



Greetings everyone.

It has been a while between newsletters but with the annual SCBWI conference in LA that Susie and Chris attended and now Book Week things have been very busy. Anyway below we have things that have been happening in our region of Australia and New Zealand.

SCBWI Conference 4-7th August 2006 - Los Angeles

The conference is initially overwhelming with so many choices of talks and workshops, publishers, editors, authors and illustrators and delegates.

The Hyatt is 5 plus star and glamorous, the hotel of Presidential elections and Danny Devito. The conference is residential with 'discount rates'. That translates to a reduction from US\$400 per night to US\$210 per night. However everyone shares. No one is in their room anyway as once the conference starts, it is full-on.

The Ballroom venue opens the conference with 1000 attendees. Lin Oliver and Steve Mooser are the heads of SCBWI, USA and International, including Australia and New Zealand. Lin and Steve began this organization 35 years ago in the USA to benefit children's authors as there was no society for them. Soon after illustrators were included, so began an organization which today has over 20,000 members crossing the USA and including an increasing international community which now spans 28 countries from Mongolia, Australia, France to the Philippines.

Australia/NZ SCBWI was a tiny nebulous association in Melbourne, when Jen McVeity took it over 10 years ago. She worked to give SCBWI Australia/NZ a profile in the USA and began spreading the word in Australia. She was International Chair for 2 years. In 2006 Jen stepped down leaving a growing Australian/NZ SCBWI in the leadership hands of Christopher Cheng & Susanne Gervay. They are co-Regional Advisors or RAs.

SCBWI today has Assistant Regional Advisors called ARA's in WA, Victoria and Queensland. Dianne Wolfer (WA) is assisted by Louise Schofield, Jen McVeity (Vic) assisted by Corrine King. Prue Mason is the Coordinator of the Queensland branch.

SCBWI, through the work of Christopher Cheng, is associated with the National Literacy & Numeracy Week with SCBWI leaders as Literacy Ambassadors. The ambassadors are Chris Cheng (Australia), Hazel Edwards & Jen McVeity (Victoria), Frane Lessac (WA), Prue Mason (Qld), Sally Odgers (Tas), Phil Cummins (SA), Susanne Gervay & Jeni Mawter (NSW).

The new Headquarters of SCBWI Australia/NZ is The Hughenden Boutique Hotel, 14 Queen Street Woollahra (Paddington, Sydney) in the heritage and arts precinct of Sydney.

In February 2006, the first International Conference for SCBWI Australia/NZ was held at The Hughenden where Susan Sherman, Art Director for the boutique USA publisher Charlesbridge (Boston), joined Australian publishers Lisa Berryman (HC), Laura Harris (Penguin) and Lindsay Knight (Random House) to speak to Australian delegates from all over Australia including WA.

Christopher Cheng and Susanne Gervay represented Australia/NZ at the 2006 LA Conference establishing connections and bringing information back to SCBWI Australia/NZ.

Highlights of the conference:

- Multi award winning authors gave keynotes including Mo Willems (Pigeon picture books), Tomie dePaola (Strega Nona books) and others
- Top commissioning editors and publishers spoke from USA publishing houses including HarperCollins, Random House, Scholastic, Dutton, Knopf & Crown, Delacorte, Little Brown, Lee & Low, Harcourt.
- Leading US literary agents addressed the delegates
- Master class by renowned illustrator Tomie dePaola
- Dedicated published writers tracks
- Manuscript assessments and portfolio consultations
- Inside information about what editors and publishers are looking for
- The process of negotiating contracts exposed
- An opportunity for illustrators to display work to publishing houses with potential book offers.

