

Come All Ye for March 2002

Another record night with 80 in the audience and plenty of new faces on both sides of the 'stage'. This was a truly unexpected result as we have a smorgasbord of events for poetry lovers in the next few months. It shows that the association now has a great variety to offer for all tastes at just about any time.

Leigh Matthews, our MC for the night, lived up to the 2nd part of the reputation on his T- Shirt - "*I'm unreliable, impossible, immature, undisciplined...But I'm Fun!*" Leigh had an appropriate comment, ditty or poem for each performer, but kept these brief and to the point and he was indeed fun! The night went like clockwork; with a bit of time for a social chat afterwards.

The evening featured WA's northern areas. **Geoff Bebb** starting off the evening with his "Exmouth Cup" saga. This rendition was even more humorous than his debut last year. I think that Wireless Hill has honed down Geoff's performance, as it has for many other performers in our association, the general standard has lifted another notch. **Syd Hopkinson** also came up with Carnarvon and Meekatharra experiences with his "Real Bush Tucker" and cyclone-affected "Denis The Menace". I've met a few of these thieves and terrible kids during my time teaching ... the punch line seems very apt and well deserved in both cases.

Northern Queensland was also featured by two of our new faces. **Bob Suann** read "Just Dreaming" by Bluey Whyat for a friend in Ravenshoe (I had to look it up - 17°37'S and 145°29'E. in the Reader's Digest Atlas if you are a surveyor at heart). The tale was of Granddad's recollection of youth as related to his grandson, complete with anomalies and memory lapses. **Anne Tracey** recited her "Gunpowder" River in Mt Isa, also written for a friend. This was the edited version, I hear, which was a winner in the Mt Isa Eisteddfod, much to Anne's pleasant surprise.

Moving round the country, to outback South Australia **Rusty Christensen** gave us a couple of Bob Magor poems. "Snakes Alive" a new one, and an old requested favourite about 'the wonders of classic machinery', involving a granny. He brought these to life with all the characteristic, energy and sardonic humour that Rusty brings to all his recited works. This just *had* to be followed by Kerry's "Mammogram". Thanks for the requests Rosa. Looks like you and your lady friends had fun too.

Now back to the 'Back of Perth' stories from the **Rod and Kerry Lee** duo. For the uninitiated, Rod and Kerry have been relating this long-standing saga-duel-epic, from their 10-acre allotment in Oakford. If you haven't been there yet, give yourselves a treat and attend their "Great Aussie Evening". Rod led off with a demarcation issue between himself and Kerry regarding the super, turbo "Blower Vac" which left a trail of devastation on their property. This is true contemporary/humorous bush poetry at it's best. Kerry had every right to retaliate but had been heavied into keeping her new best poetry for the Milton Taylor night. She then recited a new poem by Norma Jeffries - on the perils and joys of farming - a love/ hate relationship she could easily relate to. The 'joy' part, according to Kerry, definitely comes in the form of owning a horse, no matter how much he costs. I wonder if Kerry has the bumper sticker "Poverty is owning a horse"?



While we had a crop of new poetry to keep our evening fresh, the classics were not forgotten. Another new face, **Peter Drayton** kicked off with a very professional rendition of "Clancy of the Overflow". Later in the evening Peter gave us one of his own, a very complex and thought provoking piece called "Brave New World" involving post September 11 issues. Welcome Peter, we love to see new talent.

David Sears carried on with the traditional Thomas Spencer classic "How McDougall Topped the Score". David's lively rendition, complete with bowlers action packed gestures, was complimented by enthusiastic audience participation. Rusty and Geoff also kept the Banjo tradition alive with a couple of "Saltbush Bill" episodes. Banjo is of course in the news with the wonderful Barry Crocker --- in town at present. A much recommended show by all of our members who delighted in it.

What tremendous variety we have at our CAY's now. If you haven't been back for a while, you will be pleasantly surprised. Another new face to be welcomed tonight is **Trish Joyce** who gave us her "Caught in the Act" about a hapless gentleman caught in his own zip. Am I glad I'm female! Thanks Trish, we look forward to more.

I also did my bit of new poetry to aid our distant cousin the Orangutan at Perth Zoo. This poem "Hirsute Madonna" which will appear in the 2nd edition of my new book. (Just thought I'd get away with a small commercial - the perk of being a sub-editor!). While on the subject of commercials, Rod wetted our appetite with a heart-warming recitation of Milton Taylor's "Queenie Lucinda O'Toole". We're in for a real treat when Milton Taylor arrives - despite the Ansett collapse.

Cheers

Michelle





Burragundle

In the town of Burragundle there's a sanctimonious air,
 And the goodly congregation all kneeling down in prayer,
 With the righteous Enoch Brewster a' really into form
 And a thumping on the altar and a' preaching up a storm.
 For the sermon is on whisky and the cursed demon rum,
 And the fate of all who drink it on the days of kingdom come.

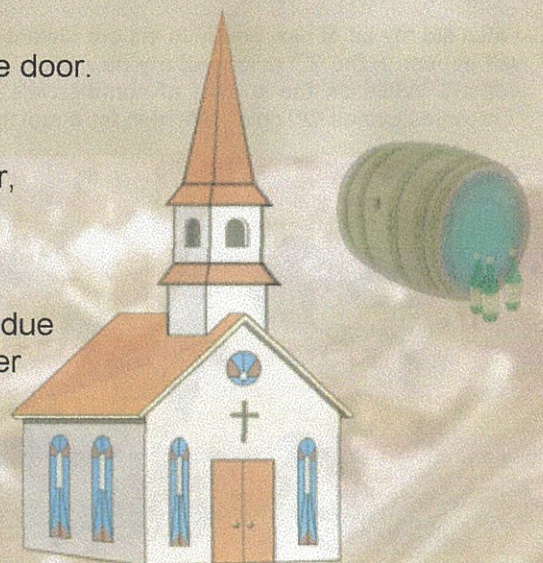
For those non-rural Barrugundalites, who choose not the pews to fill,
 Make their living from the brewery that is perched upon the hill.
 The sermon reached its zenith and Enoch with all his power,
 Called upon the Lord to send an admonitory shower,
 Just a little fire and brimstone, to demonstrate His will
 And wipe out that abomination that is perched upon the hill.

The Lord, His wonders to perform has many different ways,
 And the stilts that held the whisky vats had known of better days.
 The timbers in the mainframe were full of pith and rot
 And inhabited by termites, a most besottled lot.
 When a million drunken mandibles finally brought the lot undone,
 They set a mighty hogs-head, upon a downhill run,

The keg's course was erratic, its contents raw and neat,
 And it gained in its momentum when it reached O'Reilly Street,
 Perhaps a chance deflection, which caused the keg to lurch
 And changed its whole direction towards poor old Enoch's church.
 The parishioners grew restless at the noises in the street,
 And the youngest and the boldest even shuffled in their seats.

Till the tumult of the multitude rose above a roar,
 The whisky keg, its run now spent, rolled slowly through the door.
 It came to rest somewhere twixt the altar and the pews
 And from its shattered portals, the grog began to ooze,
 Then exploded like a thunder clap with a God Almighty roar,
 Soaking all and sundry from the altar to the door.

Sunday morn in Burragundle and there's not a vacant pew,
 For this whisky-scented sermon we must give the Lord His due
 And the goodly congregation are all kneeling down to prayer
 And praising their salvation on the whisky scented air.



General News and Events

We have had so much happening that I needed to abbreviate on some letters in order to get more news to you. The writing is also getting smaller, so I hope you can cope. I apologise in advance for anyone or anything I miss out. Please inform me if it was hugely relevant and I'll place it in the next newsletter. Michelle

Boyup Brook 2002

Brian announces that the event was a great success, with an audience of about 400 at the Poet's Breakfast, which seems the highlight of the show. Thanks to all who supported this event. The poets were **Rusty Christensen, Leigh Matthews, Pat O'Leary, Ron Evans, Rod and Kerry Lee, Arthur Leggett, Joan Macneall with young Alan Gill and Brian** of course.



To maintain the standard of performance for the Sunday session in future years, it may be necessary to choose the top six or seven poets. Poets at the Pub is gaining a bigger following with an improvement of the venue and the general atmosphere. The Lions Club, who do the Poet's Breakfast, announce that from the next festival, Breakfast will be supplied by them. See you in the future. **Brian Gale**

Poetry Evenings at Margaret River District Club Last Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm

Phone Brian on 9757 2431 or Keith on 9757 2596

Organised by Brian Gale assisted by Keith McLeod. Bring your favourite poems to recite or read with friends, and share a night of hidden talent. Poets and audience, all ages welcome.



MILTON TAYLOR VISIT

Rod and Kerry would like to thank all those who combined to make this visit possible. I'd like, on behalf of all the association to thank *them* for all the hard work in organising these events.

Thanks to Brendan Parker for the photos for this article



I went to the Piney Lakes evening. The centre by itself is well worth seeing :- the entertainment under a newly erected sailcloth, under the stars, was top class. Milton really portrayed the classic view of our outback people, their courage, mateship, tragedies and triumphs over adversity, with genuine feeling and real tears in his eyes. This was no light weight evening, nor a light weight "entertainer". He conveyed these strong feelings via his own heartfelt works, those of the classic Paterson, Lawson and O'Brien as well as works from contemporary Australian poets Denis Kevins and Mark Gliori.

I learnt something new and rather disturbing from Milton. The Kevins poem, written in 1995 was a letter to Banjo informing him that Kylie's Run has been destroyed, both the homestead and the acreage has been turned over to radiata pine. Thank heavens; at least the poets are keeping our heritage alive, through their poetry.

Milton's last poem seemed to sum up his philosophy, as well as that of many other true Aussies "Do The Best With What You've Got". Milton was brilliantly supported by Rusty presenting Bob Magor, Rod presenting Coleen McLachlan and Kerry presenting a tribute to The Women of the Outback. My only regret was that not more people attended. Surely next time we can manage more than 50 people. **Members, you missed out on a truly stunning performance by all these poets.**

Michelle Sorrell

The Saturday night by contrast had a record turn out of over 150 people. I'll let Kerry tell you about it:-

"Milton Taylor was an excellent choice. Thank you Rusty! After Milton's very moving performance at Piney Lakes I wondered if he could be equally as good at comedy. I needn't have worried!

The event kicked off early evening with Rusty and Lee positioned on hay bales under some trees and Chris Sadler and myself similarly situated. The audience sat on sleepers, which Rod and Milton cut up the day before. Luckily Milton wasn't a "prima donna" type as the poor man was worked hard on Friday. I hope he doesn't spread the word or we may never lure another Eastern States Poet over again!

Peter Capp opened the main event, followed by Milton, a break, then the same format again. It was refreshing to hear new poetry. The professionalism of Milton's performance was inspiring.

About 40 people camped over and were treated the next morning, after a BBQ breakfast by a variety of funny poems by our regulars, followed by an even funnier show by Milton, involving the audience with hilarious results.

When we talk poetry to the unconverted we often see the shades go down (Yuk! Poetry!). It is a thrill when these people comment later that they didn't realize poetry could be so much fun. I think it was even more of a thrill to hear, after the Piney Lakes night that people discovered the depths of entertainment that lies in the traditional, emotive poems. We all love a good laugh but these poems take us to a higher level and deserve our attention. Thanks again for your support."

Kerry Lee

Your newsletter is going to 5 ½ pages this issue due to a memory lapse by the sub-editor who was to print page 6 on the back of page 5. As she abhors waste, rather than lose 130 pages you have gained ½ a page of news. This irregularity should be rectified next issue when her memory returns (hopefully!). Cheers Michelle

Letter to the Editor

Women in Bush Poetry & Yarnspinning

This, as we are constantly being reminded, is the Year of the Outback. The story of the outback (as we well know) is one of harsh beauty, courage and survival against the odds.

It is seldom that the subject of the story and the storyteller are one and the same. As bush poets and yarnspinning, I think we have a duty to tell the stories in a full and balanced way. Surprisingly, nearly half the population of the 'outback' is made up of women. This has apparently been the case for some time, although by looking at the more popular bush stories, you may be forgiven for thinking otherwise.

Paterson, creator of the 'Bronzed Anzac' image of Australia, was very much given to the manly pursuits of droving, soldiering and polo. Few female characters are featured in his works, those that are being very much accessories to their men-folk. Lawson, who loved the battler and found the bush a cruel mistress, was greatly influenced by his feminist mother and tried very hard to place himself in a woman's shoes. (No, I don't believe he was a closet transvestite). Barbara Baynton and other women who wrote at the same time about the day-to-day life and death struggles endured by women in the bush, who described drover husbands as slave-drivers and swagmen as psychopaths (and were probably not far off the mark) have been largely ignored by the *hoi polloi*.

Sadly, this imbalance is reflected in our own activities. The recent Marybrook weekend is a good example, the line-up of performers being 100% men, except for the pianist. (I believe there was one woman in the original line-up, but her husband didn't want to go down, so she pulled out). We had a female state champion yarnspinner a few years ago, but now she prefers to perform at CWA functions.

The objects of our association include the preservation and propagation of bush stories. I believe that is about both sexes, BY both sexes. So, let's get a bit of affirmative action going here – we have female president, secretary and committee members, how about more female Bush Poets and Yarnspinning to celebrate the year of the outback?

Stinger

**Advertise your product, association or event here next month
For only \$5. Reach 130 members and their families**

Bowman Furniture Industries P/L



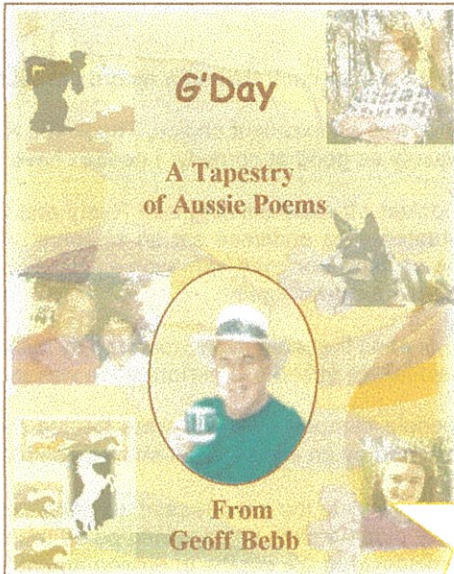
**158 Maddington Rd
Maddington WA 6109
Ph: 9493 4333
Fax: 9493 4933**

Email: daverodkerry@bigpond.com

Quality cabinets and consoles for your TV and stereo equipment. From Rod & Kerry Lee

G'Day

A Tapestry of Aussie Poems



From Geoff Bebb

\$10 only

Backfire

This happened 40 years ago while travellin' interstate
Chasin' up a shearin' job, the night was gettin' late.
It was me and John Johansen that was drivin' through the fog,
We was lost and getting' nowhere, then, we bottomed in a bog.

"We'll have to leg it," Johnny says, "I think it's gunna rain
And I'm sure I saw a letter box away back up the lane."
We walked and found the letter box and through the gloom we saw
A light inside a farmhouse, so we fronted at the door.

Our knock was quickly answered by a lady with a lamp.
"Whatcha want!!" she bellowed, so I said, "A place to camp.
We're cold and tired and hungry Missus, could you see us right?
We only want a nice warm place to camp in for the night."

"Ya' can't sleep here! I'm on me own! I got no extra beds!
There's straw and lucerne hay down by the feed room near the sheds.
Make yourselves a bed in there, and take this as a warning,
Don't hang around termorrer, youse go early in the morning!"

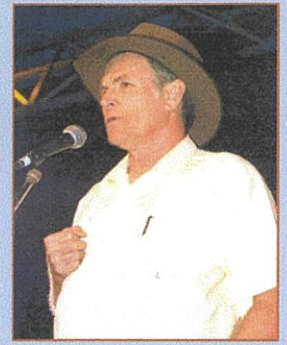
Well, the straw was soft, the hay was warm, John snuffed out like a light
And I'll admit, I had a very pleasant time that night.
At 6 a.m. the old girl's voice came rattlin' through the shed.
There's eggs and bacon up the house, and tea and toast," she said.

We had a bonzer brekky, we couldn't eat no more,
The old girl's attitude to us had softened, that's for sure.
She went and got a tractor and a length of bullock chain,
Pulled us from the bog and sent us on our way again.

Well, 12 months later Johnny phoned. "I wan't to talk to you!
Remember that old farmer girl?" "Yeah, John," I said, "I do."
"That night when I was sleepin', did you sneak out of the shed
And go and wake our hostess up and crawl into her bed?"

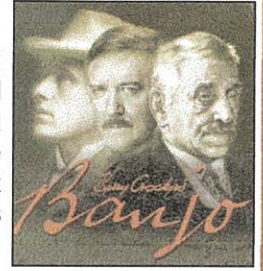
"Well, Johnny, cobber, yeah, I did." I answered, filled with shame.
"And furthermore, you cunnin' rat, you gave *my* bloody name!"
"Well, yeah, I sorta, mighta done. John, you're a decent bloke,
Now you've found my secret out I hope you get the joke."

"Yeah, very bloody funny! But I s'pose ya' gotta laugh,
A joke like that is pretty good, too clever mate by half.
But I'm not angry with ya' mate; I'm rather glad ya' see.
The old girl died 6 months ago – and she left the farm to me!!"



Barry Crocker's "Banjo"

Strictly speaking this isn't Association news, however it was such a good show that I recommend it to you if it comes around again. Many association members did attend and commented very favourably at the next CAY. Rusty Christensen was very pleased to also get a phone call from Barry Crocker himself, (with an offer to share a cup of tea on his return to the state), as a reply to his letter. Geoff and I also were lucky enough to be offered opening night tickets and meet Mr Crocker and Mr Holly Wood, with an offer to go on radio in a few months time. Many of our poets are now reaching the airwaves and spreading the Bush Poetry Gospel.



Vale Wendy Walton



Wendy passed away last month. This lady was not only one of our members; she was a gifted teacher, writer, a member of the "Jolly Jotting Company" and an author of many poems to the "Dawn Magazine". She was in the middle of a romance novel and a children's book when she died. Unfortunately, long illnesses, medication and the death of her husband made life for Wendy very difficult in the end and masked her many talents. The association sends its condolences to all her friends and family. May she truly rest in peace and her spirit shine through her writing legacy.

Poets Out and About

A tribute and thanks to all our hard working poets

As I said before, our poets are now performing far and wide. **Rod and Kerry** are doing a special recital and breakfast at the Workshop & Company in Dandaragan from Frid. April 5th–Sat. April 6th for the whole community, including the up and coming poets at the school.

Rusty Christensen has just finished an entire weekend at the Caravan Show (a huge annual event) on the South Perth foreshore. I believe he's off to a special Get to Know Fremantle ambassadorship. More to come on this one.

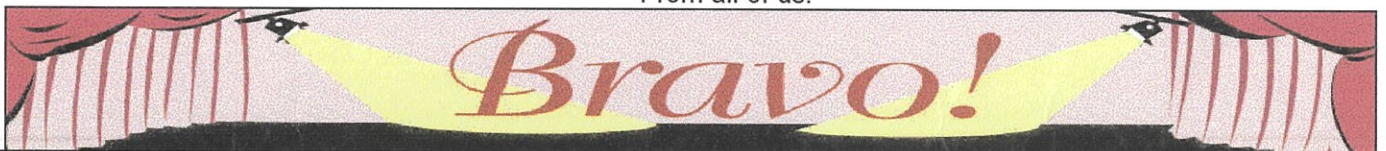
John and Anne Hayes have just completed an Eastern States tour including Norfolk Island (doing workshops for schools) and met up with the Hunter Valley Poets on their way back down south. I believe they're off again soon to an as yet, undisclosed destination.

Geoff Bebb has been asked to recite at the Premier's Book Awards dinner at the Alexander Library, next month. Some horse poems may be the go with Dr G G Gallop! (I can hear you groan ... sorry! couldn't resist that one). Geoff has just returned from a round the world trip which included lots of Bush Poetry promotion (and our books) to the unconverted in England, Canada and even Chile. (Bush Poetry in Spanish should be interesting.)

Val Read has recently won "The Dusty Swagman Award" for bush poetry (written competition).

Congratulations! Val

From all of us.



Committee Contacts Year 2001 – 2002

Name	Address	Position	Phone	E-Mail
Lorelie Tacoma	16 Gratwick Tce Murdoch, WA 6150	President	9310 1500	tacoma@tpg.com.au
Peter Nettleton	3 Ashwood Pl South Lake, WA 6164	Past-President	9417 8663	stinger@iinet.net.au
Michelle Sorrell	Unit 1, 8 Hill St South Perth, WA 6151	Secretary	9367 4963	msorrell@iinet.net.au
Geoff Bebb	Unit 1, 8 Hill St South Perth, WA 6151	Treasurer	9367 4963	geoff@surpac.com
Rusty Christensen	51 Coogee Road Ardross, WA 6153	Committee	9364 4491	
Rod Lee	160 Blair Road Oakford, WA 6113	Committee	9397 0409	daverodkerry@bigpond.com
Kerry Lee	160 Blair Road Oakford, WA 6113	Committee	9397 0409	daverodkerry@bigpond.com
Phyllis Tobin	8 Fionn Court Ardross, WA 6153	Committee	9364 4323	tobins@iinet.net.au
Joan Macneall	23 Streatham St Beckenham, WA 6107	Committee	9451 6008	macneall1@iinet.net.au
Constance Herbert	Unit 6, 5 Crabtree Mews O'Connor, WA 6163	Vice President	9331 2321	
Barry Higgins	140 Bernard Road Carabooda, WA	Committee	9407 5311	

**The Members of the Editorial Sub-Committee
Would like to thank all those,
who contributed to this Edition of The Newsletter.**

**Without their support and enthusiasm,
a Newsletter like this would not be possible.**

Many Thanks

Geoff Bebb - Editor

WA Bush Poets and Yarn Spinners Association Inc

Coming Events

Date	Event	Co-ordinator
5 th -6 th April 2002	Workshop & Company Dandaragan & Poets Breakfast	Rod and Kerry Lee- 9397 0409 Christine Smith – 08 9651 2042
Frid 3 rd May 2002	Special Come All Ye Meeting Featuring Peter Capp and supporting Local Poets	Barry Higgins - 94075311
20-24 th June 2002	Waltzing Matilda Bush Poetry Awards	
30 th June 2002	Nominations for committee positions 2002-3	Michelle Sorrell – 9367 4963
Frid 5 th July 2002	AGM and Traditional Poetry Night	To Be Advised

Return Address

The Hon Secretary
WA Bush Poets and Yarn Spinners Assoc.
Unit 1, 8 Hill St
South Perth WA 6151

Postage Paid

Australia

PP No: 607 742 100 42

Edna Westall

**Unit 2, 10 McKimmie Rd
PALMYRA WA 6157**