

Fine Lines

The **Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators**

Australian Newsletter

www.scbwi.ampl.com.au

Autumn 2006

In This Issue

- **SCBWI Australia News**
- **Opportunities**
- **NEWS from SCBWI Members**
- **Learning, Resources & Websites**
- **Events, Festivals and Activities**
- **A Word In Your Ear**
- **Newsletter Details & Contacts**

SCBWI Australia Regional News

1. SCBWI International Conference at The Hughenden 17-20 February 2006

The conference was a wonderful experience of sharing between authors, illustrators & publishers. Laura Harris publisher for Penguin, Linsay Knight publisher Random House and Lisa Berryman publisher for HarperCollins gave up a Saturday to speak on the publishing panel. Their insights into publishing were revealed in a funny and lively discussion. They answered tricky questions with style and good humour including the valuable advice to discover what a publisher is currently publishing rather than a shot gun approach.

Shona Martyn's (publishing director of HarperCollins) talk was inspirational giving a great deal of hope for kids' books with its 8% increase in sales in the last year. We're all waiting for Wendy Orr's film (she wrote the book and co-wrote the script) coming out in 2 years. 'Nims' Island' is being produced by the same team who made the current huge hit NARNIA. Hazel Edwards is always there with the right advice. Her Antarctica experience on a literary berth was adventurous, but what was very interesting is how she used that experience as an author, translating a story into AUSLAN (film for the hearing impaired) to books, animation and the newly released 'Antarctic Dad' (Lothian). (Books Illustrated will be exhibiting the illustrations all February).

The three book launches were highlights each day. Felicity Pulman's 'Rue for Repentance' (Random House), Meredith Costain's 'Doodledum Dancing' (Penguin) and Krista Bell's 'That's Trick' (Lothian) were moving celebrations of these author's work. Lesley MacKay's Bookshop sold a huge amount of books.

Susan Sherman, Art Director of Charlesbridge Boston, USA, was fantastic as she explained the process of taking an idea right through to a published picture book. She invited several illustrators and authors to submit work to Charlesbridge which is currently looking at expanding their list. She was very impressed with the diversity and energy of the illustrators at the conference. That was very exciting.

However the most exciting part of the conference was the new friendships made between new, emerging and established authors and illustrators. The sharing of ideas. The encouragement to continue to pursue writing and illustration. The connections made between authors/illustrators from all over Australia - WA, Queensland, NSW, SA, ACT, Victoria, the capital cities and the countryside.

Thank you to all those who participated in the Conference.

From Susanne Gervay
Assistant Regional Advisor
SCBWI NSW (Sydney)

2. Wonderful Book Launches at the International SCBWI Conference

The three book launches were highlights each day of the conference. Books launched were:-

Felicity Pulman's *Rue for Repentance* - an early young adult book on medieval murder, mystery and romance by Random House Australia
It's the second book in the JANNA mysteries. Launched by Hazel Edwards.

Meredith Costain and Pamela Allen's *Doodledum Dancing* - a gorgeous picture book by Penguin Australia. Launched by Susanne Gervay.

Krista Bell's *That's The Trick* - primary age group book with delightful illustrations about word spelling by Lothian Australia just taken over by Hachette publishers. Launched by Christopher Cheng.

The book launches were a great success at the Conference because they:-

- Celebrated children's books
- Supported SCBWI authors/illustrators by providing a platform to launch their book
- Ensured an enthusiastic audience at the launch
- Gave delegates an opportunity to buy autographed books
- Supported our specialist children's bookshops who sold the books at the conference
- Enhanced the author/illustrator within a publisher's list

- Established links with the publicists and publishers facilitating their support of the conference
- Enabled the organisers to obtain sponsorship of the conference
- Gained publicist support who provided bookmarks and similar for delegate bags and posters for the conference
- Gained publishing house support for the launched books
- Promoted a collegiate relationship between publishing houses and SCBWI
- Attracted media for the books.

3. Bookseller

Lesley MacKay's Bookshop Queen Street, Woollahra is a specialist children's bookshop that supplies trade and schools. The bookseller was at the launches and attended throughout the conference, selling the launched books, and books by delegates and presenters including Wendy Orr, Marjory Gardner, Hazel Edwards, Christopher Cheng, Frane Lessac, Moya Simons, Jen Mawter, Susanne Gervay, Jen McVeity, Tina Bourke, Dianne Wolfer, Pamela Rushby, Ilana Kresner, Jennifer Cook, Prue Mason, Patricia Bernard, Jan Latta, Vashti Farrer and Wendy Blaxland.

Hundreds of books were sold and signed and there was a great celebration of the talents of the authors and illustrators at the Conference.

Opportunities

Presence on SCBWI Australia Website

If you are a writer or illustrator with your own website and as a member would like to be listed on the Australian SCBWI website please contact our Co-Regional Advisor and website designer extraordinaire Chris Cheng. Your website will need to be of a decent standard to be included and should not be simply a front page and a list of books. If you fit the bill please contact Chris with an email via the Australian SCBWI website.

Heading to Tokyo?

This is from the SCBWI RA in Japan:

Please help our region out by letting editors and publishers, authors and illustrators know about us and by urging them to contact us if they plan to be traveling to Japan. Though a young international region like ours does not yet have the member base to fund airfare and accommodation, when authors and editors plan to travel here anyway, we are happy to consider creating an SCBWI event for them during their visit, and can help connect speakers to international schools (who ARE well funded!) and other venues. Please spread the word for us in New York, Australia and at other conferences!

Holly Thompson (SCBWI Tokyo Co-RA) holly@scbwi.jp

Changing your Email or Address?

All SCBWI roles are voluntary, therefore head office in the USA runs all the administration. If you don't tell head office your new email, you won't get this newsletter as we get the lists direct from head office.

Just email: membership@scbwi.org

You can also change all your contact details directly from the members section of the USA website. www.scbwi.org

Congratulations to our Queensland Leader

We are delighted and excited to welcome Prue Mason as the official leader of SCBWI Queensland.

Prue is an award winning author who has travelled widely, worked in a huge variety of jobs and who writes with great verve and talent. She plans to run some meetings in her beautiful property Rowan House just outside of Brisbane. The view is fabulous!

First meeting Sunday 23rd April 2006. All Queensland members will have been contacted by Prue about this.

Do make Prue welcome and step up and offer her your help. You can contact her on: pruemason@bigpond.com

NEWS from Australian Members

Member Book News

Author: Susanne Gervay

Susanne's new YA novel, *That's Why I Wrote This Song* (HarperCollins) is to be released in March 2007, her teenage daughter wrote the music in a special combination of text and music.

I Am Jack (HarperCollins) is now in 14th reprint and becoming a major younger fiction on bullying at school. It has just been translated into Korean.

SuperJack (HarperCollins) the sequel is being translated into Korean currently.

Butterflies (HarperCollins) has just been bought by a major Indonesian publisher for translation.

Author: Deborah Abela

Max Remy, Superspy: Series (Random House, Australia)

Eight novels for 8-12 yo's. An adventure comedy about a girl and her best friend Linden, who take on the world's bad guys as the youngest members of the elite intelligence agency, Spyforce. Numerous reprintings. Part 1 has been reprinted 11

times. Also published by **Simon and Schuster** in the **US** and **Oxford University Press** in the **UK** and **Malta** and **Platypus Press** in **Greece**. (Winner of Gold Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Award, New York)

Jasper Zammit (Soccer Legend): Series (Random House Australia) written with the help of Australian soccer hero, Johnny Warren.

Three novels for 8-12yo's. An action-packed series about one of the most popular sports for kids in Australia, **Jasper Zammit** is a fun, entertaining read for all aspiring Beckham's. In an engaging, fast-paced story by best selling children's author, Deborah Abela, the books are packed with tips, rules and anecdotes from Australian soccer legend, Johnny Warren.

Author: Hazel Edwards

Hazel's sequel YA novel, **Outback Ferals** (Lothian) is to be released in September, has a pandemic theme and is set in Darwin. The graphic designed cover is the result of a contest.

Antarctica's Frozen Chosen (Lothian) was listed No 10 on SMH Independents. Top Ten on Feb 11th from the Nielsen Bookscan Booksales monitoring system from 1000 retailers nationwide.

Antarctic Dad (Lothian) artwork was exhibited at Books Illustrated Gallery, all February.

Muscles (Lothian) reprinted within months of release.

There's a Hippopotamus on Our Roof Eating Cake in 3rd Penguin Puffin reprint this year. Used by Japanese Kumon Institute internationally and Catnip UK release in April.

My Hippopotamus is on Our Caravan Roof Getting Sunburnt was released by Penguin in February. Other titles in the series will be released in July, November and January.

Simply Events with event manager Jan Bottcher is being widely used by councils. Also relevant for book launches.

Author: Frané Lessac

Frané Lessac has just signed a contract for a Texas alphabet book (HarperCollins USA) to be released in 2008. This will be a sequel to the highly successful **New York New York: The Big Apple A-Z** and **Capital! Washington DC from A-Z** (HarperCollins USA).

Author: Goldie Alexander

Here's a list of her most recent Educational Publications. Fiction: **Trapeze, Captain Gallant, Hairy Harry, Shape-Shifters**. Non Fiction: **Children's Rights, Impact of Technology, All About Bread, An Interview with Cindy Centipede**

Author: Felicity Pulman

Felicity Pulman's new novel, **Rue for Repentance**, Book 2 of her medieval crime series for teenagers, titled The Janna Mysteries, was launched in February at the Australia-wide SCBWI conference held at the Hughenden Hotel in Sydney. The series is published by Random House Australia.

Rosemary for Remembrance, Book 1 of The Janna Mysteries, was republished by RHA in a smaller (B-size) format at the beginning of the year. Book 3, ***Lilies for Love***, will be published in October.

Author: Tina Burke

Tina's first children's picture book, ***Fly, Little Bird*** (Penguin) has recently been released in Australia and the US. Her next book, ***It's Christmas*** (Penguin), is due for release in December.

Are You a Leader?

From Jen McVeity

Most people think of leadership as someone out the front, crying 'follow me' and knowing exactly where they are going.

Research shows that there are many difference types of leaders, ranging from the well know dictator, through to the autocratic (do it my way), and ending with the most successful of leaders, the democratic person who is inclusive of people and asks for input.

Why am I telling you all this? Because we need an SCBWI leader in Victoria. My commitments to the SCBWI nationally and my role of Board Chair internationally, means that my home state of Victoria has missed out on events and personal leadership.

So would YOU like to step up to the plate? The time commitment is only a few hours a week. The rewards are many. Being an SCBWI leader taps you into the heart of the publishing industry and creates friendships with writers and illustrators around the world.

Don't feel you are good enough? Don't want to put up your hand? Let me share with you some of my favourite leadership quotations:

- A leader is best when people barely know he exists, not so good when people obey and acclaim him, worse when they despise him. But of a good leader who talks little when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: We did it ourselves. (Lao-Tzu)
- I must follow the people. Am I not their leader? (Benjamin Disraeli)
- Only one man in a thousand is a leader of men -- the other 999 follow women. (Groucho Marx. Sorry, couldn't resist that!)

Think about it. Act on it. Email me today: jen@jenmcveity.com

Fine Lines Information

Don't forget we are trying to make the Australian SCBWI newsletter more relevant to both writers and illustrators and can only do that with your contributions. If you (or someone you know) fit the bill perhaps you could contribute to some of the following items.

Illustrator Spotlight

The aim of the Illustrator spotlight is to provide a profile on Australian Illustrators, their history and a brief description of their work. Illustrators who wish to be profiled need to provide a paragraph detailing themselves to the editor of Fine Lines.

The Market Place

The aim of the market place is to provide up to date information on all aspects of writing and illustrating and publishing including such items as editor news, agent news, industry news, opportunities for writers and illustrators. Items should be submitted to the editor.

Please send your publication and events news to Trudy, the editor of SCBWI Newsletter Australia

Learning, Resources & Websites

International SCBWI Newsletter

Expression OnLine is the SCBWI international online newsletter. It's available at no charge to all current SCBWI members, anywhere in the world. It includes news and short feature items about children's books, the industry in general as it is practiced in different parts of the world, and the people involved - writers, illustrators, book designers, publishers, editors, booksellers, librarians, teachers, parents, educators, and more. There's a regular section announcing good news about SCBWI members wherever they are, and a constantly updated listing of SCBWI events worldwide.

There's also a calendar of other children's book-related news and events that might be of interest to SCBWI members - from Tirana, Albania to Wahrenonga, NSW Australia. From Brussels, Belgium to Smith's Parish, Bermuda. From Russe, Bulgaria to Phnom Penh, Cambodia. From Belo Horizonte, Brazil to Mississauga, Canada. From Beckenham, UK to Quimperle, France to Cavite City, Philippines to Gipuzkoa, Spain to Los Angeles, California and many, many more places where SCBWI members live and work.

By subscribing to Expression OnLine, you get two to four issues a month that will make you feel that you are indeed part of an international SCBWI community.

To subscribe, email Beulah at bpteditor@yahoo.com with your complete name and your email address that is on file at the SCBWI head office. Once in, you can unsubscribe anytime. You may also, on your own, change the email address that you would like to use in receiving the newsletter. You may also visit http://groups.yahoo.com/group/expression_online/

Fast Track Writing Tutorials

Published by Jen McVeity, these are a series of email tutorials by some of our top Australian writers including Garry Disher, Margaret Clark, Hazel Edwards, Libby Gleeson and lots more. They are short, sharp bites of information with an action activity which really tries to make the information 'learning by doing.' You get expert industry knowledge and experience from multi-published and successful authors. (Though warning, the tutorials do not include individual manuscript critiques - not at this price!) Cost \$66 for 8 x 650 word tutorials. Learn at your own pace and in your own home. www.fasttrackwriting.com

Events, Festivals & Activities

NSW SCBWI quarterly meeting dates for 2006: (From Susanne Gervay, ARA for NSW)

Wednesday July 2006
25th October 2006

Venue: At the Hughenden (the beautiful boutique hotel owned by Susanne Gervay.),
14 Queen St, Woollahra

Time: 5.30 – 7.00pm.
Drinks/coffee at personal cost. Optional dinner afterwards to network with fellow authors and illustrators. (And the food is great!)

Bookings: So that we know who is coming please advise Chris Cheng by email.
chris@chrischeng.com

Western Australia

(From Frané Lessac, Assistant Regional Advisor, West Australia)

I encourage all WA SCBWI members to attend events being held at the Fremantle Children's Literature Centre - be inspired and network.

Earlier in April, Kim Gamble, a master of pastel, pencil and oil illustration spoke about his extraordinarily successful career as illustrator of some of Australian children's best-loved books. The evening included a pastel demonstration by Kim and a short hands-on activity making all participants feel they can actually draw. The evening also contained a step by step description of how to create a picture book and discussion of the narrative and viewing elements of Kim's books.

Fremantle Children's Literature Centre - April

Special Guests Kim Gamble and local writers and illustrators who will be available to sign copies of their books purchased at the Centre. A chance to view the exhibitions of:

There Once Was A Boy Called Tashi
Anna & Barbara Fienberg & Kim Gamble

The Mystery of Eilean Mor
Gary Crew and Jeremy Geddes

Pete the Sheep
Jackie French and Bruce Whatley

The Bubble
Josie Montano and Matt Ottley

Also, a wonderful opportunity to admire or purchase artworks by interstate artists, including: Terry Denton, Kim Gamble, Ann James, Narelle Oliver, as well as WA artists Guundie Kuchling, Frané Lessac and Shaun Tan

Books and artwork for sale FREE ADMISSION

Old Prison Hospital
Cnr Knutsford Street & Hampton Road
Fremantle Western Australia 6160
Telephone: (08) 9430 6869

A Word In Your Ear

Susan Sherman Art Director of Charlesbridge Boston

Keynote Address at SCBWI Sydney Conference, Hughenden Hotel, Woollhara,
Saturday 18 February 2006

Reported by Theresa Willsteed

Susan Sherman is the Art Director, at US children's publisher, Charlesbridge. She spoke about her career, and the current market for children's books in the USA.

- Susan began by taking us through her career, from starting out with Little Brown and Co as assistant to the publisher, Robert G. Lowe (where she wrote correspondence, asked a lot of questions and learned her craft); to working at Houghton Mifflin in the mid-1980s, with the editor-in-chief, Walter Lorraine, who taught her about illustration and art direction (Lorraine is still the boss at HM today).
- Around this time, publishers began realising how stable children's books were – they seemed to make money without publishers even paying them much attention, and they attracted big accounts without the sales people even visiting! Every publisher began to double their children's list, and then in the mid-1990s there was the inevitable crash: too many books had flooded the market. (In the US market, if a writer can sell 10,000 books, that is considered to be a great result, and this figure doesn't even tap the enormous libraries and school market.)
- By far the biggest markets for children's books in the US are the libraries and schools – this is where the backlist goes, year after year (mass market success might bring big sales for only one or two years after publication). Susan later

referred to this strong backlist library and school market as the heart of 'sustainable publishing'. The American Libraries' Association publishes magazines, lists and reviews of titles, which are very important and influential. Each year, there is a Libraries and Bookselling Convention in the US, where publishers can sell their books directly to bookshops and libraries – word of mouth is very important in the world of children's books.

- After moving back to Little Brown (at the time of its takeover by Time Warner – Susan worked there during its heady post-takeover days), Susan moved to her current position as art director at Charlesbridge, an independent, family-owned publishing company, with about 30 staff. It's a dynamic company staffed mainly by women, with a very collegial atmosphere. Susan's philosophy is that publishing is a service organisation: they are there to help an author make the best book they can.
- She showed us a picture of the 'slush pile' – Charlesbridge receives around 200 unsolicited manuscripts a month, along with 100 solicited manuscripts. They read everything, and it takes around three months for them to reply. If a reader likes a manuscript, it is then read by at least two people before a team meeting that may recommend publication or discuss their interpretation/possible rewrites.
- Susan herself receives around 10-15 envelopes/postcards a day with artwork for her consideration. She loves receiving postcards with web addresses on, so she can visit artists' websites (she will always remember a person's art, before she remembers even their name or face). She has no time to mail replies, but will send back a reply card if included in the submission.
- When a manuscript is chosen for publication, Susan talks to the editor about the age level of the reader, which artist might be suited to the project, and she suggests artists, saying why they're interesting and what they can bring to the project. She looks for artists who have really great imaginations – they can read typescript and come up with ideas that she and the author haven't even thought of yet, and can then take those ideas to make them work completely with the text. For example, on a particular project about a little girl and a whale, quite by chance, the artist had initially included pictures of whales and portraits of little girls in her portfolio (these were some of her favourite subjects).
- Once an artist is chosen, Susan then chooses the font for the text, and starts designing the book – among her current inspirations is the work of Alex Brodovich, a US magazine designer (*Harpers*, *Vogue* etc). Susan sketches grids of page layouts, then works them up on the computer. She then sends the artist the laid-out text for the illustration process to continue.
- The artist will send her back rough, thumbnail sketches, which he or she then later develops into more detailed black-and-white sketches, following discussion (face-to-face, or by mail or e-mail – Susan works with both local and international artists). Susan took us through this whole process from thumbnails to final book (including the artist's revisions) with the whale book. If Susan has to make suggestions to the artist, she will always do a rough sketch, and never do it well – making it clear that she is only making a suggestion, and not intimidating the artist or telling them what to do.
- She then showed us how artists incorporate the text into the illustration, and the magic of how it all then merges into one, interdependent work, with each

element ultimately looking bare without the other. She did point out that some artists simply can't incorporate text on their art – in this case, the text will be featured separately from the illustration.

- Susan discussed jacket art, and how tricky this can be, again taking us through the different processes involved before arriving at the final cover for the whale book; and later showing us two proposed covers for another book, and asking for audience reaction.
- In the print production process, everything is done on disk. This gives the designer much more control over all the elements, and makes the job easily portable. Charlesbridge prints offshore, and artists check colour proofs against the art – it is rare for artists and designers to do press checks now.
- She also showed us a longer chapter book, including the author's research and Susan's own imaginative research to find a typeface to match the subject.
- Susan closed by emphasising how inspiring and what good fortune it is to be working in this area: an author's idea is taken up by the publishing team and illustrator to become something that no-one could have originally envisioned. She finished with this quote:

'The more significant the content of the book, the longer it has to last and the more perfect it must be.'

Susan then took questions from the audience, and her answers follow:

- Illustration time frames can differ. Picture books generally take two years to produce, from the slush pile to end product; one year will be given to editing, and then one year to illustration and production, but it can slide either way.
- Author/illustrator talents are an unusual combination in one person – books are mostly illustrated by someone other than the author. Many illustrators start writing because they can't find books on subjects they're interested in. If the author and illustrator are the one person, the whole process is likely to be more organised from the outset; but where the author and illustrator are two individuals, two different visions merge into something new, and it's a very exciting process.
- Susan reiterated that she always hires illustrators for their imaginations – she wants them to come up with ideas that no-one has thought of before, which will inspire a fresh reading of the text.

BIO: Theresa Willsteed received Sydney University's Henry Lawson Prize for Prose and Adrian Consett Stephen Memorial Prize, and her novel, *Fun Life*, was commended in the 1992 *The Australian/Vogel* Literary Award. She is a freelance editor and copywriter, and is currently working on a novel for young readers.

Quote of The Season

"In order to hear your calling and answer it, you must generously give yourself the gift of time. It's not how fast you make your dream come true, but how steadily you pursue it." — **Sarah Ban Breathnach**

Great advice for every writer or illustrator! Think of this quote the next time you receive a rejection!!

Keeping in Touch

'Fine Lines' the Newsletter of the Australian Chapter of SCBWI is a service providing information for Australian members. Please address any correspondence to the editor.

Trudy Edgar, Editor

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Details about non-SCBWI events, courses, competitions, grants and web sites are provided for your information and not necessarily endorsed by this organisation.

While every attempt is made to assure the accuracy of included material, gathering it from a variety of professional sources, markets and needs change rapidly. Please verify addresses, names and specific market needs before submitting or querying.

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www.scbwi.ampl.com.au Australian SCBWI website (including conference photos)

www.scbwi.org The international SCBWI website

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membership@scbwi.org Membership questions and change of email

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