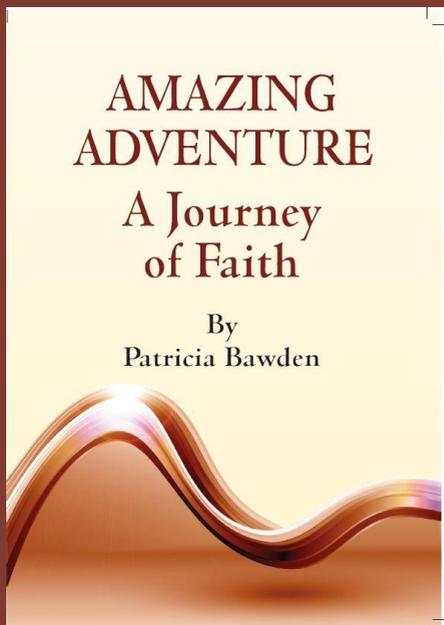


THE CHRISTIAN WRITER



MAGAZINE OF THE CHRISTIAN WRITERS
GUILD NEW ZEALAND

October – November 2013



Supporting
Members' Books

Amazing
Adventure
A Journey of Faith

by Patricia Bawden

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

(New Revised Standard Version of the Bible)



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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 (in 500 words or less) for consideration. Please note that hard copy manuscripts cannot 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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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 to inform the committee on matters of interest, or to make recommendations which will benefit the Guild and its members.

www.nzchristianwritersguild.co.nz

From the President

Greetings to you all on a rainy spring day.

It was great to see a good turnout at the recent Spring Workshop in Auckland. Having more men attend than usual was also very pleasing. Thanks so much to Jan Pendergrast for the time you put into the morning session you led. It is appreciated. Thanks also to those who were on the panel. After listening to Bryan Winters in the afternoon I am not convinced I will make a modern day writer.

I would especially like to welcome Julia Martin onto the committee. I have always admired Julia's writing and am sure she will make a valuable contribution to the Guild. All other committee members were returned to office.

It was sad to hear of the passing of Anne Laidlaw at such a young age. She was a regular attendee at workshops and spoke at one too.

Our sympathy also goes to Rosie Boom whose father, Evan Harris, passed away in late September.

We are hoping to hold our Planning Day shortly. If anyone has a suggestion we could look at implementing, please feel free to put it forward.

After a hard day shearing, a friend sat down in front of the fire and put his feet up. At that moment his wife cleared the papers off the table and popped them into the fire. He watched horrified, unable to do anything, as the \$300 he had just earned burnt to nothing. When my life's work is over, and I stand before Jesus Christ, what will remain of value?

Janet Fleming



Mike and Janet receiving the Citizen award for service to their community—full details on Page 11

CONDOLENCES

The Guild would like to extend its deepest sympathy to longstanding member, Rosie Boom on the recent passing away of her father

Evan Harris

and to

the family and friends of

Anne Laidlaw

who passed away in
August 2013.

A writer of remarkable talent and insight, Anne's published works blessed both the Guild and the public at large. We will miss her greatly.

Passing of Anne Laidlaw

On August 13, 2013

By Frederick Swallow



Family and friends filled St Aidan's Church, Remuera to pay their respects

to Anne who requested her service be a day of celebration. Many paid warm tribute to her as a loving mother whose life was lived daily with Jesus.

During her severe illness Anne said: "He is sovereign, He is in control. If He doesn't do what I understand, I will trust."

Reference to her Christian writing was mentioned by the family, with two of her books being displayed—*Kick Addiction* and *Know God More*.

Anne's writing aim was to uplift the reader in overcoming life's struggles. On being invited to pay a tribute from the Guild, I outlined her Christian writing and said, "Anne's welcome on meeting the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavenly city could have been 'Well done good and faithful Christian writer for using your many talents to the full. Enter into the joy of your Lord.'"

Anne's leisure time was skiing and walking. Family member, Robert Laidlaw, wrote *The Reason Why*, now in its 100th year and with millions having been distributed. (See the April 2013 *New Zealand Christian Writer*.)

For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.

— Hebrews 3:14

CWG Spring Workshop Report

Compiled by Janet Pointon and
Debbie McDermott

Our Spring Workshop was held on
Saturday September 14th at Rossgrove
Chapel, Auckland.

Janet Fleming welcomed us and
apologies were noted.

Colin Gallop opened with prayer and
Eion Field led the devotion from the first
five verses of Psalm 103.

Our morning speaker was Jan
Pendergrast, author of two children's
books—*Tui's Friends* and *Dam
Disaster*—and she presented the topic of
Writing for Children.



*Jan Pendergrast – (inset photo of a range of
children's books Jan used as examples)*

Jan gave each person attending a
comprehensive six-page hand out full of
useful information for those of us who
know how hard it is to write for
children. Key points included:

THE CHALLENGE:

1. What is my reason for writing for children?
2. What age children do I relate best to?
3. What children's books did I enjoy reading?
4. Am I able to see the world from a child's point of view?

WRITE ABOUT WHAT YOU KNOW

- Nature
- Memories
- Machines
- Retold tales
- Places
- Maori legends
- Experiences
- Anything else

Remembering the child you once were is your most valuable resource. Stand in the scene with your characters. Educate where you can—without the kids knowing. Show, don't tell.

HOW TO 'HANG' YOUR STORY

- **The Wall:** Your Audience
Age and gender. Write to one child you have in mind.
- **The Nail:** Your Topic
on which you hang your frame.
- **The Wire:** Your focus
Have a point. Where are you going?
- **The Frame:** Your border
The main body of your story is framed by:
 - The lead, which captures the reader's attention.
 - The conclusion which should be connected to the lead.

Writing the conclusion is the most difficult, but it is an essential part of your frame. Conclusions that echo an image or idea from the lead are powerful. They can also capture

significant events that happen throughout the book.

- **The Picture: The Plot**

The plot—which is the body of the story—should be simple and cohesive, with ideas well connected. Use punctuation and grammar intentionally to enhance connections. Create characters with attitude. Give timid characters gentle actions and adventurous characters bold actions. Keep sentences short. Use words that:

- Convey emotion and humour
- Show action
- Reveal character and background.

Following morning tea we had a panel comprised of Julie Belding, John Sturt, Julia Martin, Catherine Hudson and Debbie McDermott, with Jan Pendergrast taking questions from the floor. Questions asked related to topics such as social media, book cover design children's book illustrators, and subsidy publishing.



Left to right: Julie Belding, Julia Martin, Jan Pendergrast (behind), Catherine Hudson, Debbie McDermott and John Sturt

After lunch Bryan Winters, from Ocean Books Publishing Cooperative, spoke about the reality of bringing a book to

Market. He explained how to create an e-book and suggested we install Calibre, a free and open source e-book software application program, onto our PCs. We can then try and form our own e-book.



Bryan Winters

We all had a very interesting day and left with positive encouragement from each speaker which will help us write even better.

If you would like an unabridged copy of Jan Pendergrast's talk, do email her on jan@roads-end.co.nz. Bryan Winters can be contacted through Oceanbooks (<http://www.oceanbooks.co.nz>).

Feedback from Spring Workshop Attendees

Jan Pendergrast's talk:

Very informative – great notes; loved the handout; inspiring; great overview; very interesting; excellent and exhaustive; expressive; could see the passion; helpful in writing tips.

Bryan Winter's talk:

Informative and entertaining; helped us see the broad picture re publicity and e-books; very interesting and helpful, challenging re technology; more than excellent; certainly opened up the e-book world for me.

**THE NZ CHRISTIAN
WRITER GUILD
30th AGM Minutes
and President's Report**

September 14th, 2013 at Rossgrove
Chapel, Mount Albert, Auckland

31 people attended.

Janet Fleming chaired and Janet Pointon
took the minutes

Apologies: Elaine Given, Julie Belding,
Denis Shuker, Beth Walker, Fred
Swallow, Carol Soole, Janice Gillgren,
Rosie Boom, Beth Roose.

Minutes from last year read by Janet
Fleming. Accepted—Debbie
McDermott / Jan Pendergrast.

Financial Report read by Jan
Pendergrast. (Copies available on
request.)

Total Funds \$3,352.81
121 members

Jan moved the adoption of the report.
Seconded by Debbie McDermott.

Committee

That Janet Fleming continue as President.
Jan Pendergrast / Catherine Hudson.

That Jan Pendergrast continue as
Treasurer: Debbie McDermott / Philippa
Grant

Julia Martin joining committee—Jan
Pendergrast / Debbie McDermott

Current committee members are
standing: Janet Fleming, Jan Pendergrast
(VP), Debbie McDermott, Beth Walker,
Catherine Hudson, Eion Field, Fred
Swallow, Barbara McNaughton and
Julia Martin.

President's Report:

*Good afternoon and welcome to the
30th AGM of the NZ Christian Writers
Guild.*

*Our celebration for the 30th Anniversary
of the Guild was held at Cornerstone,
Whenuapai, on 23rd April, when a
wonderful time was enjoyed by those
attending. Speakers at that time were
Julie Belding, John Sturt and John
Massam, while the Boom family sang a
number of items. We also shared a meal
together and entertained each other at
the evening concert. Awards were
presented including: Achievement
Awards—Denis Shuker and Rosie
Boom; Most Improved Writers—Lois
Farrow and Dianne Ross; Contribution
to Christian Writing—Julie Belding; and
Contribution to the Guild—Janice
Gillgren, Jan Pendergrast and Debbie
McDermott. Copies of the 30th
Anniversary Anthology were available.
In total there were 41 entries in the
Anthology competition. The winners
were Lesley Ayers who took 1st Place,
followed by Dianne Ross and Sarah
Tengvall.*

*Our Spring Workshop was held at
Rossgrove Chapel on September the 1st
last year when Annie Hamilton was
visiting from Australia. It was a special
day. I would like to thank Rossgrove
Chapel for the use of their building. It is
appreciated.*

*Local Groups continue in various areas
which include, Whangarei, (there are 2
groups there), West Auckland, Paeroa,
Hamilton, Tauranga, and Christchurch.
Thanks to those who lead these groups.*

*Thanks also to Janice Gillgren and
Janet Pointon for the work that you*

have both done on the Guild website. It's looking good.

Thank you to those who so ably help in the marking of the competitions. Debbie McDermott, Waiuku, marks Level One, Janice Gillgren, Whangarei, marks Level Two and Julie Belding, Auckland, marks Level Three. I would also like to acknowledge the work that Ruth Linton and Jan Pendergrast have previously done in marking competitions.

Congratulations to our winners for 2012. It's great to see some new people entering the competitions. Overall winners for the year receive \$60 for 1st place, \$50 for 2nd place and \$40 for 3rd.

Thanks to all the Committee members for the work you do to encourage others to write well. Thank you Beth for keeping the Archives and leading the West Auckland Group. Thank you Jan for all the work you do as Vice-President / Treasurer and for leading the Tauranga Group. Thanks Debbie for your work as librarian and for editing the magazine. You do a great job! I would also like to acknowledge the work of Barbara McNaughton, Catherine Hudson, Fred Swallow and Eion Field on the Committee. Thanks also to Jan and Fred Swallow for hosting our meetings and to my husband, Mike, for driving me to and from meetings.

If any of you have suggestions that we could implement as a committee we would appreciate your input.

Our next Retreat is planned for February, 2015. We have decided to hold it then to avoid Parachute. Waitangi Day falls on Friday thus making it a long weekend. We would love to see you there.

Janet Fleming moved her report be accepted. Catherine Hudson / Janet Pointon

Janet Fleming thanked Jan Pendergrast for chairing official aspects of the AGM. She then concluded with reading a letter received from a prisoner and asked Larry Cates to close the meeting with prayer.

Warm Welcome to New Member

KAREN BELK
TAKAPUNA

Of Leaves and Suits?

A little boy opened the big, old family Bible with fascination, and looked at the old pages as he turned them. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible, and he picked it up and looked at it closely. It was an old leaf from a tree that had been pressed in between the pages.



"Momma, look what I found," the boy called out.

"What have you got there, dear?" his mother asked.

With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered: "I think it's Adam's suit!"

ANTICIPATION

By John Milne

All of us are locked into the time factor. King Solomon expressed it so eloquently when he said, 'To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted, a time to laugh and a time to cry'. We look forward with joy or with dread to what may lie ahead. We reflect with regret or with pleasure on what is past, but it is the now time which really matters. That is where regret or satisfaction will come from.

As a child growing up in a different world to what we live in now, I was deprived of close parental care and affection. My parents and young sister died at different times before I reached the age of eight. The passage of seventy-seven years has not dimmed the memory of their passing. Totally bewildered and lost I had no notion of what lay ahead except that it could be dreadful. Anticipation of what could be was dark and frightening.

How we feel and think, what we do, is in context of a much wider and deeper scenario. All of us are influenced and affected by the culture and times we live in. A child has little control of the fundamentals of his life—where he lives, with whom he lives, or the quality of that lifestyle. At a very young age I understood experientially the meaning of vulnerability.

World War Two broke out when I was ten years old. Every night, in *The Aberdeen Evening Express*, photographs and obituaries of healthy-looking young

men were published with the caption, 'Missing presumed dead' or 'Killed in action'. The future for a teenage boy looked bleak.

Enemy aircraft would cross the short distance from bases in Norway to our city of Aberdeen, in the north east of Scotland, to drop their lethal cargo of bombs. I recall the dreaded drone of heavy bombers overhead and the terrifying whistling sound of falling bombs. The house would shake and the ground would shudder, but more acutely would be the shuddering of the citizens below. There was no air raid shelter nearby, but even if there were, there could be no protection against a direct hit. I clearly remember huddling in a cupboard under our staircase with my brother and sister, wondering what it would feel like to be blown into a thousand pieces.

My formative years were moulded in the context of anxiety and high drama. There were no guarantees about tomorrow. It took a while to understand that what I think becomes what I do, what I do becomes who I am, and who I am becomes my destiny. 'As a man thinks in his heart so is he.' Destiny is more a choice than an inescapable future event. The real battleground is the mind. That is where the future is decided.

I have a fine teenage grandson called Micah. His Biblical namesake said something which has influenced my whole life: 'The Lord requires you to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God'. The beauty and power of these few words lies in their clarity and simplicity. When accepted and practised they are life changing.

Mike and Janet Fleming Recognised for Community Work

The Guild extends its congratulations to Mike and Janet Fleming for receiving one of this year's 16 *Citizen* awards in recognition of years of unpaid, selfless work to make their district a better place. The awards were presented by Mayor Wayne Brown in a ceremony held on Friday, September 20th at the council chambers in Kaikohe. The full citation for the Flemings (quoted from *The Northern Advocate* newspaper) is as follows:

Janet and Mike have organised activities for at-risk youth in Kaeo for more than 30 years and are renowned for trying to make the town a place where youth can develop and prosper. These activities include running after-school and youth groups, as well as a Friday night Kids Rally which is attended by more than 50 children.

Janet and Mike also take young people fishing, hold Bible classes and help run Christian youth camps where their ability to make wonderful meals out of very little is legendary.

Many children in Kaeo come from families with little money or no transport, but Janet and Mike make sure that isn't a barrier to them taking part. They collect kids from their homes in vans and return them safely afterwards; often with food for the rest of the family.

One father, whose son goes to Janet and Mike's recreational and Bible programmes three days a week, says many children in Kaeo would have a very different life without the Flemings.

"The planning and effort they put into our children is amazing and we are so lucky to have them."

Come and Pray

By Carole Ruth Soole



*Friend why do you run away?
Come and pray with me today.
I'm the one you're searching for
Call on me, don't close the door.*

*My friend I love you don't you know
The Holy Bible tells you so.
I am faithful through and through
Trust and see what I can do.*

*The past is over can't you see.
My grace has always covered thee
Your future is worth fighting for
Peace and joy for evermore.*

*Come and pray with me today
I am the truth, the light, the way.
I can make you strong and bold
No good thing will I withhold.*

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18a
*Pray continually, give thanks in all
circumstances.*

GET CREATIVE

Many thanks to Sarah Tengvall of Wellington for submitting such a delightful story on the topic of *Spring Chickens*.

Spring Chickens

By Sarah Tengvall

Our three fluffy bundles arrived in Spring. Recently hatched, the trio, still bare skinned with patchy feathers and bulgy black eyes, bonded to each other tightly. My daughter became their adopted mum and tenderly hand raised them in a cat carrier in her bedroom! The warm heat lamp was constantly monitored, as was their chick crumble food. But the essential growth element was love, and that they received in buckets from my affectionate Isabella.

Eventually they outgrew their nursery and despite adventurous runs it was time to relocate and get creative with my son Hugo in tow. The pair busily constructed a large chicken run on our steep suburban section bank. The pristine dog kennel was turned into 'Issey's Chick House' complete with a hand built nesting box and pull up wooden drawbridge door. The bank was a busy mass of posts, sturdy chicken wire fencing and a roof of berry enclosure green netting.



Newly christened as Kowhai, Fred and Zoe, the Bantam chickens were ready for transition. Now fully grown their legs supported clumps of feathers like mini gumboots. And they had a 'bustle' bottom. Their colours were gloriously rich, deep and individual with feather tips edged in a contrasting trim, brown/camel, black/green and radiant white.

The trio are a team. They run in a group, waddle in a group, eat in a group and snuggle up in a group. And oh the joy of collecting eggs and capturing that feeling of new life once again!

The next topic will be

Old Hat

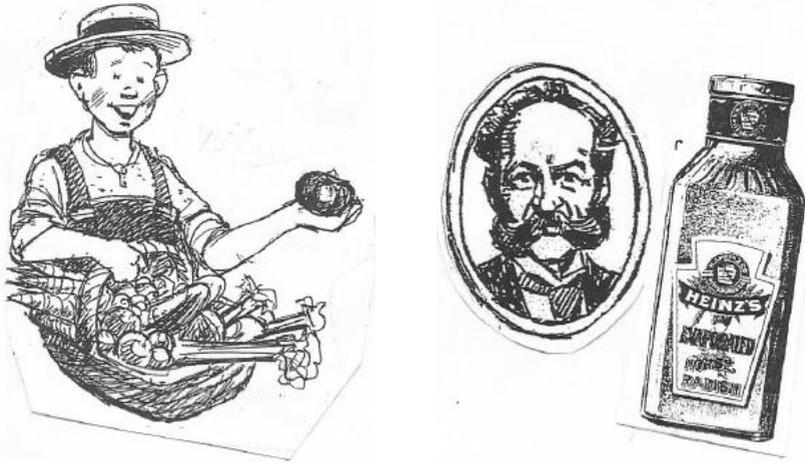
Maximum 40 lines for poetry and 250 words for prose.

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 November 2013

WRITING BRIEFS

Inspiring Christian writing of today and yesteryear—by Frederick Swallow



In 1854, at the age of twelve, Henry J Heinz—founder of Heinz foods—sold to neighbours vegetables he helped grow in the family garden in Pennsylvania. He also bottled horseradish sauce. His enterprise grew but in 1875 he suffered bankruptcy in a national financial crisis. He noted the debts in a *MO (Moral Obligations)* book and repaid all. Heinz products sold well again with new products and manufacturing methods added. Initially he advertised 57 Heinz varieties. Today there are over 3,000. He treated his employees well and provided them with many benefits. Henry’s Lutheran parents taught him the Christian life was the best life. He was a keen Sunday School supporter in the USA and the Orient. Heinz UK gave away 57 Mini Minors in a 1961 soup contest! A good and faithful servant, he entered heaven in 1919.

The last will of Henry J Heinz was headed ‘...the most important item in it [the will] is a confession of Jesus Christ as my Saviour.’

Bibliography

Henry Heinz and Heinz Bottle Illustrations. Thanks to Heinz USA, UK

Kiwi Gemlets from an Immigrant's Perspective

By Deborah McDermott

I was in love with New Zealand long before our plane landed at Auckland Airport on 20th April 2006. The main reason for that, of course, was that my husband was already here, waiting for me and our boys to join him. I also knew from the photos I'd seen that we were immigrating to a gorgeous country. Even so, I was unprepared for the exquisite beauty that greeted my eyes the following morning. I wouldn't have been quite so blown away had we been able to see the lovely rolling hills and pastureland from the air the night before.

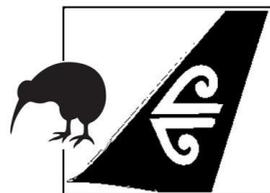
It was not just the verdancy and abundance of livestock I found breathtaking, however. Everything was just so *clean*, making me feel like I was living inside a pristine picture. I suppose everyone who comes here from Africa feels a bit like that. It took a while getting used to not having to dust the furniture everyday. As for the rain, I really enjoy it most of the time. Having grown up in an area regularly stricken by drought, it is wonderful bathing in more than four inches of water without feeling guilty! Coping with weeds as tall as my house is another story, but I'd rather have green weeds than a desert any day!

Kiwis often ask if I miss Zimbabwe and I can honestly say no. There

is so much here that is appealing. For instance, the number of birds in New Zealand may be vastly fewer than in Africa, but what is lacking in quantity is made up for in character. I think in particular of the tui with their funny white neck feathers and amazing variations in their calls; the pukeko with their quirky gait and cheek; and the ducks that waddle around Waiuku as though they own the place!

One of my most poignant memories of my first year in New Zealand is of the lovely pōhutukawa trees coming into flower just before Christmas. Their rosy blooms made me think of Zimbabwe's bright red poinsettias: two very different plants, yet both blossoms representing the most significant event in history.

Much water has flowed under the bridge in the past seven years – some of it sad and yet exceedingly joyous at the same time. Life has a way of not standing still but God continues to take me on and upward as I choose to carry on walking with Him through the thick and the thin. He brought us to New Zealand and I am so glad He did. Here is home and always will be. What's more, I am now a citizen of this wonderful country. Now how sweet is that? If the gratitude in my heart is anything to go by, Kiwis really can fly!



Library Corner

Book Review

By Debbie McDermott



Amazing Adventure A Journey of Faith

By Patricia Bawden

From the outset it is clear that *Amazing Adventure* is the start of what was to become a lifelong pilgrimage for Patricia Bawden. Her seven month journey of faith begins with a call to the Hebridean island of Iona (where St Columba first brought Christianity to Scotland), and is followed by visits to numerous Christian sites in UK, Europe and USA. With the primary focus of the book being on the healing ministry of the church, each stage of the journey is peppered with extraordinary answers to prayer and a keen sense of the love and holiness of God.

Perhaps the most enjoyable aspect of this book is how well Pat portrays God's response to childlike faith. Each step of her journey is provided for in ways that can only be from her Heavenly Father. How He connects her with people throughout her travels is also remarkable.

Fifty years later, the vision of Christian unity God gave Pat on her journey is due to be realised in 2014, as preparations are now well underway for celebrating the first Christian service to the Maori people in New Zealand's Bay of Islands.

Amazing Adventure is a fast-paced, well written and inspiring story that is told with conviction and passion. A highly commendable book and worth reading.

To obtain your own copy, contact Pat Bawden at pmbawden@xtra.co.nz, or DayStar Books via <http://www.daystarbooks.org/>

CWG 30th Anniversary Anthology



With Christmas coming up, *In the Stillness* is the perfect gift for family and friends.

Containing 41 devotions written by Guild members and a lovely photo on each page (several of which are in colour, including the photo on the cover), this anthology costs only \$10.00 per copy.

To order, email Jan Pendergrast on jan@roads-end.co.nz

New Additions to the Library

Many thanks to the following Guild members for donating copies of their published works:

Rodney Hickman for his collection of

POEMS Volume One



John and Agnes Sturt for their book

Created for INTIMACY

2nd Edition

New Competition for the under 30s

Due to providing our readers with incorrect contact details for submitting their entries, the Guild is re-launching the new 11-30 year age group bimonthly competition.

Both members and non-members are eligible to enter this particular competition. All entrants will receive **one year's free membership** to the Guild.

Future competitions in this category will be for members only.

TOPIC

Complete the following statement

Life was simpler when...

and use it as the beginning of a short narrative piece. It should be written from the point of view of someone from your grandparent's generation.

(500 words maximum)

DEADLINE

10 November 2013

First Place entry will be published in the *Guild's* magazine.

Email your entry as a Word document attachment to Vicki Nogaj at

nogaj@vodafone.co.nz

with 'CWG comp Attn Vicki' in the subject line.

Don't forget to include your name and the word count in your entry.

Also send a head and shoulders photo of yourself, to be published with your entry if you win.

Log Onto JANICE GILLGREN'S weekly blog

offering inspiration,
encouragement and useful tips for
writers at all levels.

www.wordsandscenes.co.nz

CWG Writers' Groups

AUCKLAND – WEST

Barbara Rabey

*(in the absence of Beth Walker who is in
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Notice Board

Atlantis Short Story Competition 2013

Writers from all around the world are welcome to enter.

1st Prize: \$300 + in-depth feedback

2nd Prize: \$100 + in-depth feedback

3rd Prize: \$50 + in-depth feedback

GUIDELINES

- Short stories in English, previously unpublished
- Group work allowed, max. two authors per short story
- Fiction and stories based on true events (put fiction or non-fiction on title page)
- No theme or genre restrictions
- Title page presenting the title, author's name, contact information/email and the word count. (The Judges only get your short story; the title page merely fulfils administrative purposes)
- Double-spaced
- No more than 2,500 words
- Microsoft Word Document or PDF
- Only online submissions accepted at <http://www.atlantis-shortstorycontest.com/site/page000.aspx>
- A maximum of seven stories per writer allowed
- The writer retains all rights to their story
- Writers who have earned more than \$5000 through their published work are not allowed to enter.

DEADLINE:

November 30, 2013

Romantic Poetry Writing Contest

Open to contestants anywhere in the world, 18 years old plus. All work must be the original work by the contestant.

Prizes:

\$1,000 to the winner
\$500 to second prize winner
\$200 to third prize winner.

Closing Submission Date:

February 1st, 2014

For further information go to <http://writersviews.com/writing-contests-romantic-poetry.php>

NZSA Asian Short Story Award

Entry is open to New Zealand permanent residents who are Asian or of Asian ethnicity. Short stories will be in English, and the theme is open. Stories will ideally contain some Asian content, though not necessarily be set in Asia.

The minimum length of entries is 2,500 words, and the maximum length of entries is 3,500 words.

1st prize: The Asia NZ Foundation Prize of \$1,000. **2nd:** \$500. **3rd:** \$250.

Deadline

5pm Friday 6 December 2013

For further information go to <http://www.authors.org.nz/wa.asp?idWebPage=38553&idDetails=192>

Competition Results

Judges do not edit entries before they are reproduced in the magazine. Major weaknesses and errors are discussed in the judge's comments, and entrants also receive a more detailed critique on an individual basis.

If you're not sure which level you're on, check the 2013 reference sheet sent to you in December 2012, or email Jan Pendergrast on jan@roads-end.co.nz.

Under 30s Competition

Judge:
Vicki Nogaj

Requirement: INTRODUCING YOURSELF —
in 500 words or less.

First Place



**Melanie
Aitken**

All About Me

My name is Melanie Joy Aitken and I am thirteen years old. I live in a family of 5 and I am the youngest member. My older sister is 15 and my older brother is 17. Something I enjoy doing with my family is playing board games like Monopoly, Settlers of Catan, Escape from Colditz, RoboRally and Risk

I live in Christchurch and attend Riccarton Primary School. I am above the national standard for all my

subjects. This year is my last year at Primary because I am year eight, next year I start High School. At school I am part of the Road Patrol team, Club Captains (like school council), Business Brains (enterprise group), Kapa Haka, netball team and am a Librarian. We have a school pool and I won a swimming cup at school. In our school cross-country I came third. Drama and writing are my favourite subjects but mathematics is a close second.

My club netball team just finished for the season but I used to play Saturday Netball. I take piano lessons and recently passed Grade 5. In my spare time I like to write in my diary, read books, bake something nice, play video games or play outside with hula-hoops and skipping ropes. I love sour lollies, chocolate, cool clothes, the colour green and all fluro colours. My favourite dinner is lasagna and my favourite desert is chocolate self-saucing pudding. In terms of food my family say I am a fussy eater but I just think I have simple tastes.

When I grow up I want to be a lawyer because I enjoy arguing and I think being a lawyer would be challenging and fun. Also, I love to be organized and lawyers are very organized people.

In my life, something that I value is my Christian faith. God has helped me through a lot of things and He is very important to me.

I try to get involved in everything I can and as you can see that is a lot. My life is very busy and on top of all these things I also love to hang out with my friends. Writing is something that I enjoy and it's been fun to do this.

Judge's Comments

Dear Melanie, congratulations on being the first entry and automatically winning first place as there were no other entries. Please spread the word and tell your friends as this is a fantastic opportunity for budding Christian writers. I was very impressed with the high standard of writing and grammar you exhibited and had to go back and double-check your age! You are a very busy and multi-talented young lady. Your writing reflects your organised and efficient personality as every sentence was succinct yet informative but with a touch of humour squeezed in for good measure. Your entry will be published in the magazine if this is okay with you and you'll be given a year's free membership.

I'm looking forward to receiving more writing from you and thank you again for setting the benchmark so high for future entrants!



Level One

Judge:
Debbie McDermott

Requirement: LETTER —Write a letter to a grieving friend who isn't a Christian. Express your sympathy from the Christian perspective, but in such a way that you are not preachy. 200 words.

General Comments

I was pleased to receive six well-written entries for what turned out to be quite a difficult assignment—not just for the writers but also for me! In order to mark each letter fairly, I had to imagine I was the bereaved person on the receiving end, and a non-Christian at that. Do you know how hard that is when you've been a believer for 35 years, and Christian expressions or clichés have become such a part of your everyday talk that you don't notice them? However, unbelievers do notice, but—because they are not familiar with Christianity or church—they can either misinterpret our Christian expressions, or simply fail to understand what they mean. It is therefore vital to keep our speech simple and clear when talking to non-Christians about God.

With this aspect in mind, I carefully read each entry through several times before awarding places. With so few errors in grammar and punctuation, the deciding factors in the marking were based on the level of empathy and concern, the simplicity of language, and how effectively the Christian viewpoint was put across without being preachy.

As already mentioned, this was not an easy assignment, so well done to those who gave it a go.

First Place



**Susan
Flannagan**

of Paihia

Dear Sarah,
How are you? Really? I was so sad to hear the news of your loss and my heart goes out to you. Although I have never carried a baby to term, I have suffered miscarriages and know it takes time to come to terms with the grief and pain. Some days the ‘what ifs’ and the ‘buts’ can overwhelm and you start to wonder if life will ever be normal again. Whatever normal is!

I found such comfort in God and the bible. I know you don’t necessarily share the same beliefs but I really want you to know that God is there for you if you need Him and His heart hurts for you too. I hope you don’t think I’m preaching to you. I just want the same comfort and hope for you that I have.

I love you Sarah. If you ever feel like talking, please call. I have an ear for listening and a shoulder for crying on, anytime.

Take care of yourself.
Love Susan.

Judge’s Comments

What impressed me when I first read Susan’s letter is how she immediately engages with Sarah by asking ‘Really?’ As the ‘recipient’, that simple question

made me feel like she was making eye-contact with me on paper, and I’m sure a bereaved person in a real time situation would feel the same. Needless to say, my heart was captured by the rest of the letter which continued to express Susan’s deep love, concern and empathy for her bereaved friend.

Susan also puts across her Christian viewpoint clearly and with respect for Sarah’s beliefs. She avoids using words Sarah may not understand and also takes time to identify with her loss. Offering a shoulder to cry on any time is a very strong conclusion too. Providing ongoing friendship and support is a critical aspect of helping people get through grief, which can be an extremely lonely process otherwise.

Apart from the recommendations below, grammar and punctuation is excellent.

- *Para 1—sentence 4: As the word ‘term’ has already been used in the first half of this sentence, I suggest changing the second half to read, ‘...come to grips with grief and pain.’*
- *Para 1—sentence 5: I suggest changing ‘can overwhelm’ to ‘be overwhelming’ as it reads better.*
- *Para 2—‘Bible’ should be capitalised.*

Overall, this is an excellent piece of writing. Well done, Susan.



Second Place



**Cindy
David**

of Titirangi,
Auckland

Dear Marife

I am very sad to hear about Edward's death. We loved Edward dearly, too. He was such a good friend to me and my family. We are still coming to terms with losing him.

I wish I could find the words to help ease your pain. Sometimes life confronts us with hard questions, and the hardest one always begins with 'why'. Why does God allow this? Why do we lose the one that we love most?

Every time I struggle with these questions, I look back at the Calvary—the place where God sacrificed His own Son to die on the cross, so that I may be saved and someday be reunited with my loved ones in heaven. In death, tears will be wiped away, and there will be no more pain and sorrow. This gives me hope even in my darkest moments.

I'm sure God has his arms wrapped around you now and wants to give you the same hope. Don't forget that He has also placed loved ones and friends around you, including me.

You are- and will continue to be in my thoughts and prayers.

With my deepest sympathy
Cindy

Judge's Comments

There is a very clear Gospel message in Cindy's letter that was not quite so apparent in the other entries. She has also used words such as 'saved' and 'Calvary' which may be baffling to a non-Christian. However, her love and desire for Marife to have the same comfort she has come to know through Christ shines through so strongly that this letter is anything but preachy.

Although Cindy anticipates the hard questions her friend may be asking herself, she does not try to answer them but rather empathises by sharing on how she has learnt to cope with her own struggles and why she can have hope for the future. While what she has said may seem incredible to a non-believer at first, it does have the potential to replace the awful 'Why?' questions with a 'How?'—which can lead to a positive outcome.

Reminding Marife that she is one of the friends God has placed around her is also a strong conclusion.

There are a couple of minor errors with grammar and punctuation as follows:

- *Para 2—last sentence: delete the word 'that'.*
- *Para 3—1st sentence: delete the word 'the' before 'Calvary'. Also replace the hyphen with a space followed by a long em dash.*
- *Para 5—Replace the hyphen with a comma. Also insert a comma after 'be' so the sentence reads '...to be, in my thoughts and prayers.'*

This was a very good piece of writing overall. Well done, Cindy, and keep up the good work.

Third Place



Judith Powell

of Oxford,
Canterbury

Dear Sue,

I am sorry to hear Don has died. You shared so much that you will miss him immensely. I can only guess how you are feeling, however you know I am thinking of you and love you. Tell me if there is any way I can help.

I want to tell you about something that happened when our children were small. It showed me I was not alone, that my Heavenly Father loves me and cares about every part of my life.

I always did the ironing on Wednesdays. One Tuesday God told me to do the ironing that day. My reaction was, "I always do it on Wednesday." The voice repeated, "Do the ironing today." So I did. Later that day my mother-in-law visited and offered to take the girls to town. I was able to pack easily as their clothes were all ironed.

I saw then that God is interested in the little things. When you feel lonely ask Him to comfort you. Tell Him how you feel. He does listen and He is interested in every little detail of your life too. You just need to ask Him to help.

Love,
Judi

Judge's Comments

There is a gentleness about Judith's letter that makes it very appealing. The first paragraph is particularly good. Even if we have gone through grief ourselves and are able to empathise out of our experience, we cannot assume another bereaved person will feel the same way we did. Judith's admission that she can only guess how Sue is feeling is an open invitation for her friend to share her feelings when she is ready to do so.

Judith's personal and simple example of how God cares about what we go through is an effective way of sharing her faith without being preachy. However, because the loss of a loved one is so traumatic, the phrase 'the little things' is inappropriate and should be changed to 'everything'. Using phrases like 'God told me' and 'The Voice repeated' in paragraph three may also seem eerie to a non-Christian. I therefore suggest changing them to 'God prompted me' and 'However, the strong feeling to do the ironing today persisted.'

With regards to the conclusion, I think the offer to help (made in paragraph one) should be repeated—especially as Judith has encouraged Sue to speak to God. A non-believer often does not know how to begin to pray, even if you've explained it to them in simple terms, so it's important to reassure them of your willingness to help in any way you can. This can lead to all sorts of God-given opportunities.

A couple of grammatical errors needing correction are as follows:

- *Para 1—3rd sentence: Replace the comma with a full stop. Write 'However you know....' as a new sentence.*
- *Para 3—the 1st sentence should read 'I always do the ironing....'*

Well done, Judith, for submitting such a good piece of writing. I look forward to receiving further entries from you.

Level Two
Judge:
Janice Gillgren

Requirement: MEMORIES OF DAD—Tell us about a terrific Dad (your own, or someone else’s) and how he helped you to understand our Heavenly Father better. Show, don’t tell. Use plenty of dialogue and action rather than narrative to do this. Approx 300 words.

General Comments

This assignment required specific use of both dialogue and action to reveal your message about the terrific Dad you were featuring, so I was on the lookout for these aspects.

It was difficult to decide between the first two stories. Nola’s won because of her use of exciting descriptive language, the clear lesson at the end, and being closer to the correct word count.

Some entries were over the required word count. I know it is hard to try and sum up what a Dad meant to you in only 300w, but the clue is to focus on a small piece of action.

The standard of writing was reasonably good for most entries; the main problems being with only small issues of punctuation. As a higher standard is expected for level two entries, this was good to see.

Finally, please take note of the format requirements, as seen on the back of the CW. I often delete unnecessary spacing between paragraphs before sending entries to the editor.

First Place



**Nola
Mickan**
of Papakura
South Auckland

The Day God Threw A Party

Other people might remember us as being poor, but I remember us being rich. It all began when my dad prayed on Christmas Day during the depression years.

“Well family,” said my father as we four children sat around the Marmite and bread on the table, “let’s remember how much our heavenly Father loves us as we give thanks for Jesus’ birthday.”

“Father, we want to thank you for providing for our spiritual needs by sending your son, Jesus. We know that because you love us so much, you will supply our daily needs too. We want to say ‘Thank You’ on Jesus’ birthday.’ Amen.”

I opened my eyes to see if food had miraculously appeared on the table, but it was as ‘unparty-ish’ as before. The disappointment tasted like the bitter tonic my mother doled out each morning.

A scuffling on the porch drew our attention. “It’s those cats again,” said my brother, throwing open the porch door. “Wow! What’s that?” he screeched.

Eyes popping, we all stared at a large, gift wrapped box.

“Who’s it from? How did it get there? What’s in it?” The questions tumbled out of our mouths as fast as we were tumbling over each other to reach it.

Pushing through our wriggling, Dad carried the tinsel and ribboned box inside. Heads hovering over the top, we all gasped as each wonder was lifted out... A Christmas cake, packets of sweets, colourful cordial mixes, fruit mince pies, juicy red plums, balloons, hard boiled eggs, a jar of preserved peaches, and a bottle of cream.

‘Children, that’s our heavenly father’s love for you. Don’t ever doubt it.’ Dad’s voice trembled.

We never discovered who provided our meal that day, but one thing we learned. We weren’t a poor family. We were rich; rich in the love of a heavenly Father who delights to give good things to his children. Our Dad taught us that.

Judge’s Comments

Hi Nola. I’ve awarded you 1st place for this delightful little story. You’ve written this so well, I feel like I’m at the table with you, feeling your disappointment at first, then your excitement at the wonderful parcel!

A few little points:

- *In your 2nd to last paragraph, ‘father’ should be capitalised, as you did in the other places you speak of the heavenly Father.*

- *In the 3rd paragraph, you have an extra single speech mark after ‘birthday’; quite possibly a typo.*
- *Although ‘Dad’ in the last sentence doesn’t need to be capitalised, it seems appropriate enough to do so, considering the context.*

There were only a few small punctuation errors that I noticed. Well done.

Second Place



**Vicki
Nogaj**

of Welcome Bay,
Tauranga

Daddy to the Rescue

“No, I’m scared; the crabs are going to nip my toes!” Seven year old Mikayla protested. It was always the same every time they went to the beach.

“Mikayla, you can’t stay here by yourself when we’re all in the water, come and be part of the family” Coaxed Stefan, her father, extending his hand.

“No, no, I’m scared, please...” Her bottom lip trembled and unshed tears glazed her chocolate brown eyes.

“Mikayla, look at me.” Stefan crouched down to her eye level.

Mikayla squinted at him, trying to focus on his face.

“Daddy’s not going to let anything happen to you. Trust me baby girl, okay? He smiled and reached out to

tweak her nose but she edged backwards, shaking her head.

“You’re not the boss of the crabs; they can still get me if you’re next to me ‘cause they hide under the sand.” She reasoned still trembling with both fear and cold.

“They can’t if I’m carrying you.” He opened his arms and waited.

She tipped her head and creased her brow in concentration.

“Okay, but don’t put me down when we get in the water.” She stipulated before moving into his embrace.

“I’ll put you down when you’re ready.” He lifted and carried her to the water wading to waist deep.

“Stop! It’s too far!” She squirmed in his arms as her legs were splashed by the waves.

“Mikayla, trust me, you’re fine, look at your brothers body boarding!” He pointed as he slowly eased her further and further into the water.

“Yay! They caught one, go boys, do it again!” She was so focused on the others she soon forgot her fear.

Fifteen minutes passed.

“Daddy put me down I want to go and body board with the boys.” She begged.

She conquered a three year long fear of crabs that day thanks to the gentle leading and support of a patient, loving father. Observing my husband with our head strong daughter, reminded me how the Heavenly Father’s perfect love casts out fear.

Judge’s Comments

Hi Vicky. I’ve awarded you 2nd place for this entry as it fits the criteria very well, and is interesting and well written. It flows well and has an appropriate title. You have carried the simple storyline well, with dialogue and action as required. At 338w it is too long, though, which is its main failing.

There are also some punctuation errors I’d like to point out.

- *In the 2nd paragraph, ‘come and be part of the family’ should either be a sentence on its own, or be preceded by a semicolon. Also, the word ‘coaxed’ shouldn’t start with a capital letter.*
- *Speech marks are needed after ‘okay?’ in the 6th para, to finish the father’s speech on that line.*
- *In the 7th para, ‘She reasoned’ should be followed by a comma.*
- *10th para: ‘she’ in ‘She stipulated...’ shouldn’t be capitalised, as this part of the sentence finishes off the speech in the first part, and should have a comma before it.*
- *‘They caught one, go boys, do it again!’ would be better as two short sentences. e.g. ‘They caught one! Go, boys: do it again!’*
- *2nd to last sentence needs a comma after ‘Daddy,’ and a full stop after ‘Daddy put me down.’*
- *I realise there is a trend toward not hyphenating words that used to be connected this way, but hyphenation can reduce confusion, especially if the first of the two words is (or could be used as) a verb, such as in ‘head strong’.*

Well done.

Third Place



Heather Vincent

of Matua,
Tauranga

Memories Of Dad.

“Aww, Kath, stop teasing me, I hate you, you’re mean,” I yelled at my sister, again. She loved teasing me unmercifully, and I had taken the bait, and fought back, losing my temper in the process.

Later, full of remorse, I hid in my room. That’s where Dad found me. Sitting on the bed beside me he quietly asked, “What’s wrong?”

“It’s Kath, she’s always saying things to make me mad, and no matter how hard I try I can’t help myself saying mean things back. I wish I could change.” And I sobbed into Dad’s arms.

Dad’s hugs comforted me, and as my sobs subsided he said,

“How about we pray about it? Why don’t you tell God how you’re feeling and ask for His help in overcoming your bad temper?”

“All right,” I managed. “Will you help me please?”

And so he did.

Sometimes when Dad came to say goodnight I wanted an excuse for us to talk longer, so I’d think up a question to waylay him. He’d stand at the door, patiently listening to my questions and

answering with wisdom and grace.

Conversations with my Dad, knowing that he loved and accepted me are precious memories of my childhood.

As a child I never worried about not having enough because I trusted Dad to provide all my need. He didn’t always give me what I wanted, but I knew he’d give me what was best.

As an adult, with a family of my own, Dad’s loving prayers followed me. His understanding and empathy came from his own experience of being a parent. How like our Heavenly Father – always there for us; caring, listening, encouraging and unconditionally loving. We can come boldly to Him in our hour of need, trusting Him to provide for us from His abundance.

Judge’s Comments

Hi Heather. I’ve awarded you 3rd place as your story fits the criteria reasonably well; although as both action and dialogue are lacking from the latter half, it didn’t do as well as it could have.

You’ve used clear, strong language; suitable for both adult and children’s speech, so it is easy to imagine being in the situation as you describe it.

The first sentence would be better broken up into shorter sentences, as the amount of commas you’ve used is more suitable for a list, rather than a series of statements. e.g. “Aww, Kath; stop teasing me. I hate you! You’re mean!”

The paragraph starting ‘As a child...’, and the last sentence in the final paragraph, don’t seem to fit the rest of the story.

The word count is fine, though a more suitable title would help.

You had a few different line spacings, which I corrected before sending to the editor. Please check your format before sending your work. Thanks.

Level Three

Judge:
Julie Belding

Requirement: UPDATE FAIRY TALE — Rewrite an old fairy tale, giving it a modern spin. 500 words.

General Comments

I did enjoy reading these, and wish I could have given awards to all of them.

Sometimes the tiniest things — such as spelling errors — are what separate the different placings. It can be hard to edit your own work, but well worth the effort if you are going to submit your story for publication.

First Place



**Carol
Duffy**
of Upper Moutere
(near Nelson)

Goldie and the three Bruins

Once upon a time, not so long ago, there was girl named Goldie. Her curious and covetous nature led her into trouble. It happened like this.

Goldie lived in a ramshackle house with her parents and six brothers and sisters. They didn't own a car, couldn't afford holidays, and were always hungry. Over the back fence lived Mr and Mrs Bruin and their daughter, Diana. They had a big house, a big yard, a flash car and often went on holiday.

Well, one time when they were away, Goldie couldn't resist exploring their place. She slipped through a loose board in the fence.

Oh, the wonder of it all! Goldie bounced on the trampoline, went so high on the swing that she could see her sisters hanging out the washing, and then explored the treasures in the playhouse. This held things she'd seen on TV or in a shop, but never touched before. She played with Barbie and Ken, their house and car, until a wheel came off. But it didn't matter – did it?

Outdoors again, she found Mr Bruin's bow and arrows on the patio. She'd always wanted to try archery. The first few attempts were poor, but then she got the knack. Twang! The arrow flew high, and straight through a garage window. Oh dear! She couldn't get in to retrieve the arrow. She placed the bow and other arrows carefully as she'd found them, and went home.

A few days later, when the fright had turned to an excited memory and the guilt had subsided, she went back. This time, hot after bouncing on the trampoline, she had a swim in their pool. Wandering in the sun to dry out she noticed a shade house. Inside were Mrs Bruin's prize begonias. The beautiful big blooms entranced Goldie.

As she gazed at them, she didn't notice a hose, part of an automatic irrigation system. She tripped and fell. She grabbed at a shelf to stop her fall. The shelf, the pots, plants, soil, stakes and Goldie all landed in a tangled heap. Her best efforts to restore order failed. She went home, very worried.

Next day the Bruin family came home. After unpacking, they went outside. Soon shouts filled the air.

"Someone's been in my playhouse!" yelled Diana, rushing out with the broken car. "My stuff's all moved, and Ken's car is broken."

"Someone fired one of my arrows," roared Mr Bruin. "It broke the window and knocked a can of paint over my tools. There's an awful mess."

"Someone's been in my shade house," cried Mrs Bruin. "Three of my best hopes for prizes are ruined!"

The family started looking around for more signs of the intruder. Mr Bruin noticed a board out of place in the fence. He gathered hammer and nails, fixed it firmly in place, and checked the rest of the fence.

"I don't think we'll have any more trouble," he said. And they never did.

Judge's Comments

A great story, with the original tale easily recognisable, and the descriptions of the chaos easy to visualise.

Suggestions: The opening para is a little jerky, so I recommend joining the first and second sentences with 'whose.'

I'd use an exclamation mark after 'one of my arrows,' since Mr Bruin is roaring, after all. And avoid the word 'very.' It is always superfluous.

Well done on an entertaining narrative.

Second Place



Lesley Edgeler
of Tokoroa

Nowayella

Nowayella lived with her two step-sisters Selseena and Moreweena. Selseena was only interested in herself; Moreweena always wanted more. Whenever Ella requested something they'd both reply, "No way! Ella."

At school her friends kept talking about the upcoming ball. Ella asked if she could go.

Selseena said, "No way, Ella! You have nothing to wear and you have to study."

"We need the money for ourselves," Moreweena added, "We're not going to spend any on you!"

The night of the ball, her step-sisters went out. Ella looked at her school books and sighed. It wasn't fair. A guy called Bryan had asked her to go with him and she'd had to tell him no. She opened a text book.

A few minutes later there was a knock at the door.

“Here you are, Ella,” Grandma said, presenting her with a beautiful dress and matching shoes. “Bryan’s outside waiting. Hurry up and get changed into these. But remember to be back here by 11 o’clock or your step-sisters will be home before you and then they’ll be angry.”

“Okay, Grandma. And thank you.”

Ella borrowed her Grandma’s cell phone. Grandma had her Granddad’s one with her. She saw Bryan beaming. He looked handsome in his black tux.

“Hey! Ella. You look great!”

“You do too.” Ella replied as she got into Bryan’s car.

They had a marvellous time. By 11 o’clock, Ella had forgotten her Grandma’s warning.

Her cell phone beeped. *Come home quickly. Grandma*

We’re coming.

In her rush, she tripped on the step leading out of the auditorium. One shoe came loose. She didn’t have time to retrieve it.

Bryan dropped her off and gave her a kiss on the cheek. Ella approached the door just as her step-sisters arrived.

“Where do you think you’ve been?” Selfeena demanded.

“To the ball.”

“Oh you have, have you?”

Moreweena locked Ella in her room that night and confiscated the cell phone.

Ella looked down at her feet and removed the remaining shoe. Then she cried herself to sleep.

The next day a memo came around the classes mentioning the missing shoe. “Ella’s,” thought Bryan and, as Ella was away, went to collect it at recess.

After school Bryan went to the step-sisters’ house and knocked on the door. No one answered. He tried Ella’s tiny window. No response. He banged on it with the shoe.

Ella appeared. “I’m locked in,” she shouted.

“Okay,” Brian replied.

Just then Grandma drove up the driveway. Seeing Bryan by the window she walked over to join them.

“Cheer up Ella,” she said. “I have some good news. Your step sisters have been apprehended for theft. You’re coming to our house to live.”

Bryan smiled and contacted the locksmith.

Later, Ella emerged smiling in her old clothes. She was rapt! She had the other shoe back and now she wouldn’t have to live with Selfeena and Moreweena anymore.

“What did they steal?”

“My cell phone!” smiled Grandma.

Together they went to McDonald’s to celebrate.

Judge's Comments

Another charming story, with a clever twist in the tale. The last sentence could be deleted, as Grandma's words make a great punch line.

Suggestion: Avoid constructions like "My cell phone!" smiled Grandma. This is because you cannot actually smile words – you can only say them, However, it's okay to write: "My cell phone!" Grandma smiled. (In the second example we have two separate sentences.) Otherwise, good writing!

Third Place



**Pat
Kerr**

of Roxburgh,
Otago

The Pied Piper of Hamelin

Once upon a time, the town of Hamelin was overcome with vermin, rat-like creatures that infested every electronic device in the town. No computers, smart phones, TVs, ipods, ipads, transmitters or Kindles would operate...if they were on, they would not close; if they were off, they would not open. Life in every household came to a chaotic halt.

It was the summer school holidays. Hot sun, long daylight hours, with bored youngsters everywhere.

Families sat at the breakfast table in silence, unable to communicate without their devices. Fathers escaped

to work. Mothers decided to weed the garden. Children, big and small, tearfully rubbed their "pet."

The Community Board members were at a loss. What could they do? Bored children could turn into vandals trashing the community with graffiti, throwing objects...the possibilities had the Chairperson, a mature woman of large stature and status (in her own eyes), reaching for her smart phone. It was not working!

A young man pranced into the room, rousing the board from their united stupor.

"Greetings your Worship and Honourable Ones," he gushed. "I believe you have an electronic crisis. I am an expert in all matters ET. I offer you immediate, completely painless reversal from this mess. I will have your youth dancing in the streets faster than you can spell Kim Dotcom backwards!"

The Chairperson jumped up, bling flapping dangerously,

"How did you get in here? Have you ID? This room is electronically secure..." her voice trailed off.

The security was electronic.

"Madam, I can break the code of even the most expensive system. If you want your children back to normal let me apply my ID-ten-T system at once. It covers all electronic systems."

"How much will it cost?" squeaked the Treasurer.

"I want exclusive control of all electronics in Hamelin."

The Chairperson felt faint. Her 10 year old aspired to this role.

“A show of hands accepting this proposal,” she ordered.

Unanimous.

Immediately the guru went outside, fiddling mysteriously with his small hand-held gadget.

Children poured out of every house. A strange noise was heard: conversation, laughter, glee... soccer balls, basketballs, marbles appeared. Games were being played and laughter filled the air.

The young man re-entered the Boardroom where gleeful voices announced: “It’s working!”

“My contract for exclusive sales of electronic devices please!”

No-one heard him. He repeated the question. No reply.

He walked outside, fiddled with his device, and immediately his ears were hurting from the wailing and bad language. All the devices had died. The games outside didn’t stop, but the Boardroom scene was ugly.

“My contract...”

“A contract please, secretary...”

“My computer is down!”

“Push this button!”

She obeyed. Immediately devices winked, whistled and beeped. Sanity was restored. Fingers pushed and poked.

“I now have exclusive rights to

manage all electronics in Hamelin. Thanks!”

He left.

Outside he ducked to avoid a tennis ball, stepping over hopscotch and marbles.

“Another ID-ten-T problem solved. IDIOTS!”

Judge’s Comments

This is a fun story, enhanced by humorous touches. Entertaining as it is, it almost won first place, but was marred by a few spelling errors. Note that graffiti has just one f. iPods and iPads are spelled like that, and 10 year old should be spelled “ten-year-old,” since all numbers under 20 are normally spelled out.

I also recommend you use italics for emphasis, rather than all capitals, as in the last word. However, you are to be commended for a thoroughly readable tale.



This metal frame depicting the piper sits outside the Hameln museum, Germany

Competitions for December 2013

Due November 10th

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

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

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

To determine which level you're on, check the criteria on the 2013 reference sheet sent to you in December 2012 or email Jan on jan@roads-end.co.nz

Remember to send a photo of yourself in the event you are awarded a place.

Level One—no age restrictions

Requirement: **DIALOGUE:** You have just reunited with someone you haven't seen for a very long time, so you have plenty to say to each other. Recreate the scene with plenty of dialogue between you and the other party. 400 words.

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



*Debbie
McDermott*

Level Two—no age restrictions

Requirement: **CHRISTMAS:** Write a love story (parent-child or man-woman) that starts with or is based on a Christmas event. About 500 words.

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



*Janice
Gillgren*

Level Three—no age restrictions

Requirement: **ARTICLE:** Write a 600-word article for a mothers' magazine on Surviving the School Holidays on a Budget. (Assume a family with three children of primary school age.)

Email entry to: Julie Belding at julie@belding.co.nz



*Julie
Belding*

Under 30s—11-30 year age group

Requirement: Complete the following statement 'Life was simpler when...' and use it as the beginning of a short narrative piece. It should be written from the point of view of someone from your grandparent's generation. (500 words maximum).

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



*Vicki
Nogaj*