

THE CHRISTIAN WRITER



MAGAZINE OF THE CHRISTIAN WRITERS
GUILD NEW ZEALAND

June – July 2014

Supporting
Members' Books

ORAMA REFLECTIONS

OUR STORY OUR PLACE OUR PEOPLE

By Lynne and Bob Michener

ORAMA REFLECTIONS

OUR STORY OUR PLACE OUR PEOPLE



LYNNE AND BOB MITCHENER

Rightly explaining the word of truth – 2 Timothy 2:15

(New Revised Standard Version of the Bible)



Editor: Debbie McDermott (email: sddp@xtra.co.nz)

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Jan Pendergrast (email: jan@roads-end.co.nz)

The Christian Writer is published bimonthly by the New Zealand Christian Writers Guild and distributed to all its members. Contributions on the theme of writing are always welcome. If you have some advice or encouragement for Christian writers, or an announcement of some event of interest to Guild members, do send it to the editor for consideration by the 20th day of the month prior to the publication date. Submissions should be no more than 500 words long and hard copy manuscripts will not be returned unless a self-addressed stamped envelope is enclosed.

The editor reserves the right to condense and / or edit any contributions for reason of space. Ideas and opinions will not be edited, but editing of a technical nature may occur to maintain the highest quality of writing possible.

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47 Taupo Quay, DX Mailbox 45
Wanganui 4500
(022) 674 2356 / (06) 347 2700
paul@wanganuionline.com
www.wanganuionline.com

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Contents

Page 4	President's Report – Janet Fleming
Page 5	Condolences – to Shirley Jamieson & Grace Shapleske's family
Page 5	Memories of Grace Shapleske – Beth Walker
Page 6	Tauranga Workshop Details
Page 6	Letter to Guild Members – Rod Hickman
Page 6	Warm Welcome to New Members
Page 7	NCWG 25th Anniversary Report – Debbie McDermott
Page 8	King of the Jungle – Rod Hickman
Page 9	This is My Story – May Y Scott
Page 9	Just Turned Five – Deborah McDermott
Page 10	New Books Launched – Love Live Forgive by Justin St Vincent and – Rubble to Resurrection by Melissa Parsons
Page 11	Eight Steps to Writing a One Act Play – eHow Contributor
Page 11	Creative Workshop Auckland
Page 12	Get Creative: Rosellas – Julia Martin
Page 13	Tips on Writing for the Newspaper – Janice Gillgren
Page 14	ePublishing Learning Curve – Marg McAlister
Page 15	Writing Briefs: Matthew Fontaine Maury – Fred Swallow
Page 16	Book Review: Orama Reflections / New Library additions
Page 16	CWG Writers' Groups details
Page 31	Notice Board

CWG Competitions

Page 17	Under 30s Results	Page 23	Level Two Results
Page 20	Level One Results	Page 25	Level Three Results
Page 32	Competitions for August 2014		

The views and opinions of authors expressed in this magazine do not necessarily state or reflect those of the editor.

Website:

The site provides useful information on the Magazine, Links, Writing Courses, Groups, Competitions, Workshops and the Library. It also has an interesting 'Current News and Views' blog site, as well as a 'Write to Us' page.

www.nzchristianwritersguild.co.nz

From the President

I trust you had a wonderful Easter reflecting on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It's such a blessing to know He paid the price for our sin and that He has conquered death. Because of this, when we belong to Christ, we do not need to fear the future, knowing that death has lost its power.

While thinking on this subject we would like to mention that long time member, Grace Shapleske, has recently gone home to heaven. We would also bring our sympathy to Shirley Jamieson whose daughter recently passed away. What a comfort it is when we know that our loved ones are at home with the Lord. I had only just finished reading Shirley's book regarding her daughter when I heard that she had died. We do offer our sympathy to any others who may have recently been bereaved.

The 25th Anniversary of the Northland Group was held on 3rd May in Whangarei, with an afternoon programme followed by dinner. A number of current and past members were present, including a couple who travelled from Wairoa. Julie Belding and George Bryant were speakers.

Do remember the Tauranga Workshop scheduled for 12th July and the Spring Workshop at Rossgrove Chapel on 6th September. We are planning to have Patricia Bawden, author of 'The Years Before Waitangi', and Duncan Pardon, Editor of NZ Baptist, as speakers.

Since writing my last report we have been blessed to have two grandsons added to our family. Ethan was born to Wayne and Lynley in April and Matthew to Andrew and Kara in May, while Greg and Sarah's baby is due shortly. Grandma is keeping busy making each one a crocheted blanket.

May you have much encouragement as you write to bring honour to our wonderful Lord.

Janet Fleming



Janet speaking at the NCWG 25th Anniversary celebrations

CONDOLENCES

Our sincere sympathy goes to

Shirley Jamieson

whose beloved daughter

Janelle

passed on into heaven on

2nd April 2014

after a long struggle with health issues

and to the

Family and Friends of

Grace Shapleske

who entered into the glorious

presence of her Lord on

30 April 2014

after suffering a short illness.

Although these precious sisters will be missed by those they leave behind, what a comfort it is to know they are now safe with Jesus in that place where there is no more suffering, sorrow or pain.

Memories of Grace Shapleske

By Beth Walker



Grace died on 1st may 2014 aged 90. Her first appearance at the West Auckland CWG group was so long ago that I can't remember.

“I'll sleep in the living room,” she offered, when the women's room at our first retreat lacked enough beds. Although in her 70s she looked most comfortable on a camp stretcher.

Unless sick or away, Grace seldom missed workshops or Westie meetings. Also she faithfully did the assignments, and sometimes also brought extra work for evaluation.

Some of Grace's poems were profound, and one begins the group's anthology published in 2009. Later she self-published a small book of poetry.

A deep desire to reach out to people motivated Grace. She didn't hesitate to express strong opinions, whether in our group or in letters to the editor of Challenge Weekly and other publications. She wrote on many subjects including Israel – a place dear to her – and on her experiences as a young nurse in England. Desperation during this time drove Grace to find God.

She married, had three children, and travelled back to England even in her late 80s to see two of them. About half of her life was spent there and half in New Zealand.

Colourful, creative clothes expressed Grace's character, and words like courage and strength were definitely in her dictionary.

No wonder we sometimes called her 'Amazing Grace.'

Tauranga Workshop

to be held on

12th July 2014

at

The Gospel Centre,
cnr Burrows Street / 14th Avenue

9.30am – 4:00pm

Registration: \$15.00 pp or \$25.00
for a couple

Morning Speaker

Jenny Argante

on

Preparation for Production

1. Getting Your Story Down and Getting it Right.
2. Bridging the Gap – from Final Text to Print-Ready Copy.

Afternoon Speakers

Graham Aitchison

on

The Power of the Story:
how one person's story can change
another person's life.

and

Jeanette Knudsen

on

Travel Writing

Bring lunch. Drinks provided.

Letter to Guild Members

Dear members of the Christian Writers Guild.

I joined the West Auckland writers group just on two years ago after struggling with the sudden loss of my wife of 37 years. As I stumbled through the valley of death I found comfort in writing and composing poetry.

Attending the monthly meetings gave me a connection on a different level of Christianity. The friendships and learning these meetings offered were invaluable to my support. I am sure the guild does a lot more than just help budding authors. It's a place to connect like-minded people who know that the Lord is their strength and their foundation.

Thank you so much members and rest assured your efforts are not in vain. In whatever you do, whether it's writing, publishing or praying, it's all a part of the Kingdom.

Regards,

Rod Hickman.

Warm Welcome to NEW MEMBERS

Angela Curtis

of Papamoa, BoP

Frances Downey

of Tauranga

Jessica McPherson

of Papanui, Christchurch

Mary Welham

of Mt Albert, Auckland

Northland Christian Writers Group 25th Anniversary

Report by Debbie McDermott

Held on 3rd May at Kaurihohore Hall (5km north of Kamo, Whangarei), this memorable event was well attended by both current and past members. After a brief time of fellowship, Janice Gillgren welcomed everyone to the celebrations and noted apologies from those who were unable to attend.



A warm welcome from Janice

She then handed over to the first guest speaker, Julie Belding, who spoke on the *Confessions of a Middle Aged Writer*. Based on an acronym of the word ‘confessions’, the key points Julie highlighted are as follows:

C—Count your blessings

No matter how bad it gets, you always have something to give thanks for.

O—Old age is not for sissies

N—Never sweat the small stuff

F—Focus

Discover your gift and develop it.

E—Exercise

S—Sugar is addictive

Look after your body. It has to last.

S—Spiritual growth

Spiritual growth is a lifelong process. Broken things can become blessed things if God does the mending.

I—Inspiration is often overrated

Don’t wait for the perfect moment—take the moment and make it perfect. Indulge occasionally.

O—Open your heart

There is always room for growth, forgiveness, change and letting love in again.

N—Never say never

The way to make God laugh is to tell him your plans.

S—Straightforward rules for Christian writers

1. Jesus is the perfect model for Christian communication.
2. In being concerned with communication, we are seeking to be like God.
3. The golden rules of good writing are:
 - You cannot write too simply or clearly.
 - Write something every day.
 - Write as you speak.
 - Read, read, read.
 - Master the basics of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
 - Never underestimate the power of the story.
 - Don’t punch people with a new idea. Shake their hands with an example.



Julie Belding



George Bryant

The second speaker to take the floor was George Bryant, a founding member of the Northland Christian Writers Group and now living in Tauranga. George spoke fondly of those early years and made mention of some of the first booklets published by the group, including *The Charisma of Christmas*. Since then, George has published many books / booklets, and he took time to share with the group some of the stories behind them. He is currently working on the Christian ‘movers and shakers’ who have impacted our nation.

George also spoke on how opportunities for Christian writing have narrowed in recent

times, particularly with so many Christian bookshops and magazines folding. This makes our task as writers more difficult, but we need to persevere and seek alternative avenues to publish our work.

Janice thanked George for his input and encouraged us to take up the challenge to get out writing out there in whatever way we could. She then invited Christel Jeffs to come to the front and show members her recently self-published book, *Earthen Treasure*, which consists of a mixture of poems, short stories and devotionals. Christel had taken the initiative to put her work into print and members were encouraged to support her.



Janet Fleming

The third speaker was Janet Fleming, former leader of the Northland Christian Writers Group. Janet spoke of her earliest contact with

Northland's and shared her poem on *Davy Jones' Coffee Lounge* (where the group first met) as well as some old critiques on written assignments. She congratulated Janice Gillgren on running the group so well in the years since she'd taken it over and presented her with a lovely bunch of flowers on behalf of the Northland Christian Writers as a token of appreciation—much to Janice's delight.

The floor was then opened up to other members who wished to share their memories of the past 25 years. There was a good response to this opportunity. After some nostalgic sharing, afternoon tea was served and the anniversary cake cut.



George & Janice cutting the cake

Then followed a time of fun and fellowship over a delicious meal. All in all, this was a memorable occasion. May NCWG enjoy 25 more glorious years of fellowship and growth.

Log Onto
JANICE GILLGREN'S
weekly blog
offering inspiration,
encouragement and useful tips for
writers at all levels.
www.wordsandscenes.co.nz

KING OF THE JUNGLE

By Rod Hickman

As night time falls the bush it stirs
Jungle cat he starts his purrs
He starts out on his nightly prowls
A menace as he starts his growls

Birds take flight and mammals hide
Don't die tonight, best stay inside
Life and death, this is no game
Nocturnal nature; it's all the same

Tonight we know some life will end
Small or large, foe or friend
King of the jungle, he is the master
Nothing outruns him, he is faster

How cunning that cat, he
knows where to hide
When danger lurks he comes inside
Sits on my lap by the fireside
King of the jungle, lord of his pride.



This Is My Story

By May Y Scott

When I was little, I was like a startled bird, scared of many things. Darkness is something I've always been scared of (even now). I remember when the evening began to fall, the fear of darkness started rising up in my small bosom. I always stayed at home when it got dark. The yellow Chinese light in the house gave me a sense of security.

When the night came, I usually went to bed before everyone. If I woke up in the night, more than often I could hear the homeless cats and dogs. They were not meowing or barking, but crying and howling. They sounded chill and desperate in the dark night. Fearfully I curled up under the blanket, quietly waiting for the fear to go away.

One day I told mama and papa about my fear. Papa gave me a 'spiritual hammer', a few words from a Buddhist scripture, Na-ma-ho-le-da-nu. Papa believed it could keep anything that scared me away.

Whenever I felt afraid I would say these few words in silence. Yet I still lay awake in the night, full of fear. Thirty years later, I told my husband about my fears. He said: "God has not given you a spirit of fear, but of power, love and soundness of mind." He asked me to say it after him. I did, aloud.

Now I often say it aloud. It seems I can feel the power of the words. I start to believe God has not given me a spirit of fear.

Just Turned Five

By Deborah McDermott

All little kids enjoy trying on big things, like Mommy's shoes or Dad's rugby shirt. This is because they have a healthy desire to grow up.

My girlhood dream was to become like my father. He could swim and cycle by the time he was four and made certain I could too. I'm not sure how many times I fell off before finally mastering the art of riding a bike, but I do remember Dad's pride in me when I didn't.

I guess his crowing about me learning to ride so quickly prompted Granny to buy me the biggest, shiniest bicycle for my fifth birthday. My tummy flipped when I saw it. What if I fell off?

"Well go on! Try it," Granny urged.

"But it's so big!" I answered in my littlest voice.

"Maybe, but you'll quickly grow into it."

I giggled nervously. Growing into shoes was one thing, but growing into a bike ...?

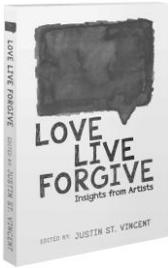
"Stand on the pedals, Deb, and I'll give you a push," Dad suggested. It seemed like a crazy thing to do, but I'd learnt to trust my father. He held the bike steady while I climbed on the pedals, then gave a mighty shove. The bike hurtled forward.

"Pedal!" Dad shouted as I began wobbling.

I quickly pushed forward with one foot, then the other. The big wheels slowly gained momentum, faster and faster until the wind was whipping through my hair. It was a wonderful feeling. Coming to a stop might not be such fun, but I didn't care. I had just turned five and was riding the best bicycle in the world.



LOVE LIVE FORGIVE



is an exciting collection of exclusive interviews with many of the world's most visionary artists, authors, and musicians. A unique anthology that explores the transformative power of love, forgive-

ness, and the creative spirit, sharing insights and reflections on the powerful intersections that exist between artists and creativity.

Justin St. Vincent, Managing Editor of *LOVE LIVE FORGIVE: Insights from Artists*, says:

“I feel this project can strongly resonate with young artists, teenagers, students, and graduates alike, to help develop their own understanding of love, forgiveness, the creative spirit, and how to practically express these essential virtues in their world today.”

He believes: “artists can become the visionaries of culture and community. They help us interpret our world through their own unique lens of creativity and imagination. Together this can illuminate our understanding of the virtues that bring meaning to life, and significance to our existence.”

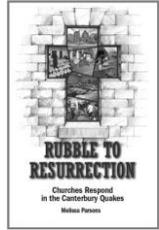
This book embraces contributors from a dynamic spectrum of artistic, cultural, and faith-based backgrounds. Individually they offer their unique perspective on the human experience. Collectively they embrace a shared passion for art and its ability to transform our lives and the world around us.

To download your FREE eBook, go to:
www.LoveLiveForgive.org

Melissa Parsons Launches Earthquake Book

On May 24, in North City Church, Papanui, Melissa Parsons launched her new book, *Rubble To Resurrection*. Published by DayStar Books, this moving volume, enhanced by many coloured photos, presents stories of the churches' response to the Canterbury earthquakes. In those disasters of 2010 and 2011

— among the largest in New Zealand's history— how did ordinary folk in the pews reach out to their suffering neighbours? The stories of many heroic Christians and congregations never made it to the secular media. But Melissa Parsons, who experienced the quakes first hand, was keen to set the record straight



“I hope these stories will encourage both the churches and the wider community,” she wrote in her introduction, “and I pray they might serve as a guide and inspiration to churches facing similar challenges....”

Melissa said it had taken her two years to write the book, and that she had interviewed more than 50 people in the course of her research. Her account is structured in three sections: The Church Responds, the Church Grieves, and the Church Rebuilds.

The launch was attended by almost a 100 people, most of whom were mentioned in the book. A special karakia was spoken by Mr Tiaki Leathers (Te Arawa) from Harmony Church. Some 76 books were sold, and 10% of the proceeds have been given to Te Mapua Child and Youth Trust.

The books are now available from bookstores around the country. Contact Melissa on <m_parsons@clear.net.nz> or email <info@dayatsrbooks.org> for more details.

Eight Steps to Writing a One Act Play

With acknowledgements to an eHow contributor

1. **Choose a subject** to cover in a brief one scene act play. A short story works best. Remember to give the one act play the necessary plot, action and characters to make it a complete story. Research other one act plays to get ideas and inspiration for yours.
2. **Develop the action first**, then compose the dialogue before you decide anything else. Keep the plot simple for a one act play and it should move consistently throughout the play.
3. **Develop the characters**. Write out a character sketch beforehand to help you flesh out your characters and bring them to life. Give your characters a motive in life (or lack thereof) and up the stakes by making them face a problem. This is central to any story.
4. **Generate the setting**. The setting for a one act play will be one scene, but you have to still develop the scene so the audience sees everything about the story line. Include as many of the five senses as you can. Lighting helps the setting. Make sure you write in notes about how the lighting should look.
5. **Add in the stage directions after you write the action**. Write notes about how each character should respond and what props you'll need. For example, if the characters should be facing another direction and talking to another character, note it in the script.
6. **Find performers that fit each part**. Hold auditions to find the right actors and actresses. Be upfront with them about whether this gig is a paying gig or a volunteer gig.

7. **Make copies of the play for each cast member**. Save the document in case you need extra copies. Give copies of the one act play to each member of the stage and prop handling too.
8. **Practice the play**. Ask for feedback from all the people involved in the play. Hire or ask an expert to help with the production too. Hold one final practice before opening the show. This should be a dress rehearsal. Treat this final as the real thing and tie up any loose ends.

Creative Workshop Auckland

- Are you feeling blocked in your writing?
- Want to be inspired and encouraged?

Then this one day workshop could be for you! The workshop will bring God into the process as we look at:

- Blocks that hinder your writing and where they come from
- Where you are now in your writing
- Where you want to be – your dreams
- How you are going to get there

INTERESTED?

Then contact Dianne Spain by email: dispain54@gmail.com or phone: 09 626-3141

GET CREATIVE

Many thanks to Julia Martin for submitting the following lovely poem, based on the topic *Ablaze With Colour*.



Rosellas

Ablaze with colour
They streak through the air
A kaleidoscopic shimmer
Of blue, red and yellow
Chittering and chattering
They swerve and they soar
Brandishing their freedom
In flourishes of pride
No cages confine them
They live as they please
As God has designed them
Independent and free.



—Julia Martin

The next topic will be **Winter Haven**

Maximum 40 lines for poetry and 250 words for prose.
Include the words 'Get Creative' with your submission. Although work is not judged,
the best pieces received will be considered for publication.

Email submissions to the editor no later than 10th July 2014

Tips on Writing for the Newspaper: Think of the Pyramid

By Janice Gillgren

The simplest way to build a news story is by using the analogy of a pyramid tipped upside down. The broad base is now at the top, and the narrow tip is at the bottom. The top wide section represents the most important facts; the narrow end denotes the least important bits. Why do you want to make your pyramid so top-heavy? There are a few vital reasons:

- When reading newspapers, nearly all readers scan titles and lead paragraphs to see what will interest them. If your article wanders slowly through the paddocks and across the streets before it even gets to the murder victim in the narrow alley, it is unlikely that many readers will persevere long enough to find out what actually happened.
- If your article is too long, it is much easier for the editor to cut from the bottom than to rewrite. This was particularly the case in the 'old days' when individual letters were typeset for printing.

There are two parts to the introduction of your news article: The title and first (lead) paragraph.

1. A title gets your reader's attention.

Some editors can write very witty and clever titles, although some are so cryptic they urge readers to read the article just to discover what the title means.

A strong title is your best drawcard, so work on creating the best one you can. However, I've discovered that editors love to play around with titles, and only a small proportion of the titles I've written have been used. Most have been rewritten.

2. Your lead paragraph has to carry the greatest weight.

There are four questions that need to be answered as well as possible:

- Who
- What
- Where
- When

Who did what, where did it happen and when?

What happened to whom, and where?

When and where did what happen?

'Just the facts Ma'am' could well be the best little phrase to remember.

The main difficulty I personally have is to avoid trying to fit so much into those vital first sentences that they become as wobbly as a knife made of cheese.

Deciding what to put in and what to leave out is a skill that has to be learned. How do you know which are the most important facts that should be included first of all? Ask 'What do people most care about?' to help you decide importance.

For example, if your story is about the aforesaid murder, is it more important that the victim was a well-known public figure, or that he or she was discovered ten minutes after midnight? Will it help readers to sleep the coming nights (which they definitely do care about) if they learn that the probable culprit was apprehended, or that the murder tool was a knife?

The middle of the article may have paragraphs of approximately equal importance, and that is fine.

By the end, though, there may be more commentary. There could be quotes, such as by the victim's neighbour stating how much he or she will be missed, or facts about the victim's life that are not as important.

Newspaper articles are a very different style than most other types of writing, but their concise nature is a good exercise for writers to learn.

The ePublishing Learning Curve

This week, I'm feeling as though I've been tossed around in a washing machine and hung out to dry. Why is this? Simply something we all run up against from time to time: the need to learn something new. I had quite a list of things on my plate.

1. **I needed to re-do covers for an existing fiction series.** My previous cover designer decided to do something else with his life, and rather than have someone else try to duplicate the style of the covers, I decided to start from scratch. And this time I would do them myself. I Googled 'Book Cover Templates for Photoshop' and that eventually led me to a Udemy course that provided six basic templates and walked me through how to customise them. I liked it that the templates were provided as Photoshop Actions, which made the whole process easier. It took a few days of learning/tweaking, but I finally got the covers done.

2. **I wanted to upload my existing titles to Kobo.** For a long while – about a year and a half – I have published only on Amazon Kindle, simply because once I completed the learning curve *there*, I was comfortable. However, I was consistently getting emails from people asking when I was going to publish in an ePub format. Part of my 2014 plan was to GET IT DONE. And now I have. This morning I uploaded my fiction titles; next it will be all titles in the Busy Writer series. Was it simple to upload to Kobo? Yes and no. I did run into a few glitches in the process, which I solved – but the main problem was that I wanted to start compiling my eBooks using Scrivener, not Word. I'm using Scrivener most of the time now, and I had heard that it produced good eBooks – even the Windows version, which is the Mac version's poor relation.

So let's move on to...

3. **I needed to learn how to compile eBooks using Scrivener** (for both Kindle and Kobo). Back to my old friend Google: "How to compile eBooks with Scrivener for Windows". I am so grateful there are people in this world who battle their way through a process then share it with the rest of us. Here is a great video that walks you through the process <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAe07DRwidi8>

Some tips for you:

- The video shown by Ryan shows a 3-part process involving 3 pieces of software: Scrivener, Sigil and Kindlegen. It sounds complicated but once you've plodded your way through it a few times it actually doesn't take long at all.
- Sigil has a button (large green tick) that checks your ePub for any problems. It delves into the code in the background for you. Very handy, since everything looks fine and dandy in the WYSIWG editor. After having my upload fail at Kobo, I downloaded two different ePub checking programs before I realised it was already available in Sigil. So now you know.
- Your upload to Kobo is likely to fail if you have links to your Kindle books in the file. It doesn't like links to other bookstores. I prepared my eBook files for Kindle, linking to other books in the series, and hadn't thought to take them out before uploading the same title to Kobo.

I seemed to have learned a lot more than this in the past few weeks (including how to use Photoshop to make my heroine's eyes silver-grey in the cover photo) but right now I'm brain-dead. If you have any questions, I'll try to answer them within the next few days, or direct you to someone else who can.

With acknowledgements to Marg McAlister



Scientist of the Sea writes about God's Ocean Wonders

Commodore Matthew Fontaine Maury, an oceanographer, joined the United States Navy at 19 in 1825, sailing on world voyages. His scientific research included ocean currents, astronomy, winds and meteorology.

During recovery from a leg injury, he requested his daughter to read Psalm 8:8. Hearing paths of the sea he said, "Paths of the sea. I will find them." On making deep sea soundings he found paths flowing from the New York Coast to England and return.

On becoming Superintendent of the UD Naval Observatory, he published extensive volumes about his findings. In *The Beginning of Oceanography*, two of his frequent references acknow-

ledging God as the Creator of the seas are:

"We are continuously surrounded by the wonderful manifestation of God"

and

"I recognise God's hand in every element of the sea by which I am surrounded." Matthew Maury, known for his firm Christian faith, stated the Bible is true and divinely inspired.

He received many honours. A large sculpture in Virginia shows his charts and Bible, with another in the New York Hall of Fame. The International Geophysical year 56/57 was dedicated to Maury and Arctic Research. He set foot on heaven's shores in 1873.

Bibliography

US Naval Historical Museum, Washington. Wikipedia.

Library Corner

Book Review

By Debbie McDermott

Orama Reflections

By Bob & Lynne
Mitchener

Additions to the Library

Many thanks to Denis Schuker for donating
his recently published book:

Trapped on Devil's Peak

The second in the Riwaka Gang
adventure story series

CWG Writers' Groups

AUCKLAND – WEST

Dianne Spain

*(in the absence of Beth Walker who is in
Christchurch attending to family matters)*

Tel: (09) 626 3141

dispain54@gmail.com

CHRISTCHURCH

Dave Palmer

Mob: (027) 216 5743

davepalmer@xtra.co.nz

HAMILTON

Elaine Given

Tel: (07) 843 2849

Mob: (021) 0232 7836

ehgiven@xtra.co.nz

NORTHLAND

Janice Gillgren

Tel: (09) 433 9752

mj_gillgren@ubernet.co.nz

PAEROA

John Milne

Tel: (07) 862 6861

johnrmilne38@gmail.com

TAURANGA

Jan Pendergrast

Tel: (07) 543 2147

jan@roads-end.co.nz

Competition Results

Under 30s

Judge:

Vicki Nogaj

Requirements: Imagine you're a guest at the wedding where Jesus performed his first miracle. Write a first hand account. 500 words.

General Comments

I was very impressed with the three entries by the Smithies children. It was hard to place them as the stories were all enjoyable in their own right. It was so very close.

First Place



**Bonnie
Smithies**
of Christchurch
(16 years old)

The Day the Water Became Wine

I had always told Rachel that she needed to get married. She was such a lovely young woman, beautiful on the outside and the inside. In fact, I had even found the perfect husband for her. Adin was tall, handsome and was even training to be a rabbi. They were a wonderful match.

That's why I was so excited when I found out that they were actually betrothed!

Fast forward months of planning, praying and preparation for Rachel and Adin's big day. It was a beautiful morning. The sky was a pastel corn-flower blue. Cana was looking its best. Everything was all set for the wedding.

Then the guests arrived. Some were from Cana itself, some were from Kefar

Tanhum and there were guests who had travelled a long way to be there. I was one of the select few who helped the bride with her preparations.

The wedding was beautiful. Once the knot had been tied and Rachel became Adin's wife, the guests all settled down for the feast. It was then that things began to go awry.

I've never been quite sure what happened. Maybe someone forgot to order enough wine, or maybe more guests came than had been anticipated. Whatever the reason, the wine ran out. I couldn't believe it when one of the servants mentioned it to me. Who had overlooked such an important detail? Why did it have to be us? And most importantly, what were we going to do?

While I was in this dilemma, I noticed a procession heading to the well. It was a whole group of servants from the wedding carrying six extremely large stone water jars. My first thought was one of panic. These servants were evidently intending to feed water to the guests! That would never do!

I hurried over to them and tried to persuade them to empty out their jars. what I had to say, then politely picked up their jars again and walked back to But they would not. They listened to what I had to say, then politely picked up their jars again and walked back to where the wedding was taking place. Curious (and quite angry, too) I followed them to see what they were going to do.

They took the jars to one of the guests (whose name, I've been told, was Jesus) who told them to take some of the water to

the master of the feast. They did so. I'll never forget the look on the master of the feast's face when he tasted it. He called Adin over to him and told him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now."

I took the opportunity to go back to where the stone jars were standing and taste some myself.

It was wine. Excellent wine. The best I've ever tasted, in fact. Rich and sweet and good.

Who is this Jesus who performs such marvellous miracles? Do you know him?

Judge's Comments

I enjoyed this narrative immensely. It was the finer details which showed a bit of background research which made this stand out for me. Jewish brides are usually betrothed a year before they are married. I would have liked to know more about the narrator. Was she older/younger? What relationship did she have with the bride, mother/matchmaker? I like the prompt at the end that invites the reader to respond.

Please try and include your name and word count at the bottom of the page as I often print them to read them.

Great job Bonnie, congratulations!

Second Place



**Danella
Smithies**
of Christchurch
(14 years old)

Surely Not

"Susannah dear, how gorgeous that new

gown looks!" remarked Martha in the lordly manner she frequently adopted.

I paused to adjust the rich sequined collar then returned the compliment, saying that her deep purple attire matched her eyes 'so beautifully'. I said it, but I didn't mean it. I was certain that the effect my adornments created entirely surpassed that of the woman seated opposite me.

"Lydia, would you try these tarts? They are simply delightful," I said to a young, yet elegantly dressed girl. She smiled warmly and shyly accepted the invitation.

A servant girl came and after depositing a tray laden with a variety of delicate viands she proceeded to gather up the empty dishes. I reached for some fruit then turned to the girl and ordered more wine for the ladies at our table. Apologizing profusely she explained that they were entirely out of wine, but there was plenty more food if we wanted it. I tossed my head disdainfully.

"What a dreadful shame," mused Martha aloud, "that they would be so unthoughtful as to neglect the proper care of their guests. I would never have thought Rachel capable of such a thing." The others all expressed like sentiments and then the talk turned to other matters.

I sighed quietly. Without wine, I thought, there couldn't possibly be the usual festivities that accompanied traditional weddings. The celebrations had hardly lasted a week and now there was no wine to keep everyone entertained.

On the other side of the room some guests started leaving. I heard them say something about 'going somewhere where they would be respected and treated as guests should be.' Glancing across at the sundial positioned in a nearby courtyard, I

decided that perhaps I had better leave also. As I stood up, I heard the sound of excited voices and turned to see several servants conversing behind us, then the girl waiting on our table came over and put a large quantity of wine in the centre of the table. After pouring a glass for Lydia I looked questioningly up at the servant. “So you found some wine?”

“No, ma’am, we were all out of wine, until an awesome thing happened.” Pointing over to where the ‘lower-class’ villagers were dining, she continued, “A young man over there came and his mother instructed us to do what he told us. We thought he would tell us where there might be a secret stash of wine, but instead he gave us the job of filling the water barrels. When we drew some out of them, it had become wine.”

I turned back to the ladies and noticed that most of them were looking slightly pale. I had a strange feeling of wonder and longing that I couldn’t quite reason away. Something deep within me wanted to believe but I was struggling to grasp what had happened. I suddenly felt all unsettled and empty. Maybe this was some supernatural happening?

Judge’s Comments

I enjoyed this as it reads like a period romance and cleverly unravels the shallow materialistic stance in the face of the supernatural. There is so much detail in every sentence it took me a second read to truly appreciate the storyline. You have captured the characters very well and used conversation to accomplish this. I like the way you concluded it with a twist at the end. Nice work!

Third Place



Benjamin Smithies

of Christchurch
(11 years old)

Water into Wine

From the dim evening light I stepped into the brightly lit hall and glanced at the bride and groom standing in the corner sprinkled with flowers, laughing and talking with a large circle of friends. I was heading over to join them when I noticed my dry aching throat from chatting nineteen to the dozen most of the day!

I moved in the direction of where a servant was holding a pitcher of wine. But alas for me, when I got there it was empty. “I’m sorry Sir,” said the servant. “I’ll just go and get some more.” He strode purposefully towards the kitchen. Several minutes later I saw him talking to the chief servant with a very uncomfortable frown on his face. I cruised over to see what was happening.

The servant looked up apologetically and said, “I’m sorry, we are out of wine. Do you know where we could get some on such short notice?”

I shrugged, “Sorry, but I don’t,” and wandered back to a group of friends.

A few minutes later I was puzzled when I noticed a circle of servants watching something with a loud exclamation of surprise and a question or two. One of the servants went off carrying a pitcher in the direction of the master of the banquet.

When he came back he had shock written all over his face. I jostled my way into

the circle and there stood six large stone water jars, the kind used for washing, filled to the brim with choice spiced wine. I wondered how they had got such a large amount of wine on such short notice. I asked the servant. "From the well," he said.

"But wells aren't filled with wine?" I questioned.

"That gentleman over there turned it into wine," he replied.

I was shocked. "But isn't he Jesus, the son of Joseph the carpenter?"

He said, "Yes, that man is Jesus."

I made up my mind to question him as soon as the feasting had ceased.

Judge's Comments

Congratulations on a great piece of writing! I was drawn in right from the first sentence and wanted to turn the page and read the conversation that followed. This would be even better with a bit of 'fattening up'. For example a bit more personal detail about the characters, looks, age, clothing, names etc. Thank you for using dialogue to bring some action and you did this well. Please put a title on your work next time. Good stuff. Keep it coming!

Level One

Judge:

Debbie McDermott

Requirement: HUMOUR—Writing from a spectator point of view, tell us about something that made you laugh till you cracked your sides. The objective is to make your reader laugh with you. 300 words

General Comments

I was pleased to receive three good entries for this competition. It's not easy to

describe a funny incident in a way that will make your reader laugh with you, but Susan, Eion and Ruth achieved this very well. I especially commend Ruth and Susan for giving this assignment a go despite finding it difficult. In my experience writing outside my comfort zone has been very instrumental in improving my literary skills.

When writing humorous pieces, it is vital to keep the narrative punchy and to the point in order to not dampen the comical aspect of the story. Susan and Eion did very well in this respect.

I would like to remind entrants that it is a standing competition requirement to include your name and the word count within the content of your entry—preferably just below the title of the piece.

First Place



**Susan
Flanagan**
of Paihia

Gala Day Games

"Arrrgggghhh!" cried the teacher as the bucket of water above emptied over her in one large, cold splash. The dunking seat was proving hugely popular with school children and I had watched more than one soaked teacher limp off to get changed.

It was a glorious autumn day for the local school gala and I sat down near the bouncy castle kingdom to enjoy my lunch. Three sizes of castles were being guarded by a pretty lady in a straw hat and summer print dress. She smiled at the people passing and chatted to the children while keeping a watchful eye on the castles. A queue of six families kept her busy for awhile, giving change and fastening

bracelets to the children's wrists.

I spotted a young boy sneaking around the back of the middle castle. While the straw hatted lady was busy selling tickets, the middle bouncy castle started sinking and the little boy ran laughing from the back of the castle. The ticket lady turned and saw the collapsing castle, shrieked and dropped her basket of wristbands. She threw her arms in the air and looked around wildly for help. She looked so funny, like an old agitator washing machine as she twisted from castle to crowd. Swish, swish, swish.

A woman I recognised as the school librarian emerged from behind the castle and at the same time the lump of deflated plastic started to come back to life, air filling its turrets and walls. I was close enough to hear her say to the straw hatted lady, "Well we do teach our children to turn things off!" The perpetrator of the crime was being marched to the other side of the field by his parents and the straw hatted lady sunk into her deck chair in relief.

Judge's Comments

Susan's story has a good flow to it from start to finish. There is also good humour throughout the piece, with paragraph three and the second last concluding sentence being particularly funny.

Although Susan's style of writing is simple, direct and easy to read, I do feel some of her sentences are a bit too long. If a sentence is longer than the recommended length (17-20 words max), convert it into two sentences if possible by replacing a conjunction with a full stop. e.g. the second sentence (24 words) in paragraph 1 can be made into two sentences by rewriting it as:

'The dunking seat was proving hugely popular with school children. I had watched more than one soaked teacher limp off....'

Apply the same principle to the first sentence (24 words) in paragraph 2, the second sentence (27 words) in paragraph 3, and the first sentence (25 words) in para 4.

Dispensing with unnecessary 'ands' or 'buts' may be difficult to do at first but it will improve the 'sound' of the narrative when read aloud.

This is otherwise an excellent piece of writing, with only two corrections to be made. They are:

- *Para 3—3rd sentence: Replace the 'and' with a comma.*
- *Para 4—1st sentence: There should be no apostrophe in 'its' in the phrase 'air filling its turrets and walls'.*

Second Place



**Eion
Field**
of Hamilton

CANINE ALL BLACK

Down on the farm where I grew up, we had two dogs. Raid could handle cattle, while Rob was willing enough, if not so bright. But they gave us great amusement with their antics.

My brother and I, keen on rugby, would often have kicks in the paddock near the house (Mum strictly banned us from the front lawn). The dogs eagerly joined in, chasing the ball back and forth as we booted "force-back" punts to each other. Rob, black and rough-haired, was particularly enthusiastic, tearing after any loose ball at high speed, punching it with his nose. The games always featured loud barking, shouts and laughter. Often, Dad joined in as did my sister's boyfriend.

Swirling dogs, mis-kicks, dropped catches, stray passes – they were all part of the fun. And Rob, otherwise mediocre, showed his brilliance playing rugby.

One day, he ‘came from nowhere’ a metre off the ground to intercept a pass from Dad who said later, “Rob was doing sixty!” He swept the ball down the paddock, snapping at it as he nudged it along. We were in stitches watching. How did he anticipate that pass?

In another melee, Rob, famous for leaping after high bounces but not over-familiar with the caprices of the rugby ball, gave us more hilarity. Chasing a grubber kick “at ninety”, he roared past us, swinging into line as the ball bounced end over end down the slope. At the last millisecond it bounced high and Rob reacted a fraction late. He soared up, but the ball passed behind his head as he gained altitude above falling ground. Having completely missed the football, he was airborne at top speed! Finally he belly-flopped to earth and slid to a stop. Back up the hill, we rolled on the grass laughing.

Judge’s Comments

I thoroughly enjoyed Eion’s entry as it is full of humour. His style of writing is also simple, his description of the dog and his antics is excellent, and each stage of the narrative is easy to follow. As already stated in my general comments, simple, direct and clear language is an important aspect when writing humour and Eion has achieved this very well.

Although there is a good flow to this story, the way the sentences have been structured requires inserting a lot of commas to maintain clarity. While Eion’s sentence structure is not incorrect, in modern literature the recommendation is to not ‘over-punctuate’ as it looks messy. To reduce the

number of commas, some of the sentences could easily be reworded. For example, the first sentence of paragraph 2 could be rewritten as follows:

‘My brother and I were keen on rugby and would often have kicks in the paddock near the house.’

Apart from the above recommendations, this is a well written entry with only three corrections to be made. They are:

- *Para 2—sentence 3: ‘force-back’ should be in single quote marks only, because it is not direct speech.*
- *Para 3—sentence 1: there is no need for quote marks around the phrase... came from nowhere.*
- *Para 4—In sentence 1, the word ‘melee’ is incorrect because it means a confused struggle or fight involving many people. Perhaps you could change it to ‘a friendly match’, or something similar. In sentence 2, delete the speech marks from around the phrase... at ninety.*

Third Place



**Ruth
Jamieson**
of Whakatane

Detour

I stood in line as the bridal party greeted the guests prior to the reception.

“My dear,” Johnny said as he turned to his young bride, “this is Mrs. Price. She was my Sunday school teacher for many years.”

“You are looking very smart today Johnny,” I said, giving him a quick hug.

“And you too, as always, Mrs. Price,” Johnny added slightly knocking my hat.

“Be forewarned Sue. I see Johnny still has that mischievous twinkle in his eye,” I said as I gave her a light hug.

Johnny laughed as I left the newly weds.

“Betty.” I turned, recognizing the voice.

“Hello Catherine. I wondered if I would see you here. Dear Jane must be so relieved to see the last of her five boys married. That young Johnny was a real prankster, always up to something. Tell me,” I asked, “were you there that time Jane invited all the church ladies out to her farm?”

“Now that, I recall vividly,” Catherine gave a small laugh. “Jane told me she had spent days in her huge garden bordering the drive up to her house. She couldn’t understand why we had climbed up the hill through the paddock, dodging the cow patties and mud puddles in our heels.”

“I remember dear old Mrs. Smith struggling to keep her car on the track while Johnny and his brother, James, watched from behind the car shed. They were buckled over with laughter.”

“I think they were in for it after that,” Catherine added, “once Jane was told that a rope was across her drive with a sign to say the road was closed and a detour arrow directed us around to the other side.”

Judge’s Comments

Ruth’s entry is well written, but there is a slight lack of connectivity between the first half and the second half of the story. While there is some important background information in the wedding scene, I feel some of it could’ve been abbreviated or

dispensed with in order to describe the funny incident in more detail. This would have made the piece far more humorous, as well as improved its clarity, impact and flow.

With regards to the ‘spectator point of view’, I expected the author to be the spectator, not a third party. I apologise if I did not make this sufficiently clear in the competition requirements.

Grammar and punctuation were generally good. Corrections are as follows:

- *Delete the full stop after ‘Mrs’ throughout the piece. It is no longer necessary to put full stops after initials or words such as Mr / Mrs / Dr / etc.*
- *Para 9—There should be a full stop not a comma after “Now that I recall vividly.” Delete the comma after “Now that..”*
- *Final para—‘Catherine added’ breaks the flow of this closing statement. I think it would be better to precede it with something like, ‘Catherine grinned’. The reader would then assume it was Catherine concluding the narrative and not you.*

Level Two

Judge:

Janice Gillgren

Requirement: Tell us about a subject you are fervently for or against – and why – in only 50 words (exactly), excluding your title.

General Comments

There were six entrants this time, in a competition that was possibly as tough for me to judge as it was for them to write. (A bit of payback after the last overly difficult assignment, for which I apologise by the way).

In 50 words, there is very little room for error, so it was good to see such a lot of effort put into this.

I looked for evidence of fervent feeling, but I particularly wanted to see a very strong focus where every word had to pull its weight, and the whole statement was incomplete without every sentence. I wasn't judging the value of the argument, but how strongly it was presented.

Grammar and punctuation were good in most entries.

A few people (not the place getters) mistakenly included their title and name in the word count. Everyone else did well. Being able to keep to an exact word count is a very useful skill.

First Place



Lynne Michener
of Great Barrier Island

The dilemma of legal highs.

I wholeheartedly support the government's ban of legal highs and animal testing of the same.

What I can't understand is why the Greens oppose animal testing yet abstain from voting against banning legal highs. It appears they would be happy to leave our vulnerable teenagers as the guinea pigs instead.

Judge's Comments

Congratulations Lynne. I've awarded you 1st place. Your entry starts with a clear statement, continues with a complaint, and then draws a conclusion about that complaint. Each sentence leads clearly onto the next.

"What I can't understand is why" is a passive statement, which is best avoided especially when you have so few words you can use. (Passive writing usually takes more words). However, it works well in this sentence because it draws attention to your frustration, not just to the situation you are complaining about.

The title could be improved. 'Dilemma' means 'a difficult choice that has to be made between two or more alternatives'. While this issue is about a choice, your point is that the Greens have made the wrong choice. I suggest two possible alternative titles: 'Illogical Preference for Animals', or 'Pro-animal Bias Leaves Teenagers at Risk'.

Titles are best written in Title Case, in which the first letters of each of the principal words are capitalised.

I'm sure this statement could be expanded successfully for a letter to be published in your local newspaper if you wanted to do so.

Well done.

Second Place



Jean Shewan
of Christchurch

POSITIVES PLEASE

I believe that the media should collect and share good news about our people and our communities. We should recognize and applaud the achievements of everyone, giving credit both to the individuals and to the groups and families that nurtured them. It's time to empower people and count our blessings.

Judge's Comments

Hi Jean. Your entry has gained 2nd place. Well done. I like the way each sentence leads logically on to the next, coming to a positive conclusion, as your apt title suggests. You've used strong, direct language. Each sentence is well composed.

Beware of changing from singular to plural POV unnecessarily. ('I believe... We should...'). Who do you mean by 'we' and 'our'? Is this article addressing fellow media presenters, perhaps? Or does 'we' mean society in general?

Finally, titles are not written in capital letters, but in 'Title Case', in which all the first letters of each of the words (except words such as 'of, or 'them') are capitalised.

Third Place



Judith Powell
of Canterbury

Please Don't Speed

Crash; graunch; an acrid smell; then silence.

Our stationary car was hit by a speeding vehicle. The shock, Jaws of Life, hospital and broken bones left me nervous of driving.

Please drivers – maintain a safe speed and obey the road rules. I want everyone to feel safe on our roads.

Judge's Comments

Hi Judith. I've awarded you 3rd place, so well done. The first sentence grabs attention very effectively, and the following paragraph

shows what this is about. The first sentence doesn't need semi-colons; commas will do the job of listing each noun.

Although the whole argument was focused on the same subject, keeping a consistent point of view (POV) would give it more punch. The change from plural to singular 1st person POV in the 2nd paragraph, then an imperative statement in 2nd person and back to 1st person in the 3rd paragraph is confusing. This change in perspective would not be such a problem if you kept the last paragraph in the same voice. For example, you could merge the last two sentences into one:

'Please drivers ... so everyone can feel safe on our roads'.

This would then be a natural progression starting with what happened to you (1st person), and going on to tell other drivers (2nd person) what they should do about it.

Level Three

**Judge:
Ruth Linton**

Requirement: Write a story for children involving a pet and with a 'take away message' encouraging good character choices. The story should be suitable for publishing as a picture book for four to six year olds. 350-450 words.

General Comments

Writing for children is a challenge and I was pleased to receive so many entries.

Although Jan Pendergrast's notes suggest 32 pages (including two pages for title and imprint details) it was not necessary for this competition; a smaller number of pages may be better for four to six year olds. In any case the number of pages would be finalised at the publishing stage. My suggestion for inserting an extra space to mark end of pages was not a good suggestion in terms

of publishing in the Christian Writer and I do apologise for that. Full marks to Lois Farrow and Addy Coles who chose different methods.

Apart from a lively story told in simple language, the ability to add illustrations throughout the text was very important for this age group and because the competition brief was for a picture book. Overall this was not well thought out and several entries would have fitted better in a magazine where only one or two illustrations were needed.

All entries had a good 'take away' message. Some were clearly biblical which would limit where the story could be published. None were too 'preachy', however, and occurred naturally in the story flow.

The usual recommendations of using a catchy title and direct speech were also important and those who were placed this time did better here. Unfortunately there were too many little errors in punctuation and grammar for Level Three entries. It is something all writers need to be constantly on the lookout for.

Special thanks to Jan Pendergrast for looking over the entries and making several recommendations.

First Place



Lois Farrow
of Christchurch

Choose to Trust God

3. Jerry and Sue bought land in the country with a creek and a long line of pine trees.

They planned their new house.

4/5. "I want my lego room," said Katy.

"Don't forget my train room," said Dan, holding his Marklin engines.

"We have to have a swimming pool," said Dad, pretending to swim.

6/7. "We can't have everything we want," said Sue, looking at the plans. "It will cost too much."

Their new puppy, Fynn, spun round and round chasing her tail. All she wanted was to be with her family.

8/9. The digger came and made flat land for the house. The digger dug channels for the drains. At weekends the family stayed in their caravan.

10/11. The wooden frames were built and the roof was put on.

Katy and Dan played with Fynn in the long grass. Grandad flew his model plane in the paddock and it stuck in a tree.

12/13. One day strong winds blew across the paddocks. "We must go and check the house," said Dad.

14/15. The roof had blown everywhere. Pieces were stuck in the pine trees; some were in the next paddock.

The builder came and built a new roof. He built the sides of the house.

"That is stronger now," he said. "The roof won't blow off again."

16/17. The rains came and filled the drains with water.

"Look, Dad," said Dan. "You've got your swimming pool." Grandad sailed his model boats. Fynn fell in the water and was a muddy mess. She ran around in circles to get dry.

18/19. Grandad checked the section.

“Look,” he said. “The creek is blocked. That’s why the water flowed over.”

The digger came and cleared the creek and the water drained away.

20/21. Jerry and Sue planted one hundred trees that would grow fast and make good firewood. Every weekend they watered them.

One night sheep from the next farm ate all the baby trees.

22/23 “We must choose to trust God,” said Jerry. “Building this house is like building our lives. It takes time and is not always easy, but God will take care of us.”

24/25. Strong winds blew off the mountains. Two gum trees crashed down.

Fynn raced among the fallen branches. She had her family and a fun place to play.

“Now we have our firewood,” said Sue.

Judge’s Comments

Lois tells the story simply using short, crisp sentences. Her use of direct speech is excellent. In several places the story is told in the passive voice (e.g. Pages 8/9 and first line of Page 10) and would be even better written in the ‘active voice’. (e.g. Up went the wall frames. On went the roof.)

There is a warm family feeling to the story.. Everyone’s wishes are included and the references to Granddad and his ‘fun activities’ add extra interest. Granddad is spelled with a double ‘d’ in the middle, being a compound word from ‘grand’ and ‘dad’. This makes it consistent with the spelling of ‘grandfather,’ ‘grandma’ or ‘grandmother,’ and ‘grandchildren’. Jerry

and Sue are introduced on page 3 and become Mum and Dad thereafter. This change could be confusing to children. Lois has divided the story into pages well but not every page would be easy to illustrate. How would you illustrate the family’s trust in God as on pages 22/23 and pages 30-32, for example? I also recommend a different title, one that would catch the attention of children.

I do commend Lois for her attention to basic spelling and grammar. Well done.

Second Place Equal



**Julia
Martin**
of Cambridge

Danny Learns his Lesson

Imprint page

Danny is playing with his new puppy. His name is Baxter.

“Mum,” calls Danny. “We’re bored. We’ve run out of things to do.”

“Why don’t you tidy up your room?” replies his mother. “You might find some of your lost toys.”

“We’re tired of being inside. Can’t we go for a walk in the park?” begs Danny.

“Off you go then, but make sure you keep Baxter on his lead and look both ways before you cross the road.”

“I promise,” says Danny.

Danny and Baxter race out the front gate and cross the road without looking.

A car narrowly misses them.

Bouncing with energy, they enter the park through the big iron gates.

They dart across the lawns...

through the bushes...

over the bridge...

beneath the trees...

past the fountain...

and in front of the playground where children are playing on the swings and slide.

Danny and Baxter pass the caretaker mowing the grass and the gardener weeding the flower beds.

EXHAUSTED! They flop on the ground and Danny drops the lead.

Suddenly, a rabbit pokes his head out of a bush and Baxter disappears after him.

“BAXTER... COME BACK!” yells Danny.

The Park Ranger appears. “What’s the trouble young man?”

“Sir, I’ve lost my puppy.”

“How come he wasn’t on a lead? Didn’t you read the signs? There are baby ducklings in the park and dogs on the loose cause trouble.”

“I’m sorry Sir. He pulled so hard, I had to let go. Can you please help me find him?”

“Follow me,” says the Ranger.

As they hurry past, the caretaker and gardener stop what they’re doing and join the search.

A group of musicians leave their

instruments on the bandstand.

They’re followed by the ice cream seller and balloon man.

All the children and their parents leave the playground to look for the lost puppy.

But Baxter is nowhere to be seen.

As the large crowd of searchers reaches the lake, ducks soar overhead.

Out in the middle of the lake, a small head bobs up and down in the water.

“It’s Baxter!” cries Danny. “He’s in big trouble. PLEASE SAVE HIM!”

The Park Ranger jumps into a small boat and rows towards the drowning puppy.

With a big net he scoops up Baxter and brings him to shore.

Baxter shivers with the cold.

“You’d better get him home quickly and keep him warm,” orders the Ranger.

“Next time, see you obey the rules and keep him on his lead. He’s had a lucky escape.”

Danny and Baxter are pleased to be home.

Danny has learned an important lesson today.

TAKE WAY MESSAGE:

‘Disobedience leads to trouble.’

Judge’s Comments

This is another well-written story using simple words and short, bright sentences.

Julia has made good use of direct speech also.

Using the guide of an extra line space at the end of pages I identified 24 clear pages and most would lend themselves to good illustrations. However, lines such as ‘As a large crowd of searchers...’ down to ‘With a big net he scoops up Baxter...’ could very well be on one page with a single picture. I suggest re-working the story with the pictures as the primary focus.

The section beginning ‘They dart across the lawns ...’ down to ‘and in front of the playground...’ is an interesting section and reinforces early maths terms such as across, through and over. It is very similar to other previously-published children’s picture books and may meet some editorial resistance. With this section too I wonder if you would give a whole page illustrating each of the positions and places, or do a single-page stylised map of the route Danny and the dog took.

There is good repetition (and wonderful scope for illustrations) with the Ranger, the gardener, the musicians, parents and children all joining in the search for the missing puppy. What a marvellous procession!

I am not sure a puppy would get into so much difficulty in the pond. A water dog would happily swim and other dogs would avoid the water – unless, of course, Baxter was over-excited chasing the ducks and accidentally fell in. Writing such a mishap into the story could have added more excitement. I also wonder (thank you Jan for pointing this out) if the ‘take away’ was more about broken promises than disobedience.



Second Place Equal



**Addy
Coles**
of Hawkes Bay

Honey and Her Puppies

- 1) Hine loves Honey and Honey is expecting puppies. Her tummy is fat. Her teats are filling with milk. She digs holes in the garden. She puffs and pants.
- 2) “Don’t worry, Hine,” says the Vet. “It means Honey will have her puppies soon. She wants to make a nest. Put her in the whelping box now, so she knows that’s where her puppies should be born.”
- 3) The whelping box is ready. It’s big enough for Honey to stretch out in and the puppies will be safe. The heat lamp will keep them warm and dry.
- 4) Now Honey is in the whelping box. She pants and grunts. Suddenly she leaves a big watery puddle. The puppies are on their way!
- 5) “Keep Honey with you,” says the Vet. “Phone me if you have problems.”
- 6) Hine gives Honey a drink. Towels, sterile scissors, a syringe, brandy and water are ready for the birth.
- 7) Honey is restless. Suddenly a puppy shows its face and out it comes! Honey licks it and gently bites the membrane around its mouth so it can breathe.

- 8) Now Honey bites the puppy's umbilical cord and licks the puppy clean. Hine helps it drink from Honey's teats and watches.
- 9) Another puppy is born. Hine moves the first born puppies aside while Honey has more puppies. She has eight more! Hine looks after Honey and the puppies. It's hard work, but she keeps going! Then the vet checks on Honey. He gives her an injection. "Well done," says the vet. "You're doing a great job, Hine!"
- 10) Hine is tired but she stays with Honey and the puppies. She helps the smaller puppies find Honey's teats. They can't see yet, but smell the milk. Honey's milk warms them and makes them grow.
- 11) Sometimes Honey has to go outside. Hine looks after the puppies while she's away. On Honey's return, Honey licks her puppies clean. She's a good mother and a big help to Hine!
- 12) Hine takes Honey and her puppies to the vet at eight weeks. He gives the puppies an injection to keep them healthy.
"Bring them back in five weeks for another injection," he says. "But keep them away from other dogs until then."
- 13) Hine listens to the vet and does exactly what he tells her to do. If not, Honey's puppies might die. Hine loves Honey and her puppies and when you love someone you do your best for them, don't you?

Post script (from The GOLDEN RETRIEVER by Joan Tudor) Ed's note— not printed due to space limitations.

Judge's Comments

Abby has written a very sensitive story using carefully selected words and clear sentences. The story progresses well and there is enough direct speech to maintain interest. Page breaks have been clearly identified and, apart from pages five and six, which should be combined for the illustrator's sake, are well placed.

On page ten I suggest rewriting the sentence 'She has eight more' as 'Altogether she has nine puppies.' On this page also 'she' is used for Hine and Honey and it would be wise to clearly identify who the 'she' is in each case to avoid any confusion.

This topic would be too advanced for many in the target age group but there is definitely a niche market for this type of subject. Check the children's section of the local library! The detailed explanations at the end of the story are useful for both the children listening and the reader, but it needs simplifying and breaking down into smaller components. It should also contain a glossary of terms such as umbilical cord, teats and membrane.

I commend Addy for being able to convey so much information so simply and with the minimum of words.

CONGRATULATIONS to Pat Kerr

for her excellent story which was placed third. Unfortunately there was not enough space in the magazine to publish her entry

Notice Board

NZ Writers College 2014 Short Story Competition

Competition entrants must submit their 2000-word stories based on a theme that draws from a line written by Charles Dickens: "... it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness."

Entries must display originality, authenticity, unpretentious writing, believable characters and that hint of bitter-sweetness that runs through all our lives.

First Prize: \$1000.00

plus publication in an anthology of stories

Second Prize: \$500.00

plus publication in an anthology of stories

People's Choice Award: \$500.00

DEADLINE

Submit entries to Nichola Meyer at nichola@nzwriterscollege.co.nz by midnight 30 September 2014.

For full competition details, go www.nzwriterscollege.co.nz



Landfall Essay Competition

Competition entrants are encouraged to think aloud about NZ culture, and to revive and sustain the tradition of vivid, contentious and creative essay writing in this country.

Winning Prize—\$3,000

plus a year's subscription to Landfall

Deadline—5pm 31 July 2014

Winning entry/ies will be published in Landfall's November 2014 issue.

The New Zealand History Research Trust Fund

offers financial assistance to people carrying out projects that will significantly enhance the understanding of New Zealand's past.

This year the Trust Fund may grant one major Award of \$60,000, as well as a number of smaller Awards of up to \$12,000. Any individual or group may apply for an Award in History, but some conditions do apply.

Only works of non-fiction are eligible, and the scheme does not provide assistance for the collection or arrangement of archival material, the preparation of databases, or costs associated with the production and publication of a work.

DEADLINE:

15 October each year

For full details and an online application form, go to <http://www.mch.govt.nz/funding-nz-culture/ministry-grants-awards/new-zealand-history-research-trust>



THE TODD NEW WRITERS' BURSARY

This opportunity is for published writers or presented playwrights at an early stage of their career.

The amount/offer for this funding opportunity is \$20,000

The next round closes: 5 Sep 2014

*For more information contact:
Jill Rawnsley | Senior Arts Adviser Literature
T: 09 373 3077
Email: jill.rawnsley@creativenz.govt.nz*

Competitions for August 2014

Due July 10th

EMAIL YOUR ENTRY AS AN ATTACHMENT, COMPLETE WITH WORD COUNT AND YOUR NAME.

Font: Times New Roman, 11 points. **Line spacing:** single

Spaces between Paragraphs: 6 points **Paragraph Indentation:** None

Please send a high resolution photo of yourself in the event you are awarded a place.

Level One—no age restrictions Open to beginner writers or new members



*Debbie
McDermott*

REQUIREMENT: POETRY: Rewrite Psalm 1 in modern poetry form, using one of the standard rhyming and rhythm formats, and with the same number of verses as the psalm itself.

Email entry to: Debbie McDermott at : sddp@xtra.co.nz

Level Two—no age restrictions Only members promoted from Level One are eligible to enter



*Janice
Gillgren*

REQUIREMENT: Read a biography, published within the past five years, about someone you know nothing about. Then write an article as if you have interviewed that person for a magazine, using a Q and A format. Include the title and author of the biography.

Email entry to: Janice Gillgren at : mj_gillgren@ubernet.co.nz

Level Three—no age restrictions Only members promoted from Level Two are eligible to enter



*Ruth
Linton*

REQUIREMENT: DRAMA: *A Chance Encounter*—At a bus stop you meet a person you do not know and start up a conversation. As a result you are able to insert a relevant testimony to the power of God to help in life. Produce a short dramatic sketch suitable for using as a tool for an evangelism seminar or an open-air outreach. Max time: Four minutes, to be noted the time at the end your entry. (Around 400 words plus stage directions.)

Email entry to: Ruth Linton at : noru@woosh.co.nz

Under 30s—11-30 year age group All members within this age group are eligible to enter, provided they do not enter at another level in the same month



*Vicki
Nogaj*

REQUIREMENT: Rewrite a parable using a modern day context. 400 words. Include your age with your entry.

Email entry to: Vicki Nogaj at : nogaj@vodafone.co.nz