



# Buzz Words

## The Latest Buzz on Books for Children

A fortnightly e-zine

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Issue 65

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Welcome to Buzz Words. If you wish to publicise any event or newly published children's book, or you wish to share information or to be considered for an interview, please contact me at [vicki@stanton.id.au](mailto:vicki@stanton.id.au)

I hope you enjoy reading Buzz Words.

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TO SUBSCRIBE: The annual cost of Buzz Words is \$44 pa. Please make out your cheque to Vicki Stanton and mail it PO Box 173 Woonona NSW 2517. Don't forget to include your name and email address. Payment can be made online. Contact me at [vicki@stanton.id.au](mailto:vicki@stanton.id.au) for details.

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### CONTENTS

**GENERAL INFORMATION/INDUSTRY GOSS**

**YOUR QUESTIONS**

**MARKETS**

**OPPORTUNITIES**

**FESTIVALS AND CONFERENCES**

**COMPETITIONS/AWARDS**

**WRITING COURSES/WORKSHOPS**

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**ACHIEVEMENTS**

**PUBLISHER PROFILE**

**GUEST PROFILE**

**WRITERS' QUOTES**

**USEFUL BOOKS/WEBSITES**

**BOOK REVIEWS**  
**ARTICLES**  
**CLASSIFIEDS**

*Editorial writers are welcome to express their thoughts – and encouraged to do so in Buzz Words. Send your editorial today to [vicki@stanton.id.au](mailto:vicki@stanton.id.au)*

**WELCOME**

Welcome to my first issue of *Buzz Words* as editor and publisher. Like all of you, I love children's books in their myriad of forms from picture books to young adult novels; fiction and non-fiction; free verse and prose. I consider it a privilege for Di Bates to entrust 'her baby' to me and will endeavour to maintain *Buzz Words*' high standard by informing subscribers of all aspects of the children's book industry.

Di is an incredibly generous and giving person who is passionate about children's literature. Her involvement in the field includes being a prolific and award winning writer of over one hundred books, founding *Buzz Words* and *CAINON*, forming more than one branch of the CBCA and mentoring emerging writers. Such achievements were recognised in 2008 when Di received the Lady Cutler Award. Above all, Di is a treasured friend and I wish her every success and happiness in future ventures.

In the previous edition of *Buzz Words* we saw the departure of Lady Penguin who, alas, has disappeared due to misadventure. Over the next few issues, I will be asking about how *Buzz Words* fills your needs and what you may like to see in place of the Earnestly Yours section. I look forward to getting to know *Buzz Words*' subscribers better and aim to provide a quality service for all my readers.

Vicki Stanton  
Compiler/Publisher

**GENERAL INFORMATION/ INDUSTRY GOSS**

**PIR MELTDOWN**

Reaction to the release of the Productivity Commission's report on

parallel importation laws on 14 July was swift within Australia and throughout the world. The bulk of the response to the report from publishers, authors and booksellers was negative. Predictably, the Coalition for Cheaper Books was disappointed that the Commission's recommended changes would take three years to be phased in from the date they are announced.

The Commission's major recommendation was that all restrictions on parallel imports be removed. Further suggestions included reviewing all current subsidies and grants for writers and publishers. The Commission favours a subsidy scheme which would reimburse Australian publishers \$1.40 for every book of 'cultural value' sold. However, educational publishers were to be excluded from this program.

[Battle of the books turns political \(Crikey\)](#)

[Publishers fight cheap books \(The Age\)](#)

[Guardian item](#)

The ASA has rejected the findings of the Commission, and urges Members to write to the Prime Minister and Cabinet by traditional (paper) letters as these are by far the most effective way to get your opinion taken seriously by politicians.

There is an address template and some key points for discussion on the ASA website: [www.asauthors.org](http://www.asauthors.org)

Consumer magazine *Choice* is conducting a poll on the Productivity Commission report. Vote now to have your opinion heard.

<http://www.choice.com.au/viewArticle.aspx?id=106956&catId=100167&tid=100008&p=1&title=Poll%3A%20Parallel%20import%20of%20books>

In response to a motion put forward by the AMWU at the ALP national conference, the federal government will establish a working group to report on the Productivity Commission's recommendations within one month, a move welcomed by the APA's Maree McCaskill and the ASA.

In a press release the ASA stated:

The Australian Society of Authors (ASA) welcomes yesterday's resolution of the ALP National Conference 'that the Government should give priority to encouraging Australians to keep on buying Australian books and to maximising the economic, cultural and creative viability of Australian literature and Australian book industries'.

The ASA rejects completely the illogical and unfounded research promoted by the Productivity Commission in its recent report on the parallel importation of books, and looks forward to the determinations of the Working Group that the National Conference has set up to consider the report and recommend actions to relevant Ministers.

### **NSW CBCA ANNOUNCES 2010 CONFERENCE**

The New South Wales Branch of the Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) will hold a two-day conference at the Menzies Hotel in Sydney on 18 and 19 June, 2010. The program has not been finalised and publishers are invited to submit suggestions. All correspondence and enquiries to Margaret Hamilton, Conference Consultant, email: [hamiltonbooks@iprimus.com.au](mailto:hamiltonbooks@iprimus.com.au)

### **CBCA ON YOUTUBE**

Watch out for the CBCA Book Week Community Service Announcement on SBS in August. If you can't wait till then - catch it on YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfhiYfA7u6w>

### **LEMONFIZZ MEDIA**

*WBN* reports that former co-owner and publisher of Hardie Grant Egmont, Susannah McFarlane has launched her new company LemonFizz Media (LFM). LFM will publish its first three series in conjunction with Scholastic Australia. The first two LFM series, *EJ12: Girl Hero* and *Boy v. Beast*, will be released in early 2010.

### **OPEN ACCESS**

Buzz Words wishes to clarify that 'Open Access is an initiative of Hachette Book Group USA only and will only extend to those titles that they have appropriate rights to in their territory.'

## **CELEBRITY BOOKS**

Olympic and world champion swimmer Michael Phelps has released his new picture book, *How to Train with a T. Rex and Win 8 Gold Medals*, illustrated by Ward Jenkins (Simon & Schuster).

## **THREE MILLION WIMPY KIDS**

*Dog Days*, the fourth book in the Jeff Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series, will have a three million copy first print run for its release in the US on 12 October. [more](#) » » »

## **CENSORSHIP ROW**

Public book burnings is one suggestion from protesters riled by young adult books in a Milwaukee library depicting sex and homosexuality. The dispute has also cost some library board members their positions. [more](#) » » »

## **AMAZON DELETES 1984 FROM KINDLES**

Amazon has deleted e-versions of George Orwell's *1984* and *Animal Farm* from Kindles and refunded their customers after discovering they had sold unauthorized uploads. The general response to Amazon's actions has been one of outrage likening the removal of the books to barging into homes to repossess print copies.

Further issues have been raised as to what scope e-books give governments to censor material [Slate item](#) but some have defended Amazon's actions for protecting the author's copyright. [ereads item](#)

## **UK SCHOOL VETTING PLAN OPPOSED**

A prominent group of children's authors and illustrators in Britain, including Michael Morpurgo and Quentin Blake, have said that they will stop visiting schools in protest against a new vetting scheme which comes into place from October 12. The Vetting and Barring Scheme requires every person who works with children to sign on to a database. The scheme was set up in response to the murder of two school girls by their school janitor. [Times item](#)

However, recently appointed Children's Laureate Anthony Browne has been much more conciliatory, stating that while it irks him to

pay the £64 fee, writers are no different to others who work with children and if teachers are to be checked he asks why writers would be excluded and that it is much more important to continue the school visits. [Anthony Browne in The Times](#)

### **VATICAN PRAISES HARRY POTTER**

*The Telegraph* reports a change of heart by the Vatican over the Harry Potter phenomenon. Rather than branding JK Rowling's creation as a promotion of the occult among children, the Vatican's official newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* has congratulated the newly released film of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* for its 'clear' depiction of the eternal battle between good and evil represented by the struggle between Harry and Voldemort.

[Telegraph item](#)

JK Rowling confirms that she has no plans for any further Harry Potter novels. [Telegraph item](#) However, doubts have been expressed by some on the suitability of the later Harry Potter books for younger children. [more](#) » » »

### **LIAR COVER 'WRONG'**

Bloomsbury Children's Books has been criticised for its US cover version of Justine Larbalestier's *Liar*. The cover features an attractive white girl with long, straight tresses on the jacket of a novel about an African-American tomboy with short hair.

Larbalestier herself has weighed into the fray on her website:

'Many people have been asking me how I feel about the US cover, why I allowed such a cover to appear on a book of mine, and why I haven't been speaking out about it.

'Authors do not get final say on covers. Often they get no say at all.

'As it happens I was consulted by Bloomsbury and let them know that I wanted a cover like the [Australian cover](#), which I think is very true to the book.<sup>1</sup> I was lucky that my Australian publisher, Allen & Unwin, agreed with my vision and that the wonderful Bruno Herfst came up with such a perfect cover image.'

<http://justinelarbalestier.com/blog/2009/07/23/aint-that-a-shame/>

## **WORST CHILDREN'S BOOKS EVER**

*The American Scene* website is hosting a discussion on what are the worst children's books of all time. *The Polar Express* is much commented on and even Judy Blume and Eric Carle's books rate a mention. <http://theamericanscene.com/2009/07/20/worst-children-s-books-ever>

## **BOOKS TO FILM**

### ***Alice in Wonderland***

A trailer for Tim Burton's adaptation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* has been released. The film features Johnny Depp as the Mad Hatter, Stephen Fry voices the Cheshire Cat and Australian Mia Wasikowska plays Alice. [Guardian](#)

### ***Diary of a Wimpy Kid***

The adaptation of Jeff Kinney's bestselling *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* is due for release on April 2. Production will be underway in Vancouver from August 12. [Hollywood Reporter](#)

## **APPEAL FILED IN SALINGER CASE**

Lawyers filed an appeal on behalf of Swedish author Fredrik Colting and his US distributors on July 23 against an injunction barring publication of Colting's sequel to JD Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*. [Read on »](#)

## **HARLEQUIN TEEN**

Harlequin is marketing their new teen imprint through social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter as well as extensive online marketing. Strategies such as offering free e-books, author trailers and promoting books through an online game contest are all part of the campaign aimed squarely at capturing the attention of teen readers.

## **TWILIGHT FANS INVADE FORKS**

Residents of Forks, Washington State, are still stunned by the tourist influx into their town (population 3 221) after *Twilight* author Stephenie Meyer set her vampire series in the US's rainiest location. The town of Forks now attracts as many tourists in a month as it previously did in a year. [Guardian item](#)

## **RIP NAOMI LEWIS**

UK children's writer, critic and teacher Naomi Lewis has died, aged 97. An authority on Hans Christian Andersen, Lewis's own work was recognised with the Eleanor Farjeon award for distinguished services to British children's literature in 1975, and she was made fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1981.

## **RIP JOHN RYAN**

The British author, illustrator and animator John Ryan, who was probably best known for *Captain Pugwash*, has died aged 88.

## **YOUR QUESTIONS**

*I have read many books and taken a few courses on writing for children. I am also a member of a workshop group to improve my writing with the eventual aim of publication. However, I always seem to receive contradictory advice. How do I decide which advice to take?*

Your question is a difficult one. Writing is subjective; what one person loves, another may hate. That is not to say one is right or one is wrong but this *is* why we have the wonderful variety of styles seen in today's book stores and each has their merit. For me, the most important element in writing is voice. It matters less whether the author's style is lean or whimsical or whether the story is written in first person or the omniscient viewpoint. What does matter is giving your writing, and particularly your characters, an original voice. Much of the advice you receive may be valid but when deciding whether to make a suggested alteration think how it would affect your individual voice. Would the change allow your voice to shine through or would it change it?

## **MARKETS**

### **Australian Publisher**

#### **WOMBAT BOOKS**

Among Wombat Books' publications are picture books, activity books and young adult novels. Wombat Books is currently accepting unsolicited manuscripts.

Manuscript guidelines are as follows:

Typed, in RTF format

12 size font, Times New Roman or Arial

Double spaced

Wombat Books requests authors to post the manuscript and then send an email to let them know you have submitted. The average turn around for an initial response is 1-2 weeks. If your manuscript is selected for potential publication you will be advised within 2-3 months. If not you will be advised via email. Manuscripts which are not family-friendly will not be considered.

Send submissions to:

Wombat Books

P. O. Box 1519

Capalaba B.C. Qld 4157

0414 761 311

07-32451938

[wombat@wombatbooks.com.au](mailto:wombat@wombatbooks.com.au)

<http://www.wombatbooks.com.au/index.html>

### ***SHINY***

*Shiny* is looking for fresh, entertaining stories between 2000 and 8000 words long. The style and substance of *Shiny* stories should be up there with the best current YA fiction, and should (for the most part) feature teenage protagonists. They are mostly interested in stories with speculative elements - science fiction, fantasy and horror - but are open to non-speculative stories that would appeal to genre readers (as with, for example, *So Yesterday* by Scott Westerfeld, *Boy Proof* by Cecil Castellucci, or *Anda's Game* by Cory Doctorow.) *Shiny* prefers a contemporary setting and/or feel to stories, but will not let this restrict choices. *Shiny* is aiming to appeal to teenagers, but also to the wide body of adults who read and enjoy Young Adult fiction.

Who: the editorial board consists of Alisa Krasnostein and Tehani Wessely

How: send your submission in rtf attachment to [shinystories@gmail.com](mailto:shinystories@gmail.com). Keep an eye on their blog at <http://shinymag.blogspot.com> for more about what they're looking for.

Payment: AUS\$50 per story

Rights: First International e-rights, and exclusivity for three months after first publication. They are not looking to reprint stories that have been previously published in print or online.

## **North American Publishers**

### **ENCORE PERFORMANCE PUBLISHING**

Encore publishes 20-30 children's plays per year and two to three children's musicals per year. Encore currently requires family-friendly plays and musicals suitable for schools (grades 4 -12) and children's theatre shows to be performed by adults. For musicals, include a CD of at least several songs and sample pages from the score. Individual scenes or plays that run under 30 minutes will not be considered although shorter pieces may be submitted as a collection of work. Flexible casting preferred.

Submission guidelines and terms:

Include a cover letter providing a brief description of the story of the play, its running time, performance history and any awards it has earned. In addition, include a short bio of your writing experience. Include any reviews, production photos, or DVDs, if available. Encore's standard royalty contract is 50% of royalties and 10% of copy sales. Playwrights are paid twice a year and generally retain copyright. Send only one submission at a time and indicate if it is a simultaneous submission. Response time is two months.

You may submit to Encore either electronically or by post.

Email: Using your cover letter as the message, attach your play as a Microsoft Word or PDF document and e-mail to

[NewWorks@encoreplay.com](mailto:NewWorks@encoreplay.com).

Post:

Meredith Edwards, New Plays Editor  
Encore Performance Publishing Co. Inc.  
PO Box 14367  
Tallahassee FL 32317

For more information go to <http://www.encoreplay.com>

## **EARTH DAY PUBLISHING**

Earth Day Publishing is a new independent publishing house with a charitable and green focus. Each book that is published will be associated with a charitable cause, and portions of the proceeds from each book will go to various organizations in an effort to help raise awareness for causes such as literacy, health, and the environment. Earth Day Publishing was launched on Earth Day, April 22, 2009 and their first book is due for release in the northern autumn this year.

Authors are invited to submit queries to:

[editor@earthdaypublishing.com](mailto:editor@earthdaypublishing.com). If Earth Day is interested in reviewing your manuscript, you will be asked to send it in full electronically. Illustrators can send a link where Earth Day may view your work: [editor@earthdaypublishing.com](mailto:editor@earthdaypublishing.com)

Earth Day currently requires manuscripts for health related/special interest picture books. Earth Day plans to publish original voices in literature from picture books through young adult novels.

For other questions or comments, please contact the publisher at [publisher@earthdaypublishing.com](mailto:publisher@earthdaypublishing.com)

## **SterlingHouse**

SterlingHouse Publisher is accepting fiction and nonfiction books in various genres. Young adult self-help and inspirational titles are published under their Blue Imp imprint. [Blue Imp Books](#) are currently seeking well-written young-adult-length novels in the genres of action/adventure, teen romance, science fiction and fantasy, horror, mystery and historical fiction. We are also interested in nonfiction books for young adult readers, especially in the categories of self-help, true stories and memoirs.'

Submission Guidelines as per SterlingHouse website:

- We will accept full manuscripts and proposals that would include a marketing plan in both hard copy format or as an electronic submission. We prefer to receive book proposals as an electronic file and you can submit them to Lisa Burns at [lkeller@sterlinghousepublisher.com](mailto:lkeller@sterlinghousepublisher.com) as she handles acquisitions

for the company. For full consideration, we do prefer to read the whole book and for that please send a hard copy to: SterlingHouse Publisher, Inc. 3468 Babcock Blvd. Pittsburgh, PA 15237.

- Please print out the following Submissions Guide Form when submitting a hard copy. Electronic submissions, you need not include the form.

[Download Our Submission Form](#)

For the full guidelines or more information go to [www.sterlinghousepublisher.com](http://www.sterlinghousepublisher.com)

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

### **GET OFF YOUR ARTS**

Submissions of visual arts, music composition, performance arts including dance, drama or poetry (up to 10 min), film/video and picture books sought. Prizes for all sections (save 12 years and under and Picture Book) are \$500 plus exhibition space/performing space, and many other prizes. The Picture Book section prize is \$1200 towards self publication of the winning work. All submissions must be received at the Glebe CafeChurch office by 5pm on 4 August. Performance section will be adjudicated on August 12. Contact Jodie on 041 387 2351, or Steph and Jennie on 9518 9413 or email [getoffyourarts@cafechurch.org.au](mailto:getoffyourarts@cafechurch.org.au) for details.

### **CBCA NORTHERN SYDNEY EVENT**

Kids: Come Meet Local Authors at Free Afternoon Tea Events

Some of Sydney's best loved, best selling and award winning children's authors will be celebrating Book Week at a series of free afternoon teas for children aged five to 12 at local schools.

Authors involved include John Flanagan, Kate Forsyth, Belinda Murrell, Felicity Pulman, Jeni Mawter, Wendy Blaxland, Karen Robertson, Jill B. Bruce, Lindy Batchelor, Tony Davis, Cassandra Golds and more.

The afternoon teas are being organised by the Children's Book Council of Australia's Northern Sydney sub-branch.

'Kids love meeting the authors who create their favourite books so we've designed these events to bring kids and authors together in a fun and relaxed environment,' said Lindy Batchelor, author and President of the CBCA Northern Sydney sub-branch.

At these unique events, kids will get to listen to authors, ask questions, get autographs and even buy personally-signed copies of books they'll always treasure.

The events will be held at the following locations on the following dates, with the following authors and illustrators:

Balgowlah Heights Public School (Monday, August 17, 3:30-4:30)

3-6: Belinda Murrell, Jeni Mawter

K-2: Kim Gamble, Anna Fienberg

Hosted by: Kate Forsyth

Manly Village Public School (Tuesday, August 18, 3:30-4:30)

3-6: John Flanagan, Kate Forsyth, Felicity Pulman

K-2: Wendy Blaxland, Karen Robertson

Hosted by: Belinda Murrell

Beacon Hill Public School (Thursday, August 20, 3:30-4:30)

3-6: Belinda Murrell, Felicity Pulman, Mark Thomason

K-2: Karen Robertson, Lindy Batchelor, Wendy Blaxland

Hosted by: Jill B. Bruce

Allambie Heights Public School (Tuesday, August 25, 3:30-4:30)

3-6: Jill B. Bruce, Cassandra Golds, Tony Davis

K-2: Lindy Batchelor, Jill B. Bruce

Hosted by: Karen Robertson

For more information contact Karen Robertson, phone: (02) 9976-5182, 0403 071 117, email: [karen@treasureboundbooks.com](mailto:karen@treasureboundbooks.com) or visit [www.belindamurrell.com.au](http://www.belindamurrell.com.au)

## **MELBOURNE WRITERS' FESTIVAL REGIONAL TOUR 2009**

From Monday 24 – Friday 28 August the MWF is taking four of Australia's best writers to five regional and outer-suburban venues.

[Melina Marchetta](#), [Margo Lanagan](#), [David Metzenthen](#) and [Michael Hyde](#) will participate in a range of events in [Swan Hill](#), [Kyneton](#), [Moe](#), [Frankston](#) and [Geelong](#), giving more young readers the chance to quiz them on how and why they write. Some events are free. Download the tour details in pdf format (403kb) by [clicking here](#)

Each venue will feature three events:

10am–10.45am

Fantasy and fiction

Join Melina Marchetta and Margo Lanagan as they explore the boundaries of what's real, and what's not. Do fantasy writers avoid reality or confront it more directly? Are fantasies just a matter of make believe, or do they say serious things?

11.15–12noon

Bringing the past to life

Join David Metzenthen and Michael Hyde in this discussion about the subtle alchemy of combining research, personal experience and real stories into compelling and authentic fiction. How does the past give life to the present?

12.30pm–1.15pm

Characters with a difference

Join Margo Lanagan, Melina Marchetta and David Metzenthen as they discuss the art to creating characters that spring from the pages, how they get under their characters' skin and how it's through character that many elements of a story are revealed.

Please note that bookings must be made through the regional venue, and that ticket prices are different for each venue.

## **ASIALINK LITERATURE PROGRAM**

Residencies are open to writers of fiction, non-fiction, children's writers, poets, playwrights, screenwriters etc.

[Applications for 2010 Residencies close 5pm Friday 4 September 2009](#)

The Asialink Literature Program offers a range of opportunities for writers and the broader community in Australia and Asia to experience each other's cultures and literatures.

The Literature Touring Program has taken high profile Australian authors and book displays into targeted countries as part of a dynamic program to promote and market Australian books and writers in Asia.

- [Literature Residency Program](#)
- [Literature Touring Program](#)
- [Asia Pacific Writers Network](#) - An initiative of Pen Melbourne office supported by Asialink.

For more information contact:

[n.low@asialink.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:n.low@asialink.unimelb.edu.au),

Ph: +61 3 8344 3581 Fax: 61 3 9347 1768

## **SHAUN TAN AT BUNDANON**

During Book Week in August, Bundanon Trust will be hosting acclaimed illustrator and author Shaun Tan. In his illustrated books, such as *The Rabbits*, *The Red Tree*, *The Lost Thing* and *The Arrival*, Shaun deals with social, political and historical subjects through surreal, dream-like imagery. Shaun has also worked as a theatre designer, and worked as a concept artist for the films *Horton Hears a Who* and Pixar's *WALL-E*. He is currently directing a short film with Passion Pictures Australia; his most recently published book is *Tales from Outer Suburbia*.

Shaun will be presenting two informative and entertaining sessions:

Upper primary students: Monday 24 August at 11am

Lower secondary students: Monday 24 August at 1pm

This year Bundanon has been successful in gaining funding from Arts NSW to present their Book Week program and will provide transport for eight schools to this event. If you are interested in attending Book Week at Bundanon and taking up this offer of transport please contact Education Manager Mary Preece on [mary@bundanon.com.au](mailto:mary@bundanon.com.au) as soon as possible as this offer of free transport is limited to eight schools.

## **FESTIVALS AND CONFERENCES**

### **BYRON BAY WRITERS' FESTIVAL 2009**

7-9 August

The 2009 line-up in the Kids' Marquee at the Byron Bay Writers' Festival on 8 August includes Wendy Harmer, Gretel Killeen, Nick Earls, Tristan Bancks and *Tashi* author, Anna Fienberg. Tickets are \$25 or \$20 for young Northern Rivers Writers' Centre members. Accompanying adult passes are available. Check the [website](#) to find all the latest or phone 02 6685 6262.

### **THE AIREYS FESTIVAL OF WORDS (VIC)**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Aireys festival of Words will be held on 15-16 August. Events featuring writers and illustrators for children and young adults are on Saturday 15 August. Creators include Alison Lester, Robert Ingpen, Maureen McCarthy, Chrissie Keighery and editor, Hilary Rogers will also present. Most events are free but bookings are wise. For more information go to [www.aireysinlet.com.au/words](http://www.aireysinlet.com.au/words)

### **MELBOURNE WRITERS' FESTIVAL (VIC)**

The Melbourne Writers' Festival runs from 21 August -30 August. The program has been released and is available on the MWF website. [www.mwf.com.au](http://www.mwf.com.au)

Over 10,000 students and teachers took part in the 2008 MWF Schools Program and already many events for 2009 are beginning to sell out. If you're interested in attending, book now to ensure that your students don't miss out. For those students and schools that need a little help attending the festival, the MWF is able to offer:

- A 100% travel subsidy to attend the MWF
- Free events offered each day

- All other events at the low cost of \$6 per student  
Places are limited for all FREE events and programs. [More info and bookings for the Schools Program](#)

*Individual children and adults are also welcome to book for sessions.*

### **IPSWICH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE FESTIVAL (QLD)**

Bookings can now be made for the Ipswich Festival of Children's Literature. The weekend sessions on 5–6 September are designed for teachers, teacher-librarians, librarians, emerging writers and illustrators, readers and anyone with an interest in children's literature. It is an opportunity to mingle with the writers and illustrators on an informal basis. Sessions will be both hands on and presentation style. Some sessions are limited in number so get your bookings in early to ensure a place. On site accommodation and meals are available. A formal dinner will be held on the Saturday night with entertainment by some of the authors and illustrators which include Jan Ormerod, David Miller, Terry Denton, Ann James and Elise Hurst. For more information please contact Jenny Stubbs Phone 0409 266 786 (9am-3pm) or email [jstubbs@eq.edu.au](mailto:jstubbs@eq.edu.au) Programme and booking information is available online at <http://www.learningplace.com.au/sc/ipswich/idthn> Look under Literature Festival in the menu.

### **CYA CONFERENCE (QLD)**

The fourth CYA Later Alligator Children's and Young Adult (CYA) Writers & Illustrators Conference will be held on 12 September in partnership with the Brisbane Writers' Festival.

This conference is aimed as professional development for new and established writers and illustrators of Children's and Young Adult literature. Masterclasses will be conducted by Jackie French, Paul Collins, Colin Thompson, Meredith Costain, Mark Guthrie, Patrick J. Jones, Peter Carnavas and international author Brian Falkner. Workshops will be presented by Pamela Rushby, Brian Tucker (CPA Australia), Scott Monk, Jenny Mounfield, Shane Thamm, Dee White, Kathryn Apel and Rev Dr Kim Miller.

Manuscript assessments/pitches can be made to Leonie Tyle (Woolshed Press, Random House), Kristina Schulz (UQP), Paul Collins (Ford Street Publishing) and Jacinta di Mase (Jacinta di Mase Management.)

Bookings are essential. Conference Cost: \$195 (concessions: \$170)  
Agent/Editor Sessions: \$85 (no concessions)

Venue: QUT Creative Industries Precinct, Kelvin Grove  
Telephone: Tina (07) 3408 7885 or Ally (07) 5547 7878  
Email: [info@cyaconference.com](mailto:info@cyaconference.com)

CYA Conference has opened pre-bookings. This year you can pay online by PayPal. Arrangements to pay off conference fees before 1 September are available. For more information go to [www.cyaconference.com](http://www.cyaconference.com)

## **BENDIGO WRITERS COUNCIL SEPTEMBER WRITERS FESTIVAL (VIC)**

The Bendigo Writers Council Festival runs from Friday 25 September to Sunday 27 September. Many sessions will be presented by writers for children including Cate Kennedy, Sharon Greenaway and Garry Disher. The full program is as follows:

Cate Kennedy

*Friday 25th September 6pm to 9pm. Venue - National Hotel, The Pearl Room, Cost - \$55*

A three-course dinner in The Pearl Room at the National Hotel will be followed by a talk with Cate Kennedy. Cate will be discussing her journey as a writer and brings a wealth of experience. Share in her knowledge of time spent writing scripts for youth drama groups and directing their plays, to working in improvisational comedy workshops in London.

Paddy O'Reilly

*Saturday 26th September 9:30am to 12noon. Venue - Best Employment, St Andrews Ave Cost - \$45*

Paddy loves the short story form and runs inspirational workshops to help participants discover the stories that only they can write. Morning tea provided

Robert Greenberg

*Saturday 26th September 2pm to 4:30pm. Venue - Best Employment, St Andrews Ave Cost - \$45*

Robert loves inspiring children to write their own stories. From explaining how to use the 'yuk factor' in their own writing, to getting children to think in pictures, Robert's approach is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Possible topics include: - The Yuk Factor and how to use it in your writing - Brainstorming to get ideas. Afternoon tea provided.

Garry Disher

*Sunday 26th September 9:30am to 12noon. Venue - Best Employment, St Andrews Ave Cost - \$50*

Garry Disher is one of Australia's most successful writers, publishing over 35 books in a range of genres. Garry has been quoted as saying, 'I wear three fiction-writing hats - literary, crime and children's - but in my head the three are indistinguishable from each other in terms of worth, writing craft and hard work.' Morning tea provided.

Garry Disher & Panel

*Sunday 26th September 2pm to 4:30 pm. Venue - Best Employment, St Andrews Ave Cost - \$50*

Sunday afternoon will be a 2pm start for our panel of speakers - Garry Disher, Ian Irvine, Sharon Greenaway, John Holton, John Charalambous and Karen Masman. The topic under discussion will be '*Writing for Change: How does 'creative thinking' advocate writing for: therapy, socio political change, arts awareness?*' Afternoon tea provided.

Cost:

You may pay for each session separately or as a total cost the weekend is \$245. If you book for the full weekend of events you can save \$45 and pay only \$200. A 10 per cent discount will apply for group bookings over four people. If you wish to pay your event fees over the next few months it can be done by direct deposit into the BWC account.

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

Secretary Karen West 5443 3469 or 0438 514 274  
Email [bendigowriters@optusnet.com.au](mailto:bendigowriters@optusnet.com.au)  
Postal PO Box 829, Bendigo Mail Centre, Victoria, 3552  
All bookings and payments are to be received by September 11<sup>th</sup> 2009.

## **COMPETITIONS AND AWARDS**

### **BUZZ WORDS WINNER**

Last issue readers were invited to submit any text (no longer than 250 words) suitable for a reader up to the age of 17 years. The entry judged to be the most publishable was submitted by Tracey Slater who wins the following prize of a pack of six books: *She's with the Band* by Georgia Clark (Allen & Unwin), *Scarlett* by Cathy Cassidy (Puffin), *My Story: Plagues and Federation, A Diary of Kitty Barnes* by Vashti Farrer (Scholastic Australia), *Crossing the Line* by Dianne Bates (Ford Street), *The Australian Writers' Marketplace 2006*, *Revision: How to Find and Fix What isn't Working in your Story* by Kit Read (Writers' Digest). Congratulations Tracey.

### **SHORT STORY COMPETITION**

Inaugural competition for Central Victorian Writers (short stories) 2009 Entry fee: \$10, closing date 30th August 2009, 5,000 to 10,000 words, theme: story with a Central Victorian setting, 1st prize \$500 and to be published in a collection. Download entry form & rules: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bcpinc/index.html>

### **DISCOVERING NEW MYSTERIES COMPETITION**

Discovering New Mysteries is now accepting submissions of original plays, screenplays, teleplays, and short stories for both adult and youth audiences. Deadline for submissions is 30 August 2009. A panel of professional readers will blindly review the submissions and narrow the field to the final mysteries, who-dunnits, cops-n-robbers, courtroom dramas, thrillers, suspense or adventures. The festival finalists will be personally notified by January 2010 with national press coverage of the finalists' performances to be released shortly thereafter. There is no entry fee.

Best new work: \$10,000 prize

Most promising new writer: \$5,000 prize

Outstanding Screenplay or Teleplay: \$2,500 prize  
Best work for young adults (ages 12-18): \$1,000  
Best short mystery play (1-Act plays, short screenplay, short story): \$1,000  
For details: [http://www.newmysteries.org/submission\\_guidelines/](http://www.newmysteries.org/submission_guidelines/)

### **TOM HOWARD/JOHN H. REID POETRY CONTEST**

*Postmark Deadline: September 30*

This contest seeks poems in any style, theme or genre. Both published and unpublished poems are welcome. Prizes of \$2,000, \$1,000, \$500 and \$250 will be awarded, plus five High Distinction awards of \$200 each and six Most Highly Commended Awards of \$100 each. The entry fee is \$7 for every 25 lines you submit. Submit online or by mail. Early submission encouraged. This contest is sponsored by Tom Howard Books and assisted by Winning Writers. Judges: John H. Reid and Dee C. Konrad. [See the complete guidelines and past winners.](#)

### **IP PICKS**

IP Picks is a national writing competition for unpublished manuscripts. The competition is open to citizens and residents of New Zealand and Australia. IP Picks Awards provide guaranteed royalty publication to the best book-length manuscript in four categories: Best Fiction, Best Creative Non-fiction, Best Poetry, Best First Book.

New this year are awards of 20 hours of free mentoring services to the winners in each category and 10 hours of free mentoring for the Highly Commended entrants but there is no guarantee of publication.

The Fiction category is for manuscripts up to 80,000 words and can include short story collections, short novels and novels written for young adults and adults. Any form of fiction is eligible, including science fiction and fantasy.

Creative Non-fiction is based on real-life experience and research, but written with literary flair. Biographies, memoirs, travel literature, histories and inspirational self-help books are examples.

The Poetry category is for complete collections in any sub-genre,

including verse novels, verse plays, special forms such as haiku, or a mixture of forms.

The Best First Book can be in any genre (Young Adult and older), but the author must not have previously had a book-length manuscript published by a recognised national publisher. Authors who have only self-published are eligible to enter this category.

#### Deadlines and Fees

IP Picks opens on 1 October and closes on 1 December. Entry packages must include

- two printed copies and one digital (on CD or floppy disk) copy of the entry
- a completed entry form
- the applicable fee

There is \$63 per entry reading fee which includes an IP title of your choice. You may enter a single manuscript in two categories, but you have to pay two entry fees. At the time of submission you may also ask to have a short report written on the publishability of your manuscript (\$189 or \$160 concession).

Download the required Conditions and Entry form in [Word format](#) or as a [pdf file](#) for further details on the submission procedure and to enter the competition. [http://www.ipoz.biz/IP/IP\\_picks.htm](http://www.ipoz.biz/IP/IP_picks.htm)

#### **TOM HOWARD/JOHN H. REID SHORT STORY CONTEST**

*Postmark Deadline: March 31, 2010*

Prizes of \$3,000, \$1,000, \$400 and \$250 will be awarded, plus six Most Highly Commended Awards of \$150 each. Submit any type of short story, essay or other work of prose, up to 5,000 words. You may submit work that has been published or won prizes elsewhere, as long as you own the online publication rights. Entry fee is \$15. Submit online or by mail. [See the complete guidelines and past winners.](#)

#### ***IN ECSTASY* WINS FAMILY THERAPISTS' AWARD**

Western Australian author Kate McCaffrey has won the Australian Family Therapists' Award for Children's Literature in the Older Readers Category with her YA adult novel *In Ecstasy*. It is the second time McCaffrey's work has been recognised by the

Australian and New Zealand Family Therapists' Association. In 2006, *Destroying Avalon* was highly commended.

## **WRITING COURSES/WORKSHOPS**

### **WRITING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS (NSW)**

The NSW Writers' Centre is offering ASA members discount rates for this upcoming workshop:

Writing for Children and Young Adults, with Jeni Mawter  
7 x Sunday mornings: 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 August; 6, 13 September,  
10am - 1pm ASA Members \$385 (Full price \$455)

This course will give an overview of writing, from dialogue and point of view, to plot, setting, and character construction. You will discover how to find the right voice for a YA novel. Works in progress are welcome.

Jeni Mawter (J.A. Mawter) is the best-selling author of the hilarious 'So' series: *So Gross!*, *So Feral!*, *So Sick!*, *So Festy!*, *So Grotty!* and *So Stinky!* (HarperCollins) as well as the Freewheelers series: *Unleashed!*, *Launched!* and *Extreme!* (HarperCollins). She has also published fiction, non-fiction, poetry and verse narrative for the education market. Jeni's enthusiasm for words and books is infectious. She can be found at [www.jenimawter.com](http://www.jenimawter.com)

For more information about the Course, go here:

<http://tinyurl.com/nlcfyt> Register by phone at the NSW Writers' Centre (02 9555 9757) or online here: <http://tinyurl.com/ywkgrm> (mention the 'ASA member offer').

### **MAGIC AND FANTASY - EXPLORING THE 'OTHERWORLD'**

Workshop with Felicity Pulman Sunday 2 August, 10am - 4pm  
NSW Writers Centre, Sydney. Members are \$99, Members' Concession \$85, Non-Members \$125. Bring lunch and writing materials. Morning and afternoon tea provided. Bookings and enquiries: (02) 9555 9757 or email: [workshops@nswwriterscentre.org.au](mailto:workshops@nswwriterscentre.org.au)

Wish you were JK Rowling? Here's your chance to outgun Harry Potter with a hands-on workshop to help you write your way into

the fantasy world you've always dreamed of creating. Explore ideas for the hero(ine)'s journey, the quest for a boon and the role of magic. You'll look at creating characters in 'otherworld' settings. The who, what, where, how, when and why of writing a fantasy will be answered in a series of fun exercises designed to give you a good overview of the various sub-genres of fantasy, along with several story plans and a notebook full of ideas. We will also cover preparing a manuscript for submission, and publishers and markets for fantasy writing.

Felicity Pulman's published novels for children and teenagers include her medieval crime series (*The Janna Mysteries*) and the award-winning time-slip fantasies (the *Shalott* trilogy and *Ghost Boy*.) She majored in Creative Writing for her BA Communications degree (UTS) and has an MA in Children's Literature from Macquarie University.

### **CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOKS (VIC)**

Workshop with Sally Rippin (Introductory and Intermediate)  
Saturday 8 August 2009 - Sunday 9 August 2009 (Booking deadline: 3 August 2009) Members \$200, Concession members \$180, Non-members \$260

Sally will cover character, story and good openings, writing and illustrating tips, learning to plot visually, layout, design, the role of the illustrator, knowing your audience, approaching a publisher, and contacts and assessment services. Students are encouraged to bring along their favourite picture books, ideas or previously written texts and/or art folios.

Sally Rippin is an award-winning children's author and illustrator. She has had over twenty books published from baby board books through to Young Adult novels. Currently she teaches Writing for Children at RMIT and mentors for the Australian Society of Authors. Visit: [www.sallyrippin.com](http://www.sallyrippin.com)

For more information go to <http://www.vwc.org.au/what-s-on/event/children-s-picture-books/VWC>

## **WRITING WORKSHOP WITH BELINDA MURRELL (NSW)**

Belinda Murrell, author of *The Sun Sword Trilogy* and most recently, *The Locket of Dreams*, will be conducting a workshop on Plotting and Characterisation in conjunction with the Manly & Peninsula FAW. Details are as follows:

Time: 2pm to 4pm

Date: Saturday, 8 August 2009

Venue: Warringah Mall Library, Warringah Mall Shopping Centre, Pittwater Road, Brookvale (Sydney, NSW).

Cost: Members: \$5, Visitors: \$10

For bookings, email Aleesah Darlison at [aleesah@bigpond.net.au](mailto:aleesah@bigpond.net.au)

## **SELF-PUBLISHING - HOW TO DO IT (NSW)**

This seminar is presented by Geoff Bartlett and will help you determine if self-publishing is right for you.

It will cover:

- self-publishing versus commercial publishing
- the steps to successful self-publishing
- the importance of editing and layout
- how to get your book printed
- marketing and distributing your book
- what's it all going to cost?

This seminar is held at the Sydney Writers' Centre, Wednesday 12 August 6.30pm - 8.30pm. Fee: \$75 (includes GST).

<http://www.sydneywriterscentre.com.au/self-publishing.htm>

## **WRITING ON THE WEB (VIC)**

Blogs, forums, posts and wikis present opportunities for writing on the web. Learn basic skills in social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, and how to share your knowledge online!

Time: Wednesday 12 August, 10.30am–12.30pm

Venue: Meet in front foyer of State Library of Victoria

Bookings: 03 8664 7099 or [bookings@slv.vic.gov.au](mailto:bookings@slv.vic.gov.au)

Free

## **WRITING BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS (NSW)**

This course is presented by [Judith Ridge](#). Judith has worked with the Children's Book Council, as an editor at ABC Children's Books

and the NSW School Magazine and freelances as an editor for Random House. For the past two years, Judith has taught "Writing for Children" at the University of Sydney MA in Creative Writing. This course in Writing Books for Children and Young Adults will cover:

- How to get started
- Finding the right voice
- Creating characters and stories young readers will enjoy
- Common assumptions about writing for children and about young readers
- Understanding the children's publishing market

The course will focus on longer fiction, although picture books will also be touched upon.

This seminar is held at the Sydney Writers' Centre. Evening classes begin Tuesday 18 August for five weeks, 6.30pm-8.30pm.

Course fee: \$395

<http://www.sydneywriterscentre.com.au/writingchildrensbooks.htm>

### **WRITING HISTORY**

with Christopher Cheng (09WCHEN3) Sunday 16 August, 10am - 4pm NSW Writers' Centre, Sydney Members \$99, Members' Concession \$85, Non-Members \$125

This workshop is suitable for anybody who is interested in researching and writing history, from the beginner to the experienced writer, whether you're interested in local history, family history, the history of people, places, or things.

[workshops@nswwriterscentre.org.au](mailto:workshops@nswwriterscentre.org.au)

### **BUILD YOUR OWN WEBSITE - A BEGINNER'S GUIDE (VIC)**

The aim of the course is to help you identify the most appropriate forum for your web presence and get you started building your site.

Topics covered include:

- Web options: what's out there
- What is the difference between a website and a blog?
- Identifying the best medium for your needs
- Time constraints and commitment: how this affects your site

- What to think about when building a website
- How to sell yourself
- Who is your audience?
- Introduction to WordPress
- Getting started on building your own website
- Troubleshooting

When: Saturday, 22 August 2009, 10 am to 4 pm

Where: CAE, 253 Flinders Lane, Melbourne

Cost: Members \$150, non-members \$200

Enquiries: [training@socedvic.org](mailto:training@socedvic.org)

## **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Dear Vicki,

In the wake of the media's uneven coverage on the PIR debate, a group of authors has banded together to create a blog that tells the 'real' story on this issue.

<http://savingaussiebooks.wordpress.com> is a new website offering easy to understand information about the risk to Australian books and the publishing industry. The site also provides links, comments and access to practical advice about who to lobby and how to contact them. It also tells you how you can write letters to the editors - and get your concerns out to the general community.

Note: the site is constantly being updated so if you have any positive ideas to share, email [sherylqwyther@optusnet.com.au](mailto:sherylqwyther@optusnet.com.au) (administrator)

The site also has regular guest bloggers willing to put their names to blog entries - and hopefully not just authors because there are many other professions and trades who will be affected by this change of law.

Please feel free to visit our site

<http://savingaussiebooks.wordpress.com> and leave your comments.

Dee White

Children's and YA author

## ACHIEVEMENTS

### DIANNE (DI) BATES

Di's latest YA novel, *Crossing the Line* (Ford Street) recently sold to Germany has now been made recommended reading by the Australian Family Therapy Association. Meanwhile, Di has sold articles and stories to the Teachers4Teachers' Yellow Box, a market announced in a past issue of *Buzz Words*.

### GEORGE IVANOFF [www.georgeivanoff.com.au](http://www.georgeivanoff.com.au)

George is very excited to announce the launch of the promotional website for his new book, *Gamers' Quest* — a science fiction adventure for young teens. Check out:

<http://www.gamersquestbook.com>

### VICKI STANTON

Vicki's short story *Charmed* has won the Gold Coast Writers' Association Adult Literary Competition for Children's Story. Her short story *We're Good* received a special mention in the 2009 Nairda Lyne Award.

## PUBLISHER PROFILE

### IP KIDZ

IP Kidz is the newest imprint of IP (Interactive Publications Pty Ltd), a Brisbane based print and digital publishing house. IP Kidz began in 2007 with the publication of *Real Guns*, a picture book written by IP Director David P Reiter and illustrated by Irish artist Patrick J Murphy. IP Kidz aims to 'address important social issues in an educational and entertaining rather than a preachy way.'

IP claims to be Australia's leading publisher of literary digital material and prefers to 'multi-version' titles, forming partnerships with multimedia companies to produce audio, multimedia and even film versions of print titles. IP has also been approached by multimedia companies to essentially co-publish print versions to precede digital works such as films. This approach allows IP to promote and distribute their titles more effectively to a global market.

IP's marketing strategy in the short term is to establish a profile with schools, libraries and bookshops with high quality print material. IP Kidz plans to publish 6-8 titles per year and to invest as much energy as possible into marketing and promoting those titles to ensure their success in a difficult market.

IP employs eight staff, mostly on a part-time basis. The Director makes the final decisions on what gets published in consultation with the editorial board. Anna Bartlett is Children's Titles editor and recommends to the Director. Various staff support the imprint in the promotions and marketing of its titles.

Unsolicited manuscripts are considered but most titles come from established authors and illustrators, 'several of whom have come to us because they have become disillusioned with "mainstream publishers" and are impressed by our collaborative methods of working with authors and illustrators,' says Reiter. Creators published or in the process of publishing works with IP Kidz include Libby Hathorn, Hazel Edwards, Mark Carthew, Edel Wignell, Di Bates, Marjory Gardner, Goldie Alexander and Matt Ottley. There is a focus on Australian and New Zealand authors and illustrators although IP Kidz' list includes some titles by international creators.

There is a focus on titles for primary through YA level in a range of formats including picture books, non-fiction works and novels. At this stage IP Kidz does not publish educational texts. Reiter says that 'the key ingredients are evocative and dynamic illustrations in picture books and engaging and original stories, with a social message, for our junior novels.'

Writers may pitch ideas rather than finished work but IP would not contract them at that stage. Authors should initially query IP Kidz by [email](#) with a creative bio, a synopsis of the work and a representative sample. For picture books, send the complete work in storyboard layout (where the text is divided by page or spread). The work can be in a Word, InDesign, QuarkXpress or Acrobat pdf attachment, with any images optimised for screen viewing.

Queries are free, but if IP thinks work shows promise a reader's report is requested requiring the author to pay a fee of \$115 for a picture book or \$210 for novels and non-fiction books. The reader's reports function as short assessments, providing two to four pages of constructive commentary on the strengths and weaknesses of the manuscript and a view of its readiness for publication. IP maintains a database of freelance readers who are published authors, editors or experienced reviewers of work for children. Authors receive the reader's report whether or not publication is offered. IP regards reader's reports as a 'developmental tool' for emerging authors and as a way to keep their doors open to unsolicited manuscripts. Published authors may be exempt from the reader's fee.

Despite all of IP's cutting edge means of promotion Reiter still considers word of mouth to be the best promotional tool around. He invites individuals, teachers and librarians to have a look at IP Kidz titles, and, if they like what they see, asks them to encourage their schools and libraries to buy them. For more information on the imprint, go to [http://ipoz.biz/IP\\_Kidz/Kidz.htm](http://ipoz.biz/IP_Kidz/Kidz.htm)

Post: Treetop Studio, 9 Kuhler Court, Carindale, Queensland, Australia 4152.

Telephone: +61 7 3324 9319

Fax: +61 7 3324 9319

## **GUEST PROFILE**

### **ADELE WALSH: AUSTRALIAN YA BOOK BLOGGER**

*Early in 2009, Adele Walsh established Persnickety Snark, a blog which is quickly gaining many fans. Author Dianne (Di) Bates interviews Adele:*

#### *What is Persnickety Snark?*

Persnickety Snark is a Young Adult Literature review blog. I review any YA novel regardless of origin, genre or author. I decided that the feature of my blog would be a focus on Australian authors and so far I have been very lucky. Melina Marchetta, Simone Howell, Mo Johnson and Karen Tayleur have all contributed to my blog. My main feature would be my Author Spotlight Week where an author contributes answers to my

Reader's Snapshot questionnaire, answers questions about their most recent release and writes a guest blog. I try and review Australian authors as a priority and raise awareness of them within the YA blogosphere.

### *Why did you set it up?*

Persnickety Snark was a blog that I created to review YA literature with a specific Australian bent. My initial motivation was to source review copies from Australian publishers to increase the meagre library at my school. My idea was that through reading and reviewing YA novels, I could give my students a larger quantity of quality books to read. I love reading YA and I always have. I am older than the target demographic but there are so many great stories on offer.

It's a completely solo effort as this point. In the beginning I had some friends contribute guest reviews just to bolster my review archive. I have a former student waiting for me to send him some books at this moment so he can write some reviews for me, too. The original plan for the students from my largely ESL class to review the books on Persnickety Snark but that has evolved into my class slowly establishing their own blog (Wanted: Read or Alive). They are currently delving into the words of SE Hinton with *The Outsiders*.

### *Where did you get the name Persnickety Snark from?*

Well the name made an impact! One librarian in the USA listed it as the blog title that she most envies as she did not come up with it herself, which is hysterical. Persnickety has always been a favourite word of mine, especially as I can be a bit of a snob (particularly towards sci-fi) at times. Snark is a word that combines 'snide' and 'remark' and on occasion I can be snarky with the best of them. They sound great together plus there's an added bonus in them sounding a little like a Wolverine sound effect in the comics. In all honesty, it isn't all that representative of my reviews. Though I give my honest opinion, I haven't read too many books that require me to unsheath the snark.

### *How long did it take you to get it up and running?*

It's been running since 9 January, 2009. So not long at all. I had a clear plan and I approached it rather methodically. I looked at a

large group of blogs and decided what features I liked. Then I wrote reviews for all the YA books that I had in my possession and posted them – that turned out to be around 15-20 in the first fortnight. I wrote emails to publishers and explained what I was doing, hyperlinked to the blog and used stats from the previous blog and pod-casting to show what I was capable of in terms of gaining an audience.

*Have you had much response to it, and along what lines?*

I got an almost immediate response from some authors as I was rather proactive. I would email those with email addresses on their sites and link to the review of their book (if it were positive). Once publishers were interested I was able to contact some authors through their representation. I have found Australian authors to be really supportive and appreciative of having some attention shone their way. I am just happy to bring new reader's attention to their work.

In terms of the general blogging readership I was very lucky. My blog is a particularly bright shade of green (think Kermit) and I am sure it burns into people's retinas. The name helps too but mostly I think people respond to my reviews and the new authors I bring their attention to.

Judith (Ridge) from Misrule mentioned me on one of her posts and that was invaluable. A whole new group of people were introduced to my blog through that one post. The American YA blogging scene is huge, very vocal and very active, so I think she wanted to point out some local bloggers. I was able to then to mention two other Aussie YA bloggers, Allie and Lisa who do a phenomenal job juggling blogging and attending school. (Side note - we have established a blog together called the [Aussie YA Alliance](#) to push Australian YA further through reviews, interviews, a book club and other Australian focused features.)

*Why should a children's author have a blog site, as opposed to a website? Which is most important and why?*

I think it's important to have both. The website provides a great avenue for young people to see your book list, find your contact details, view FAQ, read a biography and other general aspects. Sandy Fussell used her IT knowledge to create a great site for her

Samurai Kids series; it's interactive, fun and the kids are repeat visitors.

The blog allows for a reader to have more personal access to an author. How they are progressing in their drafts, what they thought of the episode of *Life of Mars*, a book they want to recommend. It allows your readers to form a personal connection to you. There are some great blogs that I read regularly, even before I read the author's work so it can create a larger readership if you regularly post. It's the regular posting author/bloggers that draw a crowd as well as some honesty and humour.

Sarah Dessen has been blogging for years and readers have read about three separate books being published, many book tours and the birth of her daughter. John Green blogs and blogs and his readers are particularly enthusiastic. Simmone Howell has a beautiful website and her blog always makes me laugh. James Roy is a great read; I loved his rant on overpriced food at the cricket. But I think the stand-out in Australian blogging (in what I have seen so far) would have to be Justine Larbalestier, who is a blogging machine. Her January series of blogs on the ins and outs of writing was informative, entertaining and characteristically brilliant.

If you are only going to offer one, I would attempt the blog. I have become acquainted with many authors via their blog entries and their responses to my comments. I think this is an area where Australian authors could explore more.

### *Do you have to spend much time updating your blog?*

I try to post everyday and aim to post three reviews a week. The blog is very time-consuming but I love it. I spend a lot of time fostering relationships with authors, securing copies of overseas novels, organising author spotlights, formulating interview questions, reading the books, writing the reviews and taking part in many of the YA weekly memes. I have resisted competitions so far as I want people to visit for the content and that seems to be working.

I edit and produce a fortnightly YA pod-cast called The Read Carpet. I have gathered bloggers from across the globe and taught

them some pod-casting basics. They record five minute segments and I edit them all together (very time consuming) to make it one cohesive audio pod-cast. We've only just begun but authors across the world have been terrifically supportive. I host a segment called The Aussification Experience and I talk about Aussie YA authors. You can guess who was the topic of my first segment!

*What is your own background with regards to children's books?*

I have always been a reader. My mother modelled it from an early age and I was reading novels at a very young age. I would always prefer to read on the weekend over anything else. In terms of Australian YA though, Melina Marchetta blew my mind when I read *Looking for Alibrandi* at approximately twelve years old. You couldn't stop me after that!

When I studied education at university, I chose Children's Literature as my sub-major. I loved it and we covered everything from the classics, picture books, Australian works, pop culture and YA. I missed it when I graduated.

I am in my late 20s now and still read voraciously; it's just a little more productive now. I would love to write a book eventually, I have been percolating on an idea for awhile. I have written a few short pieces and gotten a good response but I write more for enjoyment. I teach year eight English at the moment and am considering studying in the librarianship field. I love the concept of weaving ICT and literacy together and that's what basically got me started on this journey.

*Do you know many other people in the Australia and/or overseas' children's book industry?*

I have made an immediate connection with some authors who are about to debut - Beth Fantaskey (*Jessica's Guide to Dating on the Dark Side* - No Aust. Deal), Gayle Forman (*If I Stay* - Random House), Karen Mahoney (UK) and Alexa Young (*Frenemies* - Random House). It was hilarious when I found myself mid conversation with Alexa discussing Alf-vocab from *Home and Away*, despite her being American. *Veronica Mars*, *Mad Men* and reality television seem to be unifying topics of conversation too. I have ongoing twitter conversations with Courtney Summers

(*Cracked Up to Be* - No Aust. Deal) who's a great debut author too.

In the YA blogosphere, people know that I am also a Sarah Dessen's blogger but I don't tend to use that relationship to any degree. I just happen to have a blog that's solely about her work and as such she's allowed me to interview her. That is an opportunity she doesn't offer all that frequently to others, lucky me!

I am a rabid supporter of Melina Marchetta so people seem to associate her to me in the community also. Melina's been lovely despite my constant gushing over her work.

In terms of here in Australia, Simmone Howell and Sue Lawson were the first authors to support me. I have found most of the Australian publishers to be super-supportive, in particular Erin over at Penguin, Sarah at Allen and Unwin, and Yae and Sarana at Random House. Walker Books and Black Dog Books have also been amazing. 'Book nerds' as I choose to affectionately call us, tend to have many pop culture finds in common and so it's very easy to develop camaraderie with these people that are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and eager to know what you are up to.

*What are you five most favourite children's books?*

I am going to make this my five favourite YA books in no particular order:

- 1 - *Saving Francesca* (Melina Marchetta)
- 2 - *If I Stay* (Gayle Forman)
- 3 - *Looking for Alaska* (John Green)
- 4 - *On the Jellicoe Road* (Melina Marchetta)
- 5 - *Alanna* (Tamora Pierce)

(I am sure if you ask me tomorrow that list will change).

## **WRITERS' QUOTES**

'I wanted the feeling of romance and the sense of wonder I had known as a kid. I wanted the world to be what they had promised me it was going to be--instead of the tawdry, lousy, fouled-up mess it is.' Robert Heinlein, *Glory Road*

'There's no magic formula. To become a competent writer, you write until you start to sound like you, and then you keep on writing. Finish things you start. Get better.' Neil Gaiman

'When I face the desolate possibility of writing 500 words, a sick sense of failure falls on me and I know I can never do it. This happens every time. Then gradually I write one page and then another. One day's work is all I can permit myself to contemplate and I eliminate the possibility of ever finishing.' John Steinbeck

## **USEFUL BOOKS/WEBSITES**

Especially useful for authors writing for the education market is *Children's Writer's Word Book*, by Alijandra Mogilner & Tayopa Mogilner, Writer's Digest Books, 2006

[FanStory.com](http://FanStory.com) has reviews, writing contests, and writers can post their own writing to be critiqued. There are different levels of membership with varying benefits and costs.

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

### **Board Books**

*Mummy's little zoo babies* and *Mummy's little farm babies* (black dog books)

HB RRP \$9.99

Reviewed by Vicki Stanton

These two delightful titles in a durable board format are the perfect introduction to animals for the very young. Engaging photos of a range of animals are accompanied by amusing text that is a far cry from the bland 'this is a chick' style of animal book of the past. Each photograph is captioned with little pearls of wisdom on themes such as friendship and I can't go past the tiger on the front cover of *Zoo babies* and the llamas in *Farm babies* are hilarious. At \$9.99 each these books are good value.

## **Picture Books**

*My mum's got cancer* by Dr Lucy Blunt, illustrated by her daughter Eloise Osborn (Jane Curry Publishing)

RRP \$19.95

Reviewed by Lindy Batchelor

I was privileged to attend the launch of this book at *Lindfield Bookshop*. As a children's bookseller this is exactly the type of book that is a pleasure to keep on our "issues" shelf. We know it will be such a worthwhile resource for many people who follow a similar journey to the one Lucy has experienced.

The first thing most poor mums worry about when a cancer diagnosis occurs is what will they tell the children – and also how the rest of the family will be affected by their treatment and illness. This attractive picture book provides well-researched information and practical advice for parents and children. It will form a great basis for discussions about the treatment and side effects of cancer.

Dr Lucy Blunt is a practising Clinical Psychologist so her experience lends great reliability to the clear information presented. The drawings by her own daughter are warm, consistent and child friendly and will form a good source for discussion amongst families. There is plenty of adult information contained in the book too, and Petrea King (cancer survivor and public speaker) and Fran Boyle's (oncologist) comments are extremely valuable.

The various 'text boxes' throughout the book have useful and interesting facts in them that help demystify this disease for young children. It is a great asset in our bookshop and it would be a desirable book to keep in homes, schools and public libraries. It could also be a good resource for assignments and for people interested in the body and medicine as future careers.

## **JUNIOR READERS**

*Nit Boy: Lift Off!* and *Nit Boy: Bug Out!* by Tristan Bancks, illustrated by Heath McKenzie (Laguna Bay Publishing)

PB RRP \$14.95

Reviewed by Lindy Batchelor

These well presented novels are on a topic only too close to many people's lives at schools – NITS! Every family has no doubt been exposed to these common school creatures (23% of primary school students have), and had to deal with them in some form or another. Good descriptions of nits make an interesting introduction to the books.

These are the stories of two 'blood brothers' – a boy called Ned and his head louse Lewis. Quite funny discussion takes place involving Ned and his long history of nits – will he shave his head completely? The reader also gets to hear the situation from Lewis, the actual nit, as well. The quick nit and flea quiz in the back of each book poses some interesting questions for fact finding readers.

Bancks has a background as an actor, filmmaker, presenter and writer. His sense of humour will appeal to young readers of these books and the discussions about nits, head shaving and orange ear goo will make for interesting family discussions.

The illustrations by Heath McKenzie add interest and appeal to the books with their expressive humour and fun. Never before have nits looked so friendly and deserving of sympathy. You will certainly know much more about nits, lymphs and lice after reading these two entertaining stories.

*Queste: Septimus Heap Book 4* by Angie Sage (Bloomsbury)

PB RRP \$16.99

Reviewed by Jenny Sharp [www.myworldofwords.com](http://www.myworldofwords.com)

The fourth tale of *Septimus Heap* delivers loads of action, adventure, and most of all, magic. In this tale, Nicko and Snorri are stuck in the past, and Jenna is determined to rescue them. However, the path home is a tricky one: Nicko and Snorri must find their way to the mysterious House of Foryx, 'the place where all Times do meet.' Using the notes and lists that Nicko has left behind, Septimus and Jenna discover what Nicko and Snorri are attempting.

Jenna and Septimus hope that their appearance might allow Nicko and Snorri to return home to their correct Time. However, it's not that simple. Once they are in the House of Foryx, the matter becomes much more complicated. They must wait for someone from their own Time to enter before they will be able to leave and return home.

Meanwhile Merrin has grown tired of taking orders from Simon, so he unleashes Darke Magyk in his determination to take revenge on Septimus. He uses the pernicious ghost of Tertius Fume, to send Septimus, against his will, on a Queste from which no apprentice wizard has ever returned.

Sage's clever wit and captivating characters, keep the reader entertained. Queste is filled with nonstop action, wit, intelligence and adventure as Septimus continues his journey of Magykal self-discovery.

*Eye of the Wolf* by Daniel Pennac, translated by Sarah Adams, illustrated by Max Grafe (Walker Books)  
PB RRP \$14.95  
Reviewed by Jennifer Rumsey

Pennac is one of France's most celebrated and translated authors, and in 1990 won the 'Prix du Livre Inter' for *La petite marchande de prose*. *Eye of the Wolf* is well-known in France, having first appeared there in 1982 as *L'Oeil du Loup*. Adams' translation of it into English won the 2007 Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation. Grafe has illustrated the work very sympathetically, his tones of black through grey to white harmonising perfectly with Pennac's dark, reflective verbal text.

Firstly, it is a story about a boy and a caged wolf, each of whom is dealing with enormous loss brought about by human maltreatment, entrapment and exploitation. The boy watches the wolf until he is eventually able to make eye contact with its one good eye. Gradually the wolf reads the boy, an African orphan who calls himself Africa N'Bia and who, during a horrific night fire had been put in the care of an unscrupulous trader who later sells Africa's story-telling before selling the boy himself. The wolf reveals he is from Alaska and is called Blue Wolf for the colour of

his coat. He had been captured after going to the aid of his sister, and in the process had lost the missing eye. The mysterious two-way process by which wolf and boy come to know each other makes for a healing friendship. The telling of that process is the highlight of the book.

Secondly, it is a story about the natural environment and the part played by humans in destroying animal habitats and murdering wild creatures or damaging them in ways that make it difficult for them to live happily. There is talk of Grey Africa, Green Africa and the Other World then a happy ending crowded with the creatures of Africa's past.

I recommend this suitably-priced reader-friendly book for children in the immediate sub-teen age-group. Its blue-toned cover illustration shows Africa profiled on the front and shadowed on the back where the wolf sits in his torso looking out, boy and wolf as one. Do consider it for the upper primary school boy in your life.

## **OLDER READERS**

*It's yr life* by Tempany Deckert & Tristan Bancks (Random House)  
PB RRP \$16.95

Reviewed by Oliver Phommavanh

The pen-pal story is given a hip and modern lick of paint with *It's yr life*, a novel for older readers. The story is told through emails between Sim, a foster teen living in Bryon Bay and Milla, whose parents are caught up in movie-making business.

The two teenagers have to become e-friends for a cross-cultural assignment. In the beginning, it seems that they're destined to fail. Sim and Milla are both head-strong and have a set of beliefs that are poles apart. Over time, they both let their guard down and realise that they have things in common, like sharing creepy secrets and fears about their own home life.

Deckert and Bancks have created two authentic voices. They both come from unusual backgrounds, which results in a lot of frantic tension. Sim's a 'free-gan', someone who doesn't buy anything which clashes with Milla's rich lifestyle. However she's

uncomfortable with her parents' celebrity status and its cruel consequences, like stalking. The emails make it easily accessible for teens, with language such as emoticons and abbreviations used throughout.

There are plenty of attachments with these emails, such as photos, news articles and web-links. It's amusing to see what young Australians and Americans think of each other. All of this helps build up a realistic friendship, filled with angst, sorrow and humour. You can't help but feel concerned when one person doesn't reply for awhile. The latter half of the book deals with mature themes and it's uplifting to read how Sim and Milla help each other out with their problems.

*It's yr life* is a pacy, slick novel between two charismatic characters. It's nice to see that pen-pal stories aren't dead: they've just moved on with the times. Recommended for ages 13 and up.

*They Told Me I Had To Write This* by Kim Miller (Ford Street Publishing)

PB RRP \$17.95

Reviewed by Jenny Mounfield

Clem has problems – *big* problems. He is nursing the hurt of a lifetime: his mother's death, which he feels responsible for, his father's indifference towards him and a horrible secret that threatens to tear him apart. After years of troubled behaviour he lands himself in Rock Valley, a school for problem teens where he meets The Rev, a Falcon driving and motor-bike thrashing counsellor. Encouraged to start writing as part of his therapy, Clem documents in a series of letters to his dead grandmother life at Rock Valley, and most importantly, all the emotions he's bottled up for so long. Bit by bit Clem reveals to the reader – and himself – the cause of all his angst and is finally able to begin the healing process.

*They Told Me I Had To Write This* is reminiscent of many of John Marsden's novels – *Letters From the Inside*, *So Much To Tell You* and *Dear Miffy* spring to mind -- with one major difference: Miller has managed to infuse his narrative with a greater sense of hope and, on the character's part, accomplishment than Marsden did. At

the end of Clem's story (which, of course, for him, is just the beginning), I wasn't dogged by the dark cloud Marsden's stories seemed to leave me under. Perhaps this is just me, but I feel it worth noting.

Miller's voice is fresh and his characters authentic. This glimpse into Clem's world is both informative and entertaining; readers will feel his emotional turmoil, and for those who'll no doubt identify with much of what Clem is going through, Miller offers genuine solutions to these conflicts. Holding a PhD in Psychology, Miller's insights are well informed.

*They Told Me I had To Write This* deserves a place on every library shelf. Endorsed by such heavyweights as: Rowland Croucher, World Vision executive, author, editor and broadcaster (among other things), and Director of Real Justice, Terry O'Connell, whose work with young offenders earned him The Order of Australia Medal, this is far more than just a story. The trailer for this book can be found at:

<http://home.exetel.com.au/homeforgood/ClemAlex4.avi>

*Bloodflower* by Christine Hinwood (Allen and Unwin)  
PB RRP \$19.99

Reviewed by Jenny Sharp [www.myworldofwords.com](http://www.myworldofwords.com)

Cam, the hero of the story, returns to his small village of Kayforl from war, alone and with only one arm. With all his fellow soldiers slain, feelings of mistrust encompass him. On the other hand, he has gained a new respect by the reigning royalty. His time away at war and his injuries have also meant that his betrothal to the neighbour's daughter, Graceful Fennister, has been annulled. This further adds to Cam's grief and sense of belonging in the new post-war world to which he had returned.

But what has he witnessed? Where does his true allegiance lie? What will become of his sister, his best friend and his betrothed? Like most conflict throughout history, the devastation of changing political boundaries result in displaced families, new customs and allegiances being made.

Hinwood deals with these with extraordinary insight and literary skill. Written in a unique style, the characters are delightfully tangible and live in a world delicately imagined. Situations unfold slowly and erratically, like real life, and like real life each situation that arises has its own nuance and dichotomy followed by several contradictions.

It is a story for those who like a slow unfolding of the plot. The bigger picture gradually develops from pieces gathered in each chapter. With themes of love and war, peace and forgiveness, prejudice and acceptance, it is for the young adult reader.

*The Wish Kin* by Joss Hedley (Pan Macmillan)

PB RRP \$16.95

Reviewed by Kathryn Duncan

The environment is a topical issue for everyone in today's world so it is not surprising that it is the theme of fiction books as well. *The Wish Kin* follows the journey of 14 year old Colm Bell and his sister, Lydia as they travel to Wonding in search of their father and the meeting place of the Wish Kin.

A futuristic novel, the setting is a dry and desolate Australia, where lack of rain has destroyed the landscape and everyone struggles to survive. The Rekindling is a time when the Wish Kin will be able to come together to restore not only hope, but to heal the earth.

*The Wish Kin* is not an easy book to read, not because of the topic, but because of the style it is written in. The writing propels you through the story in the present time in such a way you feel as if you are walking along with Colm and Lydia. Once you get used to this style, and it took a long time and patience from this reader, you soon find yourself wanting to continue, to find out more about the great fire burning the earth and what Colm, Lydia and their friends will find in Wonding.

First time novelist, Joss Hedley, has tackled a topic that should be close to everyone and if she is able to make readers think about the world and what we are doing to it, then she should be congratulated. Unfortunately, the novel is not going to appeal to everyone, and the writing style will find its own audience.

For readers who enjoy futuristic novels, *The Wish Kin* is sure to please, and for those of us who have not read one before - it is a good place to start. The most important message I took from *The Wish Kin* was the importance of protecting the environment we live in now. Reality is that deserts and barren landscape are created by climate and human behaviour and it would be a sad day to wake up and find ourselves living in the Australia of *The Wish Kin*.

*Kathryn Duncan is a Melbourne based reviewer and publisher of Short and Twisted. [www.celapenepress.com.au](http://www.celapenepress.com.au)*

## **NON-FICTION**

*Prehistoric Giants: the Megafauna of Australia* by Danielle Clode (Museum Victoria)  
PB RRP \$24.95  
Reviewed by Dianne Bates

Like most non-fiction books, one's reading reveals new and sometimes startling information about the subject matter. In this book about giant animals from Australia's past, one learns of extinct beasts such as marsupial tapirs of 500+kg and kangaroos weighing over 200 kg (compared with today's average 80 kg kangaroo). With detailed coloured illustrations by a wide range of artists such as John Gould, Peter Tusler and Aboriginal rock painters and photographers as well as maps and comparative shadow graphs comparing animal and human sizes, there is much to commend this glossy-paged book.

The author, Danielle Clode, a zoologist and science writer with a particular interest in the history of Australian zoology, has used both common and Latin names of the prehistoric Megafauna. Oddly, she begins the book with a fictional account (no doubt well researched) of a day in the life of a theylacoleo – a marsupial lion now extinct – as it engages with a diprotodon – similar to a white rhinoceros and also now extinct – but then she switches to non-fiction chapters for the remainder of the book.

Chapters are divided into types of Megafauna such as marsupial meat-eaters, cold-blooded killers (giant reptiles), big birds, monotremes, and Australian rhinos, hippos and tapirs, the latter chapter followed by a question mark. For this reader, the most interesting sections of the book included information about the importance of caves in the life – and fossilization – of Megafauna, and the theories advanced about the extinction of many of the animals. Of most appeal are the illustrations, diagrams and maps.

Further information at the end of the book includes museums, fossil sites and websites for the reader to explore, as well as a comprehensive list of picture credits and acknowledgements. An index would have been handy but overall the book is interesting and informative, and no doubt accurate with regards to research. This book is part of the Museum of Victoria's Nature Series. It would be of particular interest to students of pre-history aged from twelve years and up.

*The Little One* by Kaitie Afrika Litchfield (black dog books)

PB RRP \$16.99

Reviewed by Vicki Stanton

Written in the first person by Kaitie Litchfield, the young daughter of primate expert Dr Carla Litchfield, this amazing story tells how four-year-old Kaitie raised an orphaned red-tailed monkey at a sanctuary in Uganda.

Kaitie reveals how her life in Africa changed when she became mother to a one-day-old monkey. The bond between the two is extraordinary and Kaitie describes how she cared for the monkey she named The Little One: his food, grooming, games and medical care. Kaitie had to relinquish The Little One to a Wildlife Centre once he was old enough and she calls it 'one of the saddest days of my life'.

Everyone will warm to this heartfelt story and the accompanying photographs of Kaitie and The Little One. This book will bring home to children the effects of farming and land clearing in Africa on wildlife. There is also an information page on red-tailed monkeys. I recommend this book for children who love animals.

## ARTICLES

### WHAT'S IN A RHYME?

© Jo Burnell 2009

I'll never forget the day I lost my two year old son. The heart constricted in panic as I searched the house. There he was, in the last place I imagined: surrounded by every book from the bottom shelf, quietly lifting a flap in '*Where's Spot?*'

The more elaborate picture books remained untouched on the middle shelf. My toddler confirmed a rule of thumb taught a decade before at university. 'The smaller the child, the bigger, brighter and more clearly outlined pictures need to be.'

So what happens to draw children on to the next stage of pre-reading? Apart from maturing visual skills that increase attention to smaller details, what else sparks their interest?

As the toddler's gait steadies and sentences lengthen, vocabulary explodes in a variety of ways. Books with describing words throb with promise for growing minds. Pictures books with simple sentence structures and large vibrant pictures which delight include *I'm not Cute* by Jonathan Allen (Hyperion Books), *Me and My Dad* by Jill Kearney (Koala Books) and *My Dad* by Charles Fuge (Walker Books).

As the toddler is left behind and the preschooler emerges, so do details on the page. Alison Lester opens little minds to worlds teeming with new vocabulary in books like *Imagine* and *Magic Beach* (Allen and Unwin). There are countless favourites that oscillate between big and bold, and minutely detailed. Your child's visual and linguistic maturity will govern their choices, but short predictable phrases repeated throughout a story will hook them. Apart from being a fun way to lure children, predictable phrases allow them to return to books on their own. The predictable beat of cherished phrases supports story retell in its earliest form. This is when preschoolers begin 'reading' to younger siblings or their favourite toys.

At around four years of age, the first of a series of listening skills emerge. I call them the P.A. (Personal Assistants) to reading. The technical term is Phonological Awareness. The first in the series of P.A. skills that allows children to perceive drum beats in speech is syllabification.

Children with awareness of syllables in speech delight in multi-syllabic words. They enjoy the stark contrast between the long and the short. Books that have a rollicking rhythm capture their attention. Katrina van Gendt's *Bananas in Pyjamas* encourages bodies to bob in seats to the beat of the story. Pamela Allen's *Bertie and the Bear* uses the story's tempo as the underlying pulse for a madcap chase, where ridiculous sounds made by different characters add to the fun. *Oh Say can you say Dinosaur* by Bonny Worth (Random House) and *Hooper Humperdink ...? Not Him!* by Dr Seuss (Harper Collins) are classic examples of the humorous use of contrasting long and short words.

Around six months after syllabification skills are established, a second P.A. skill emerges. It's all to do with rhyme, but this awareness of rhyme in all its facets takes time. First comes detection: Awareness that words sound the same at the end. Dr Seuss inundates the listener with examples of rhyme in books like *Hop on Pop*, *Fox in Socks* and *The Cat in the Hat*. The pages push the power of rhyme and preschoolers can't get enough of it.

Matching different single syllable words that rhyme is the next stage of development. It requires an ability to savour words, roll them around on the tongue and in the mind, and finally make a decision. Do those words sound the same at the end or not? More sophisticated stories hide rhyming words in alternate lines, stretching the memory span of children and challenging them to listen for longer. The *Madeline Series* by Ludwig Bemelmans develops the listening skills of the emergent 'rhymers'. Although first published in 1962 by Andre Deutsch Ltd, it was republished by Scholastic in 1996 and is still extremely popular today.

After the comprehension of rhyme settles, expression develops. Children play rhyming games, calling out words that rhyme – whether these are real words or nonsense ones. Dr Seuss and his accomplices take advantage of this final phase of rhyme

development with their use of ridiculous rhymes. *Yertle the Turtle* has preschoolers chortling with delight.

This final expressive phase of rhyming is a precursor to sound analysis, where children begin to notice the first sounds in words. The way to make a word rhyme is to change the first sound and keep everything else constant. Syllabification and rhyme are bridging skills to the emergence of letter-sound recognition and matching.

There are many books that take advantage of children's enjoyment of the syllable-beat in speech, and others that focus on rhyme. A third type of book uses both these strategies, while still others foray into the next stage of development. Alliteration. Children who do not 'get' the fact that words are made up of syllables or that words can rhyme are generally not ready for the fun of first sound comparisons. This is in the same way that children will not cope with fine detail in pictures if they do not perceive less intricate visual differences in large, brightly coloured pictures. It's all about development.

When awareness of isolated sounds emerges the fun really begins, but that is another story...

Disclaimer: It's impossible to compact large amounts of information about typical language development or phonological awareness into a short article. Quoted ages for emerging skills are approximate. Many children display these skills at earlier ages, while others might display these skills at much later ages. Speech Pathologist, Jo Burnell has attempted to give an overview of some basic principals of early Phonological Awareness development and how these relate to children's choices of Books.

Should you have any questions about normal language or phonological awareness development, feel free to contact a local Speech Pathologist, Speech Pathology Australia or Jo herself.

## **CLASSIFIEDS**

## **WRITERS' BOOKS FOR SALE**

*How to Self Edit (to improve writing skills)* by Dianne Bates now reissued by Five Senses Education (formerly Emerald Publishers, India) With 500 editing exercises (and suggested revisions), this book is ideal for a writer wishing to increase his or her chances of publishing success or for use in workshop situations – or for use by writing teachers. Cost is \$22 which includes p&p. Send cheque (payable to D. Bates) to PO Box 2116, Woonona East NSW 2517.

*Wordgames: Activities for Creative Thinking and Writing* by Dianne Bates, now reissued by Five Senses Education (formerly Longmans Australia) contains 150 prose, poetry and wordplay activities ideal for use by writers and teachers in the classroom for ages ten to adult, or as a fund-raising (team games) activity. Highly recommended by Libby Gleeson, its cost is \$20 which includes p&p. Send cheque (payable to D. Bates) to PO Box 2116, Woonona East NSW 2517.

*Crossing the Line* by Dianne Bates (Ford Street Publishing), a YA novel about a foster girl, her relationships and her obsessions. Short-listed for the 2009 NSW Premiers' Awards; German rights sold; recommended by the Australian Family Therapy Association 2009. Cost is \$20 which includes p&p. Highly recommended by Margaret Clarke, Elizabeth Fensham and Anastasia Gonis. Very well reviewed.

Online payment can be made; contact [dibates@enterprisingwords.com](mailto:dibates@enterprisingwords.com) for details.

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