

November 27, 2009



## HAIRDRESSING STORY A CUT ABOVE THE REST – ANNOUNCING THE 16<sup>TH</sup> SCARLET STILETTO AWARDS

A murder story about a hairdresser with highly developed empathy has won **Sisters in Crime's 16th Scarlet Stiletto Award** presented the tonight in South Melbourne (27/11).

**Amanda Wrangles** (Crib Point, Vic), a former hairdresser and dive master on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, won the HarperCollins first prize of \$750 plus the coveted trophy (a scarlet stiletto shoe with a steel stiletto heel plunging into a perspex mount) for "Persia Bloom". Wrangles, a mother of three, started writing fiction only a year ago and the Scarlet Stiletto is the first competition she has ever entered. She is currently working on her first novel, a young adult urban fantasy mystery.

Sisters in Crime's national short story competition offers \$4200 in prizes and this year attracted 134 entries. **Catherine McClements**, star of *Rush*, presented the awards and also spoke about her life in crime (on screen) with **Dr Sue Turnbull**.

Fashionista **Sally Browne**, the stiletto's patron, has been photographed in scarlet stilettos all over the world, including the peak of Mt Kilimanjaro, and recounted one of her many stories tonight. Browne also lent flower-filled scarlet stilettos as table decorations for the award ceremony at Bells Hotel.

Sisters in Crime spokesperson, Phyllis King, said that the prize-money has been boosted this year by two new awards – the Olvar Wood Late Starters Award for writers 50 or over (50+) and ScriptWorks Great Film Idea Award (\$200).

"The awards grow in stature every year – the winners often have lots of runs on the board already and they're very very good," she said. "For others, winning a Scarlet Stiletto Award gives them the encouragement to continue writing which can be a solitary and sometimes soul-destroying occupation," she said.

"Winning a prize in the Scarlet Stiletto Awards can also be a springboard into getting a book published. Previous such winners include **Tara Moss, Cate Kennedy, Angela Savage, Josephine Pennicott, Alex Palmer, Liz Filleul, Margaret Bevege, Patricia Bernard, Bronwen Blake, Jo McGahey and Cheryl Jorgensen**.

"The 2009 entries involved lots of poisonings – husbands should immediately remove oleanders from their gardens. They are being used for much more than landscaping."

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***Fighting for justice for women crime writers; promoting women's crime fiction***

Sisters in Crime Australia, Inc. ABN 52 728 423 463

GPO Box 5319BB, Melbourne, Vic, 3001

Webpage: <http://www.vicnet.net.au/~sincoz/>



The 2007 Scarlet Stiletto winner, Aoife Clifford (East Ivanhoe, Vic), won both **Kill City 2nd prize (\$400)** and **The Pulp Fiction Bookshop Award (\$150 gift voucher)** for the funniest story for "Smoke", set in the Victorian ALP. She was also presented with **The Kerry Greenwood Malice Domestic Award (\$500)** for a second story, "Havana". A former lawyer and union official and currently stay-at-home mum, Clifford also took out last year's funniest award and earlier this year was shortlisted for the UK Crime Writer Association's Debut Dagger.

**Readings Books Music Film 3rd prize (\$300)** went to **Joanne Ruppin** (Dural, NSW).

Two schoolgirls shared the **Allen & Unwin Young Writers' Award (\$400)** for writers 18 and under – **Nese Gezer** (Pahran, Vic), who also tied for the prize last year, for "Devil in the Mirror" and **Louise Bolland** (Jimboomba, Qld) for "The Deepest Regret". (Note: where prizes are shared, Sisters in Crime pays the full amount to both winners.)

**Kerry James**, who splits her time between Ballarat (Vic) and Tonga, won the inaugural **Olvar Wood Late Starters Award ( \$650 Weekend Package at Olvar Wood Writers' Retreat)** for Life's "Little Underpinnings", based on her disastrous house renovation experiences. James described the inspiration for her story: "Poe would have stopped bleating about a beating heart under his floorboards if he had got a load of what got under mine after Ozzie the Underpinner found the house had shifted on its non-existent foundations. My husband fell down one of the pits Ozzie dug and was carted off to hospital, and my maniacally house-proud sister-in-law Mavis came to keep me company and guard my virtue while the underpinning team set to with pneumatic drills inside and out."

**Eleanor Marney** (Guilford, Vic) was awarded **The Cate Kennedy Award for Best New Talent (\$350)** for "Death World", a story about a pregnant forensic profiler. Last year, she won the Katherine Susannah Prichard Speculative Fiction Award. Her story, 'The Self-Sufficient Gardener' was recently included in *Award Winning Australian Writing 2009* (Melbourne Books).

**The Dorothy Porter Award for Innovation** (\$300), sponsored by Dorothy Porter's widow, Andrea Goldsmith, in perpetuity, went to Chris Broadribb (Blaxcell, NSW) for a crime story in verse. "The Nun and the Assassin/The Assassin and the Nun".

The inaugural **Scriptworks Great Film Idea Award (\$200)** went to long-time Sisters in Crime member who writes both romance and crime, Sarah Evans (Bridgetown, WA) for "The Chicky Baby Minder", about a gum-popping 'chicky babe' bodyguard in a pink boob-busting frock. Her book *Seasons and Seasonings in a Teapot* is a humorous take on her lifestyle and is already well into its second print run and she won second prize in 2006.

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The **Benn's Books Best Investigative Award (\$200)** went to criminal lawyer Rowena Helston (Queenscliff, NSW) for "Check Out Time" where the female proprietor of a holiday park in Tasmania joins the hunt for the killer after two guests are murdered.



Special commendations also went to: 2008 Scarlet Stiletto winner **Evelyn Tsitas** (Canterbury, Vic) "Breathless", a crime story in verse; 2001 Scarlet Stiletto Award winner **Josephine Pennicott** (Broadway, NSW) for "The Edge"; **Maris Morton** (Uki, NSW) for "Hawk's Hill"; **Thelma Backshall** (Ballina, NSW) for "Hot Cinnamon Punch: and **Karen McKenzie** (Elwood, Vic) for "Teddy Bears and Barbie Dolls".

**The 17th Scarlet Stiletto Awards close on August 31, 2010. The entry fee is \$10. Entry forms will be available next year by writing to Sisters in Crime, GPO Box 5319, Melbourne 3001 or on its website: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~sincoz/>**

Print quality photos can be emailed on request.

**Further info: Contact Phyllis King on 0411 084 300**

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