

Boroondara Writers' Bulletin — February 2009

Boroondara Writers' Group is a supportive and knowledgeable community of writers, working in all genres, and at all skill levels. Our monthly workshops are designed to encourage, to improve and to applaud members' writing.

Meeting Dates For 2009

Saturdays

Feb 28, Mar 28, April 25, May 30,
June 27, July 25, August 29, Sept 26,
Oct 31, Nov 28

Wednesdays

Feb 11, Mar 11, Apr 15, May 13, June
17, July 15, Aug 12, Sept 16, Oct 14,
Nov 11

Meeting & Contact Details

Saturday meetings take place in the meeting hall behind Hawthorn Library, Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn, from 1-4pm – although this finish time can be extended if needed. The fee for each meeting is \$5, with a joining fee of \$5 for which new members receive a copy of the 2006 anthology, the Spark of Life.

Members are asked to bring about 12 copies of the work they want to workshop to the meeting, and please, keep the length to a maximum of about 1000 words, to ensure that everyone can have their piece workshopped. Even if you have nothing to workshop, your attendance is welcomed so that you can bring your perspective to others' material.

The coordinator can be contacted by email to boroondarawritersgroup@gmail.com or by leaving a message on 03 9889 9935.

If possible please forward a copy of your workshop piece to boroondarawritersgroup@gmail.com a few days before the meeting so that copies can be provided to Rebecca to assist her in providing you with her valuable insights.

Boiled Egg on Sunday Launch

With an excellent supper provided by several members of BWG, overseen by Mardi Spencer, and very thoughtful and considered comments on the book from Earl Livings, *Boiled Egg on Sunday* was launched with our usual style.

Gray Tham's photos of the event can be seen on:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/GrayTham/BWGBookLaunch?authkey=vMHERHxcZkY#>



Molly reads from Boiled Egg On Sunday

Almost half of the print run is now sold or otherwise disbursed (ie review copy to Earl Livings, legal deposit with state and national libraries, contributors copies).

A particularly large pat on the back should go to Tasma Wischer as the biggest seller, followed by Caroline Carruthers. I don't know how Tasma makes her sales, but Caroline's market is everyone who has waiting areas with magazines. This includes doctors, dentists, chiropractors, physiotherapists, etc and beauty therapists, hairdressers and probably many more places you attend.

Can willing salespeople please contact Caroline to take up to 5 copies of *Boiled Egg on Sunday* (no advance payment required) to sell to their service providers.

—continued on p. 2

The book costs less than many magazines and does not have to be thrown away because it is never out of date.



*Nola and partner attending the launch.
The front cover photo is Nola's work.*

Any contributor who has not received their free copy please contact Caroline at the next meeting or by email to boroondarawritersgroup@gmail.com.

Anyone needing reimbursement of their catering expenses, please bring an itemised list, and receipts if possible, to the February meeting.

What Happens In A BWG Workshop?

Technically we are only entitled to access to the meeting hall from 1pm, but we usually can enter before that. First arrivals help to put out the chairs and tables ready for the workshop. In order of arrival, members place the copies of their work on the table easily accessible for the meeting coordinator, and find a seat.

General business is kept to a minimum to leave as much time as possible for workshopping, so please be as prompt as you can. If you need to leave early let the coordinator know so that your work can be workshopped before you need to leave.

In turn, the copies of a piece are shared amongst the members, and then its author reads the work aloud. Members will make notes on the copies in front of them, and then have a little time to re-read and comment more by writing on the copy.

Members might simply tick or double tick parts of the writing they find especially good, or write some fairly detailed comments.

It is pleasant, but not especially helpful, to be told simply 'I like it'. If you can explain why the writing makes you feel that way (or not), that gives the writer more help towards improving the writing.

The coordinator will then call on a few people to say:

- (i) what they found particularly effective in the piece, and
- (ii) a helpful hint as to how something less successful might be improved.

When workshopping of a piece is finished, the copies are returned to the author, with one clean copy being retained by the coordinator.

We have a break for afternoon tea at a convenient time in the workshopping, and at the end of the meeting members clean up the dirty dishes and return the tables and chairs to the storeroom.

Like any casual fellowship of people, the members of BWG have differing interests, beliefs and life experience. This influences the kind of material people choose to write, and how that material can be most effectively and successfully written.

A historical romance will use a particular style, structure and language appropriate to the genre, and this will be very different from the style, structure and language appropriate to a gritty, realistic portrayal of contemporary life on the streets of a big city.

It is not our job to tell another author what they should or shouldn't write about, however much we may dislike their subject matter. Some of us find the conventions of a bodice-ripper just as offensive as others find four letter words.

It is our job in the workshop to help one another to write in their chosen genre as well as they can by being sensitive to what they are trying to achieve, encouraging the use of a style, structure and language that advances the story and builds the emotional context in a credible way. This may mean that swooning females or four letter words are essential to illustrate the author's point, though we should always avoid overuse of confronting material as this usually reduces its effectiveness.

Opportunities for writers

Residences

You may have noticed the Age article The Write Space by Lucy Treloar in which she discusses the joys of writers' retreats such as Abbotsford Convent, Rosebank Retreat (Macedon) and Glenfern (East St Kilda).

There are many opportunities for writers to go away to work on their creations without the distractions of home. The circumstances of these opportunities vary, from covering all the writers' expenses for periods up to a year, down to the more common offering of low-cost accommodation with writing facilities provided, for periods from a few weeks upwards. They also often encourage or require interaction with the local community. There are some grants available to pay for these residences which can be discovered by a web search.

For those of you to whom the idea of escaping distractions appeals, the following writer-in-residence programs are currently inviting applications:

Cataract Gorge Artist-in-Residence Program offered by Launceston City Council

Selected residents pay \$143 to \$176 pw for a stay between 2 weeks and 3 months at the Kings Bridge Cottage at Cataract Gorge Reserve.

Emerging Writer-in-Residence Program

This program is offered by Katharine Susannah Prichard Writers Centre for a full-time residency of 4 weeks or the equivalent part-time. This pays a salary of \$2250.

Self Directed Residency – Writing

Offered by Sturt Craft Centre, this residency provides free accommodation and paid teaching opportunities to experienced writers.

Young Writer-in-Residence

The Katharine Susannah Prichard Writers Centre offers this residency for 2 weeks in late 2009 for a salary of \$1100. The writer will be expected to participate in the Centre's activities. Fuller information on these opportunities will be available at the meeting on February 28.

Call For Submissions

Getting Hitched Fiction web-publishes writing to a theme for a flat fee of \$45 (+GST where required) for the assignment of exclusive rights to publish on the internet.

Authors retain copyright in their work.

Competitions

Closing March 1st: Limnisa.

Maximum of 3000 word story on any subject, entry fee \$5, prizes: 1 week holiday in Greece for up to 4 people, 1 week creative writing holiday in Greece for 1 person, 5 prizes of 25% off 1 week creative writing holiday.

Closing April 3: Cancer Council Art Awards

Cash prizes and touring exhibition in Melbourne and regional Victoria of winning work.

Closing April 24: Raspberry & Vine

Short story to 4000 words, any genre, entry fee \$10, \$8 students. \$300 prize and publication on their website.

Further information on these and other competitions will be available at the February meeting.

Closing 30 June: Bridport Prize

Prize for poetry and short story. Up to 5000 words for story and 42 lines for poetry. Entry fee £7 per story and £6 per poem. Main prize £5000 each category.