000 words. 2. Young Adults (12-18 years) Short Story max 1000 words. 3. Junior (to 12 years) Short story to 500 words. 4. Open Poetry to 48 lines. 5. Young Adults (12-18 years) Poetry to 32 lines. 6. Junior (to 12 years) Poetry to 20 lines. Entry fee Adults: \$2.50, Children \$1. Entry forms available from Sandra Lynn Evans, Positive Words, 466 Old Melbourne Road, Traralgon, 3844 Vic.

★ 27 April 2005

Sunshine Coast Writers' Group Inc. 13th Annual Short Story & Poetry Competition. Poems: free or rhyming verse not exceeding 40 lines, open theme. 1st prize \$150. Entry fee \$4. Short stories 600-2000 words, open theme. 1st prize \$150. Entry fee \$4 per poem or 3 poems for \$10. Guidelines available. Contact reklein@bigpond.net.au

★ 29 April 2005

The United Federation of Planets Fan Club of South Australia presents Holonovel 2005, the Sci Fi and Fantasy Short Story Competition. Winners announced at their club meeting 29 May 2005. Prizes awarded in two categories Best Senior (over 18 yrs), Best Youth (under 18 yrs). Ages both under and over as at Oct 31st 2004. Entry is free, story length set at 3,000 words. Further information contact us at www.ufpofsa.org or visit them at the SA Writers' Centre on the last Sunday of every month from 4pm to 8pm.

29 April 2005

Ginninderra Press Short Story Competition. Theme: regret. 3000-5000 words. 1st

- ☺ 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.

prize \$300. A shortlist of 10 stories will be published in an anthology. More info at www.ginninderrapress.com.au

☺ 30 April 2005
Australasian Poetry Awards. Poem, max 100 lines, any theme or style. Prizes \$300/150/50 + highly commended certificates. Entry fee: \$5 or \$20 x 5 poems.

☺★ 30 April 2005
Papyrus Publishing Literary Competition, Berringa and Beyond. Categories: Short Stories, max 2500 words; Poem, max 100 lines; Haiku; Essay with Multicultural theme, max 1800 words; Poem in the Youth Category (14-17 yrs), max 100 lines. Prizes: \$125/book vouchers=\$50/25.

☞ 30 April 2005
Wannabee Publishing Short Story Competition. Entry fee \$6.60. Open theme, max 3000 words. 1st prize \$300. Details at www.wannabee.com.au

☺ 30 April 2005
Playwriting Competition Prizes of £2500 for the best radio plays written by writers with English as a first language, and as a second language, plus a trip to London. Plays should be 60 mins with max 6 main characters. More info at <http://bbcworldservice.com/competitions>.

☞ 15 May 2005
Mount Arrowsmith Novel Writing Contest. An international novel writing contest open to Australians writing in English. 1st prize \$1000. Entry fee \$10. Open

theme. See website for details. www.graham123.com/arrowsmith.html or email 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 or call (03) 9662 3744.

☺ 21 May 2005
Nutshell 17-International Yellow Moon Literary Competition. Categories: Cinquain, Idyll, Limerick, Humorous/nonsense poem, Tetractys. 1st prize \$70/60. 2nd prize \$30. Entry fee \$5 or \$10 for 3. More info at 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. 1st prize: \$1000+2-week artist residential at the Arthur Boyd Bundanon Centre. 5x2nd prizes \$250, 5x commended awards. Info at www.shoalhaven.net.au.

☺ 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.

☺ 31 May 2005
Elegy-International Yellow Moon Literary Competition. Categories: Prose, Haiku, Tanka, Haiku Sequence, Poem to 28 lines on the theme of nature. 1st prize \$100 + publication. Entry fee \$5 or \$10 for 3. More info at www.yellowmoon.info.

☺★ 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.

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From Self-Publishing to Publishing Contract

by Helen Halstead

I began *A Private Performance* as a writing exercise, expressing some amusing ideas I had following on from Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. The ideas kept coming, and a theme of living behind the mask evolved, along with the immense pleasure of playing with archaic language. I was having fun, and the research was fascinating.

After ten drafts, and as many publishers' rejections, I joined a writers group, to receive unflinching criticism from fellow writers, who cared not a whit for Jane Austen. Another rewrite was necessary, before I was ready to attack the citadel of publishers again.

I called my book *A Private Performance* and it appeared that my effort would be very private indeed, due to the increasing difficulty of getting a publisher. Since I had begun writing *APP*, the success rate for new authors had shrunk from 3% to 1%. Back came the kind little notes from publishers. Encouragingly, I received a handwritten reply from one publisher asking me to write an historical novel set in the Antipodes—my present offering 'would not fit in with her list'.

Disappointed, yet convinced there was a market for *APP*, I turned from traditional publishers to consider self-publishing. There are publishers who assist self-publishing authors with the business side, from the respectable through to the dreaded Vanity Press. I chose to self-publish completely

— making my own arrangements about cover design, text layout and offset printing.

I sent a copy of *APP* to Carol Whitelock, scoring a valuable interview on ABC Radio 891, after my book launch, in 2004. This helped get *APP* into Adelaide bookshops and in two months I had sold 300 copies. Accessing the interstate market was difficult, so I submitted *APP* to the marvellously warm and encouraging Michael Rakusin at Tower Books. A distributorship deal followed—I believe it is the first self-published novel they've accepted. With insufficient copies to fill their first order, I ordered a second print-run.

As I had easily arranged distributorship in Australia, I assumed I could secure foreign distributorship, with effort. Already a small UK distributor wanted to list *APP*, but only large firms import. I was yet to discover that they do not import one-offs and that I had ordered too many books.

Promotion was still my responsibility. The distributor was responsible only for getting the book into the shops; as publisher, it was up to me to motivate buyers to buy it. Promotion is the most difficult stage of self-publishing. I often felt my efforts were frustrated because I lacked the contacts to ensure my book stood out among the hundreds that land on a reviewer's desk each month.

In what I considered a mad ambitious moment, I submitted *APP* to Text Publications and received encouragement and

advice from Michael Heyward, for which I remain very grateful, although my poor little orphan wasn't quite right for them.

In September 2004, I submitted *APP* to the Fast Books Best Self-Published Books in Print Competition. This national competition gives self-publishers a wonderful opportunity to make useful contacts as well as the chance of winning. I was thrilled to win the Fiction section, and went to NSW Writers' Centre to participate in the Annual Book Show for self-publishers, and to receive my prize of a trophy and \$500 from Pat Woolley, publisher at Fast Books.

With renewed confidence, I made a determined assault on the world of the literary reviewer, emailing, phoning and writing to every literary editor in Australia, more times than they may have liked. I tried to make direct contact — preferably by phone — so that they would remember my story when the book arrived. This took persistence and a certain thickening of my skin.

The first result was a lovely paragraph in *The Australian Review*. I had submitted the book to Random House Australia, after encouragement from bookseller, Kay Mew of Upon the Shelf Bookshop. The following Monday, I received my first call from Random House. It was just before Christmas, so I had an anxious wait until the New Year to hear the great news — a two-book contract!

I did come back down to

earth but it took a while. With joy, I have learned to let go of the business side, although force of habit had me coming up with handy pointers for a while. My publisher, Jeanne Ryckmans, has been patient and I only hope I haven't put her off self-publishers.

After a panic over the deadline for the second book, I'm now well into the first draft. I stressed over the actual date, when in fact having any deadline was scary, as writing *A Private Performance* had been a leisurely affair.

I know I am very fortunate, having secured a contract with such a reputable publisher. The kindness and appreciation with which I am treated is a wonderful bonus, especially after the sensation of swimming upstream as a self-publisher. My journey into self-publishing gave me the confidence to approach Random House, bolstering my faith in my work with proof that it could be a seller. I've had valuable encouragement from friends, family and Adelaide's wonderful booksellers, including Jacqueline Cook (Mostly Books, Mitcham), Jan Gaebler (Holdfast Books, Glenelg) and Tim Birkett, (Mindfield Books, Blackwood). Self-publishing has paid off for me.

Helen Halstead is a member of the SA Writers' Centre. A Private Performance: A Sequel to Jane Austen's 'Pride and Prejudice' will be published in the Vintage Imprint in September 2005.

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