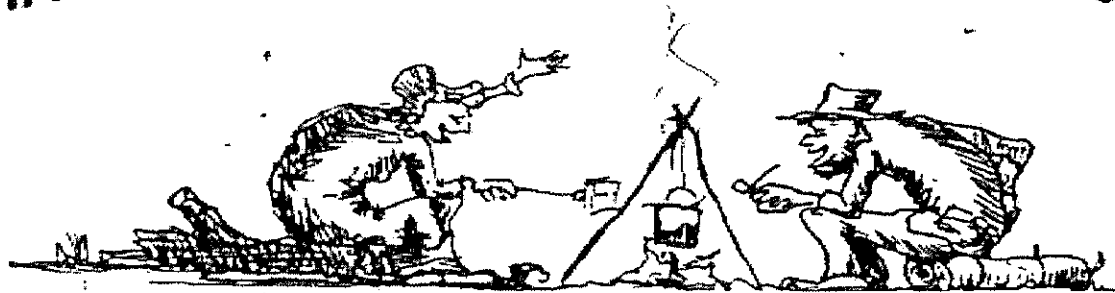


WA BUSH POETS & YARNSPINNERS



Return Address: The Secretary, Lorelie Tacoma, 16 Gratwick Tce, Murdoch, WA 6150

Newsletter February, 1998

② MARCH

THE 1998 AUSTRALIA DAY CHALLENGE RESULTS

W.A. CHAMPION BUSH POET CHRIS SADLER

BUSH POET PLACE-GETTERS

2nd Leigh Matthews
3rd Beth Scott

FINALIST POETS

Peter Capp
Joan Macneall
Bill McAttee
Suzi Moelands
Val Read
Jeff Swain
Malcolm Woodward

W.A. CHAMPION YARNSPINNER KEITH LETHBRIDGE

YARNSPINNER PLACE-GETTERS

2nd Peter Capp
3rd Chris Saddler

FINALIST YARNSPINNERS

Peter Nettleton
Leigh Matthews
Claudette Mountjoy
Dennis Wise

CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU ALL

REJOICE AUSTRALIA

Australia Day January 26th, 1998 was a proud moment in our short history.

This year W.A. BUSH POETS & YARNSPINNERS Assn Inc., in conjunction with the Melville City Council, was honoured to receive the Australia Day Community Event Award from the Australia Day Council.

DROPPINGS FROM THE BOSS COCKY

It was correct to say in my acceptance of the Australia Day award on behalf of our association at the Hyatt International Hotel on Friday 23rd January that I was the proudest bloke in Western Australia. Those of us who appreciate bush poetry as one facet of our young Australian culture know that we have tapped into a deep ground swell of public acceptance of the art, as evidenced by us winning this prestigious award. Yes! The Governor of Western Australia, His Excellency, Major General Michael Jeffery AC MC was there, along with many other VIP's, and the award was presented by the Premier of Western Australia, the Honourable Richard Court MLA.

Once again 'Thank You' to members and their friends who came to my party on Australia Day (Jan.26th) and sang Happy Birthday so spontaneously. Momentarily I was stuck for a word, but with your help and all the hype over the weekend it came and went and I hardly noticed any change. What a day! I must mention how well the ladies performed in open company at Wireless Hill, and, to our out-of-town friends, a 'Well Done' for making the effort. We realize that it is a long way to come and sometimes for very little to do, but with your help and ideas we will work on a format to make the effort truly worthwhile. A big vote of appreciation is in order for the three judges Kel Watkins, Jon Doust and Gary Crierie. My vote for best runner-up yarnspinner goes to that popular character 'Cappy', who was still smiling after what must have been a photo finish - your time will come, Peter. 'Well done' to our champions, Chris Sadler and Keith Lethbridge and all our other performers.

I have received a phone call from Bert Swindell - Bert runs the caravan-park in Winton and wanted to know if we wanted him to save some accommodation for our winner(s) over the Easter break when the Waltzing Matilda Championship will be held. Had to tell him the sad news that Mr. Qantas hadn't come to the party this year. The prizes for the winners this year were kindly donated by Tony and Sally FitzGerald of Donnelly River Holiday Village - a weekend for 8 persons - and the same was offered by Bill and Karen Spanbroek, mine hosts at the Ocean Clipper Inn, Rockingham. A big 'Thank You' to these super supporters; also to all our members who made the day happen.

We've had a lot of press lately. Carmel Randle spotted the article from the Weekend Australian featuring 'The Assassin' and Yours Truly (Jan 24th). Carmel sends her regards and tells me that she won the Blackened Billy award at Tamworth beating Glenny Palmer (another fine female poet who represented Australia in Nevada, having won the ladies section at Winton in 1996). Congratulations Carmel.

Another more recent call was from Bill Hay whom I met and travelled with in Qld last year. His was on a sad note to inform me that his brother Vic had passed away. Anyone who has read Keith Lethbridge's "Elabe Damper" would be aware of Vic. He was the character who switched the damper with a flat rounded rock. In my short time with him I realised that he was a natural wit and raconteur with a deep sense of humour.

The world needs more Vic Hays.....Rusty 'The Boss Cocky' Christensen

Dear Fellow Members,

Just a note to you through our newsletter.

I have written poems mainly for relatives and friends at celebrations like birthdays, Christmas, anniversaries, farewell parties etc. I have written them to get a point across in many different situations like telling the local electrician that I was very frustrated that he hadn't come to fix our cool-room. Faxing three days in a row, this humorous 'tongue-in-cheek' but very serious poem actually got the message across, and the electrician was very soon at my doorstep. I recite poetry (mostly in the car while travelling alone) because it is my way of stopping my mind from ticking over too fast, dwelling on things unnecessarily or finding things to worry about! The most enjoyable poems to me are stories of old Australian ways or poems of Australia's uniqueness in nature. Hence my interest in joining a Yarn Spinners and Bush Poets Organisation. I am very pleased to be an inaugural member and I thank all of you who have established and supported this Association. Joining in the competitive heats for the State competition seemed to just coincide with trips to Perth from Wongan. And now of course I am so pleased I was brave enough to follow it all through. Being the winner in the poetry section was a real thrill for me. I was lucky enough to be told two very funny farm related stories, and putting those stories to fun verse was a way of preventing them from being 'lost along the way'.

The afternoon at Wireless Hill Park was just great. Well organised and very entertaining. I was worried about all the family coming to see me in something quite different but they were wonderfully supportive and we enjoyed the atmosphere and the surrounds immensely.

The prize of accommodation for eight people at Donnelly River resort is just fabulous. We (Don and four kids) have often talked about going there – but this never happened. So now we have no excuse and we are already talking about a date. Thankyou to all of you for the opportunity to share my poetry and then to win such a wonderful prize.

I'm sure I have enough material to write another poem about the bedlam that broke out when the media contacted me at home the day after the finals. I didn't have a copy of the poems to send them, they were in my head!! The printer on the computer refused to work, so I was handwriting madly! I was trying to do a phone interview and the dogs outside were barking madly about somebody arriving, the 2-way and the fax kept noisily interrupting. It was pretty embarrassing to try and explain all the commotion! Hubby Farmer Don was happy to escape to the paddocks and for a while there I just wanted to go back to being Kitchen Chris!

But NO we survived it and it was all very special!!

Thank you,
Chris Sadler

PS: I will toast you all with my own bottle of Poets Corner white wine!!

HOW, WHY, WHEN AND ... WOW

**You'd have to agree that he's really a codger,
This bearded poet, this bloke named Roger,
To hear him recite on our own A.B.C.
Just somehow got the better of me.**

**So to him, a phone call, a cheque, then told to compete,
Down at the Raffles on Friday, in one little heat.
Then all of a sudden on Australia Day,
I'm into a final, having my say.**

**So surprise it was, from just a beginner,
I enjoyed it so much, I came out the winner,
So to all of you yarners and poetry folk
Who've made me shudder, tremble and choke,
I say to you you're the friendliest mob,
And for Australia's traditions you do a great job.
You've opened the doors for all to share,
In a hobby that's honest, dinkum and fair.**

**Retelling a tale in an interesting way,
Gives pleasure to all, what more can I say,
A thankyou all round is truly due,
Please take a bow each one of you!!**

© Chris Sadler

THE '98 CHALLENGE CUP ON A CAN OF COKE

Monday, 26th January dawned a scorcher. The radio announcer said the temperature would reach 39. I and my 396 companions were loaded into the Nissan hatchback only to be offloaded rather clumsily 15 minutes later at Wireless Hill. There were so many people there, mostly well dressed, all being served fresh salads, fruits, barbecued meats, bread rolls, all on a paper plate, and orange juice but NO COKE. I wondered, why here, why me? Soon I learnt that all these well-dressed folk had just become Australian citizens! Good on them, about time too. There were ladies from the Electoral Office sitting at tables under a gum tree handing out invitations to be put on the electoral roll. (That will also put them on the municipality roll and forever and a day, they will be RECORDED. No more anonymity. I wonder if they have a tax file number.)

Now my story really begins. A table is set up under another gum tree, a sign is hung in the tree with the help of an old lace from a spare pair of Boss Cocky's boots in the car. I get tipped from my safe cardboard carton into a huge blue plastic tub, and then, horror of horrors, lots of ice cubes are poured over me, and then a bucket of water! My fate is sealed. I know my minutes are numbered.

Just nearby the BOOKS FOR SALE stall is set up by Joan Macneal, her hubby, her daughter and her two offspring. Nice kids, all very polite and helpful. But I know a Book Stall will not be much help in my plight.

The day is warming up, the ice is melting, so an old sheep skin and grey blanket are thrown over my blue tub. I fear a customer will come soon.

The new citizens gradually disperse with a booklet on being an Australian Citizen, a Citizenship Certificate, an electoral form and a full tummy.

The bush poet devotees start arriving with their Eskys, their chairs, their rugs and their kids. They take up their positions either in or around the marquee. The Gard family has set up their sausage sizzle stall on the other side of the marquee. The aromas are enticing.

The Dingo's Breakfast Oz Band has organised itself on the stage. Roger is doing his usual, the music is enjoyed by all. Susannah is under the marquee in a nice shady hat. Trevor keeps adjusting the sound after moving around all spots, just checking. I am worried about Trevor because I know he has a great thirst, and his preference is Coke.

Rusty and Judy are moving around the crowd, being very hospitable, greeting their clan lovingly as they arrive, family after family. How many are there? Is this rent-a-crowd? I hope they are not thirsty, there are so many. (Rusty and Judy have to look after the V.I.Ps -- the Mayor, the man from the Rotary Club who will present a cheque for \$500 (very useful), and other special people, like grandchildren.)

Pretty soon, all the chairs in the marquee are filled and folk are sprawled out under beach umbrellas on their folding chairs, all embarking on the true Aussie custom of emptying an Esky.

The band stops playing and the Fourth Heat begins. I can feel the tension in the air. One contestant after another, and then a ring-in from the other side of Oz (I'm a Canna Coke, I can use an Americanism, dammit!) Okay, then

this bloke from the Eastern States does his act. I did not know they spoke a foreign language over there. I could not understand a word but I am sure it was a good story. Other folk seemed to know what it was all about. Oh well, you can't expect too much intelligence from a Canna Coke, can you?

All goes well, luckily not many are buying Coke, but oh my, the Sprite is so popular! I am sure they will run out of Sprite.

At 2 p.m. the big moment arrives. The Mayor is seated beside Rusty, the man from Rotary is in the front row too, and I am expecting a fanfare of trumpets. Alas, all we have is Roger! Rusty at last has the mike, he seems to really enjoy that, and tells many little stories about this and that and everyone. There must be 250 people listening, all very politely too. No heckling at this event! The Mayor, very smart in her black pant suit, purple blouse and coloured what-not at her throat, asks how many of the crowd live in Melville!!! I did not know this was a census!

After more little stories about this and that and everyone, the Mayor DECLARES OPEN the championship and congratulates the Association on being awarded the Australia Day Rejoice Australia Award for Best Community Event (or something like that). It was a great honour, I agree, after an existence of just two short years. The City of Melville received an award too, I guess it was for assisting the Association. The two framed certificates are impressive. The frames are made of the roughest old piece of picket fencing you can imagine. All grey with deep grooves. It indicates the image, I thought. I wonder how they will fit in with the décor in the new Heritage Room at the refurbished, expanded Council building.

I have now become nicely chilled, in fact, too chilled to be concerned about anything, even Trevor. The performances continue and everyone seems to be enjoying themselves, consuming vast quantities of nourishment, and clapping enthusiastically. (Some of those yarns are a little over the top and how *do* the poets get everything to rhyme?) *It is great to see the country folk performing.* They certainly see life from a different angle.

Then the big moment arrives and the Mayor is asked to present the CITY OF MELVILLE PERPETUAL TROPHY --- one to Chris Sadler and one to Keith Lethbridge. I can still see their faces --- all three. Such unique trophies. They are so proud to receive them. They are busy imagining them on their lounge room mantelpieces (ugh!) when Rusty announces that they cannot keep them. What sort of trophy is that? At this point, the tension is relieved as they are offered the choice of a white envelope. Chris chooses the one that has a voucher for a weekend for 8 at Donnelly River Holiday Village and Keith received a weekend for 8 at the Ocean Clipper Inn at Rockingham. I heard later that there was a cheque inside each envelope for \$100. Now that would buy a lot of coke.

The day concludes on a happy note. Everyone seems satisfied. The gentle sea breeze came in early enough to make the day comfortable. Joan has sold a few books, the Gards have sold a few sausages, and a few Cokes have been sold. I feel thankful. I have escaped my fate this year.....and then along came Trevor.

Canna Coke 26th Jan 1998

Bob Jardine of Parkridge recalls this first line: "Down at Tumba bloody Rumba shoot'n Kanga bloody Roos" and it's driving him crazy. If you can help out with the rest (or part) of the verse, the name or author, please send what you remember to Secretary Lorelie Tacoma ph/fax 9310 1500, 16 Gratwick Tce, Murdoch, 6150 and we'll put it in print for us all to enjoy. Hope we can ease Bob's torment soon!

YOUR ENTRY INTO THE GRAND NATIONAL POETRY STAKES 1998

As host to Carmel Randle during her December visit, I was delighted to accompany her to the Maltings Gallery in Northbridge. The occasion was the Grand National Poetry Stakes Awards for 1997. Her 'special reason' for coming West was to attend the presentation of poetry awards and the launch of this year's anthology of winning poems published by Access Press under the title Galloping On V111.

In essence, the Grand National Poetry Stakes is a quest for a rhyming renaissance, with a minimum guaranteed total prize money of \$1000 being awarded as two first prizes of \$250 each, and ten prizes of \$50 each. Additional \$20 prizes are awarded according to the number of entries received. All prize-winning poems are published in the anthology Galloping On. Only previously unpublished poems are accepted, and must conform to traditional rhyming style, with a minimum of 14 lines and maximum of 32 lines (eight quadrants). There is no restriction on subject matter.

For those of you who write, and wish to have your unpublished poems entered in the Grand National Poetry Stakes 1998, phone Access Press on 9328 9188 and speak to Helen Weller or John Harper-Nelson about conditions of entry. Alternatively drop them a line at Access Press, P.O. Box 132, Northbridge, W.A. 6865 to request an entry form. There's plenty of time to get busy with new poems, or shuffle through your 'bits in the bottom drawer' that you have never done anything with.

I wish all of you Good Luck with your entries.

Kay Stehn

Here is Carmel's poem from page 83 of Galloping On V111, the 1997 anthology. I've been given the nod to print it in our newsletter, with the proviso that we realize that it is not bush poetry (not having an Australian subject matter). However, it tickled my fancy. Ed

BIG GAME

Across the plains of Africa the Hunter tracked his prey—
A big old tusker of enormous size—
But though he followed footprints and could see as clear as day
No elephant appeared before his eyes.

But he plodded bravely onwards using all the skill he knew
'Til he came up to a jungle, dark and dense,
And the tracks led straight on through it—so the Hunter followed too,
Keen as mustard, for this tusker was immense!

With caution he continued, checking both to left and right
'Til he came upon a clearing, where he saw
The elephant was lying dead – a quite remarkable sight—
And a PYGMY stood atop it, what was more!

Well, the Hunter was astonished! And he couldn't help but blub...
"Who killed that elephant? I have to know!"
The little Pygmy answered, "Sir, I did it with my club!
Now I feast and sing and make a dancing Show!"

"You did it? With your club?" the Great White Hunter barely gasped.
"How BIG'S this club? Do show me! I'm astounded!"
"My club?" the Pygmy answered, "Ohhh... It's just an average size...
Ninety members strong last time I counted!"

© Carmel Randle

Doesn't this remind you of our association?

COMING EVENTS

SUNSET AND STARS GET-TOGETHER AT WIRELESS HILL

SUNDAY 8th MARCH 5.30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

FIRST TIME READINGS ARE ENCOURAGED AS WELL AS PERFORMANCES

check in with co-ordinator Joan Macneall on arrival

BRING YOUR POETRY & YARNS SUPPORTERS

ALSO A SIT-ME-DOWN

AND YOUR OWN TUCKER & DRINKS

COMMUNITY GAS BBQ AVAILABLE

Contact: Joan Macneall Telephone 9451 6008

LIES, LAUGHS & LUNACY

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CONCERT ON FRIDAY 13th MARCH ... WORKSHOP SATURDAY 14th MARCH

LIES, LAUGHS & LUNACY

THE TRIO ARE ALSO APPEARING AT KALAMUNDA PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

SATURDAY 28th MARCH

Contact: Kel for more info. Telephone 08 9314 7929, Mobile 0412 488 131

PATERSON AND LAWSON RECITAL NIGHT

FRIDAY 3rd APRIL 7.30 p.m. start

AT THE RIVERVIEW ROOM, UPSTAIRS IN THE RAFFLES HOTEL, CANNING BRIDGE

COME ALONG TO LISTEN, COME ALONG TO RECITE

COME ALONG TO MEET EACH OTHER

BAR OPEN

\$2 entry

Contact: Register your recital with Kel Watkins Telephone 9314 7929

BUSH POETS' BREAKFAST AT THE ANNUAL BOAB FESTIVAL IN DERBY

SUNDAY 19th JULY at 7.30 a.m

SEE BOB MAGOR OF 'STONE THE CROWS' FAME

WELCOME IS EXTENDED TO ALL PERFORMING AND NON-PERFORMING SUN-SEEKERS

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