



Zaphon

November 2009

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Upcoming Omega Writers Events

This Wednesday – November 11

starting @ 11 am

1111 free books

If you haven't already registered, your last chance to get a free book by an Aussie author is about to pass on by. There are some fabulous books and CDs on offer and, at the moment, we have less entries than we have books! So right now, it's not a draw, it's a sure thing! Check out the amazing prizes at www.1111freebooks.com and make sure you register by November 10.

Saturday November 28

The Word Writers Fair

Inala, Brisbane

Omega Writers member Rochelle Manners of **Wombat Books** and **Even Before Publishing** has organised a fantastic event and is launching five books at the fair. (And I'm launching one too! — ed. *The Listening Land* is the third in the series about mathematics in creation and Scripture).

Interstate guests and speakers include Andrew Lansdown from WA, Paula Vince from SA and Jeff Townsend from Victoria. Workshops, panels and addresses will be offered on a variety of subjects. Some sessions are free, some incur a small fee. Everything is designed to be practical and affordable. There are heaps of giveaways! If you're serious about writing as an expression of your faith, this is 'must-do' event. Don't miss it! For full details (including how to have your own stall) see <http://www.thewordwriters.com/>

Sunday December 6

Christmas Party

Our annual book and food fest

@ the home of Ruth Bonetti

(one of our Omega founders)

The Gap, Brisbane.

For more details, ring Annie on 07 33751775

Bring a plate and a wrapped book or book-related gift. The year in review; news on a possible new central venue for next year; the CALEB project gets underway; topics for next year's meetings.

Australian Voices



What a week! By the end of it, I was almost ready to drag out the black armbands and go into mourning. Several local Christian publishers have down-sized their staff in the last few days, letting go long-term employees into an uncertain job market.

Please pray for all aspects of this situation because it's something that affects everyone in this country who writes to express their faith. Australian voices are not well-represented or well-heard in the marketplace and this has made an already very difficult situation even more challenging.

The bookstores would have us believe that people are reading less. I'm not entirely convinced of that. What I am sure of is that people are reading *differently*.

Differently has several aspects to it. There's the *differently* of a generation weaned on blogs, that generation for whom good spelling is an optional extra. The generation which finds the last sentence about two words too long.

Then there's the *differently* of quite a substantial group — is it really true that when people become Christians they abandon their taste for fiction altogether? Fiction is a huge chunk of the secular market. Many Christian publishers and booksellers would have us believe that fiction doesn't sell. But I'm not convinced. I notice Jesus was fond of telling good *stories*. And I note that the most popular book of the 20th century (as well as the 7th most popular) were by those Christian stalwarts, Tolkien and Lewis.

Then there are a whole heap of individual *differentlys*. I admit it — I haven't darkened the door of any of the major Christian book chains in years. I used to drop in every couple of months but as time went by, I found that there was nothing there I *wanted* to read.

Now those of you who are passionate readers will understand what I mean when I say that certain books call to you the second you walk into the store. You don't know they've done it until you spot them on the shelves but the instant you do, any resolve you had about a strict budget flies straight out the window.

When books cease to call, it's not the reader who is in trouble. It's the bookstore. For a long while I thought I was becoming too hard to please when I'd go to a bookstore and come home empty-handed.

It took several years before I realised it wasn't me. The stores simply no longer stocked the sort of books I liked. Madeleine L'Engle had

written almost a dozen books in the time I waited for my local bookstore to import one. She's only one of several authors I collect. When I finally realised I had to get what I wanted from overseas, it became easier to use the internet than make a futile trip, wasting several hours in the process, looking for something that was unavailable locally.

There are many people like me. Every case is different but, for whatever reason, the average Christian bookstore no longer caters for us. So is it that people are reading less or is it that they are reading less of the kind of book offered by the major chains? Is the average reader really so subject to cultural cringe that they'd prefer to read an outback romance by an American writer than an Aussie one? For a lot of us, the answer is *no*. The same applies for fantasy, for historical fiction and for a fair swag of other genres.

The loss of custom to bookstores just in the group of readers & writers I know amounts to tens of thousands of dollars a year. I've been watching the rise of Marcher Lord Press in the US with considerable interest: Jeff Gerke, the founder, had been involved in the publishing industry and had come to the conclusion that Christian bookstores had actively pursued policies that had driven away a certain kind of reader. *Interesting premise*, I thought. *Certainly true in my case. I wonder if it's more general*. The spectacular success of his press is testimony to the fact that his belief is certainly not completely unfounded.

Amongst all this gloom and doom, there's good news. Picaro Press has just published 2 collections of poetry by Andrew Lansdown:

- ❖ **Consolations: 48 tanka** (28 pages)
- ❖ **Little Matters: a gathering of 89 haiku & senryu** (24 pages)

These chapbooks are available from Andrew (www.andrewlansdown.com) or from the publisher for \$3.60 each, postage included. Andrew has also just had a book launch for ***Birds in Mind***, a collection of both new and old poetry, published by Wombat Books.

Wombat Books has also recently published Paula Vince's ***A Design of Gold***, Stacey Charbachi's ***Climbing Mountains***, the anthology, ***Even Before You Were Born***, and ***Nerrilee's World*** by Sandra Temple and me!

HSM Publishing has also recently released a new fantasy by Meredith Resce, ***For All Time***. Here's what she says: *If you're frustrated with nothing to do stuck in traffic on the motorway, or bored running for hours on the treadmill, why not try listening to my new novel - **For All Time** - read by 'ME', and be amused and inspired by the adventures of a young couple from the 21st century who find themselves stuck in the 16th Century. Click on the following link and follow the prompts to download to your MP3 player or ipod.*

http://www.crsonline.com.au/crs_r_information.asp?rID=FATMP3&fs=1

Col Stringer has released a new book too. It's about the visit of Smith Wigglesworth to Australia last century and the impact he had on Christianity in this country.

From Wendy Sargeant:

The **Australian Christian Book of the Year Awards** close in March 2010. Start polishing your manuscripts now. They are given annually for original books written by Australians and published by an Australian publisher. The Christian Book of the Year carries a prize of \$2,500 for the author, and a framed certificate for author and publisher. Supplementary awards may be made.

- Entries may be submitted at any time until 31st March for titles published between 1st April of the previous year and 31st March of the current year.
- There is no limit to the number of titles which a publisher may submit.
- Entries must be accompanied by a fee of \$50 per title, with four copies of each title entered.

I will be available for editing in January and February 2010, but you'll need to register with me up by late November.

Wendy Sargeant
Queensland Society of Editors

(Wendy's book, ***As the Eagle Flies the King***, published by Tate in the USA is currently a semi-finalist in the Independent Publisher Awards)



Captivated!

The name is an expression of the heart falling in love with Jesus and becoming captivated with him and by him. **Captivated!** was born at midnight two years ago at the Women's Camp, Melrose, South Australia, when Gwen Leanne and Ruth Parker, over a last cup of milo shared their hearts and discussed the possibility of a Christian magazine. There were two things that were needed to start the magazine; one was finance and a graphic artist. Of course there were

other issues to overcome as well. However over the ensuing weeks both those needs were met without effort on Gwen's part. She believed the Lord was saying to step out in faith and so ***Captivated!*** was launched in February 2008. A team of 5 people was formed under the covering of local church *Crossroads Christian Centre*.

We have now published 5 issues and are preparing to publish the 6th in October. The 7th issue to be published in February is well in the planning stages even now. Recommended Retail Price of ***Captivated!*** is \$5.00. ***Captivated!*** is published three times a year: Feb, June, Oct. It is a non denominational magazine for both men and women. Contact Gwen Leane at gwen.lean@internode.on.net (remove spaces)

Magazine Madness!

Many great Australian magazines are now available for free in digital format. ***Alive, Christian Woman, Daystar*** and ***Church Today*** as well as several more specialised publications are all available at:

<http://www.mediaincorp.com/newsletter/signup/index.html>

Light the Dark - Christian Party Plan

With an emphasis on books (plus a smattering of gifts), *Light the Dark* is different in every way. Australian and New Zealand products are sold exclusively through this Tupperware-style party plan. *Light the Dark* is looking for suppliers of quality Australian products (either Christian or family-friendly) and for representatives to sell via party plan. See www.lightthedark.com.au for more details.

New From Wombat Books

A Design of Gold, by Paula Vince

ISBN: 978-1-921633-03-4

Rec Retail \$19.95 Page count: 240 Paperback
Nicola recovers after losing a friend by taking refuge in a spare room of Casey and Piers Bowman. Jerome, Piers' son, is learning to be a young man on his own, struggling in his quest to make a difference with ideals of mission life from his childhood hero. Michael, a teenager who went down all the wrong roads, is trying to follow the straight and narrow. As their lives intertwine they all learn more about themselves and how true discipleship can even start at home. Romance and drama combine in this new book from the author who brought you *Picking up the Pieces* and *Risky Way Home*.

Climbing Mountains: One young woman's journey through breast cancer, by Stacey Charbachi

ISBN: 978-1-921632-08-2

Rec Retail \$15.95 Page count: 96 Paperback
Stacey, at only 28, is about to have her 2nd child when she discovers a lump in her breast. After ignoring it and assuming it is pregnancy related, she finally sees a doctor shortly after having her son. From here we follow her traumatic journey through the diagnosis, surgery, treatment, healing, reconstruction all related to breast cancer. Breast cancer is a hot topic, a concern for so many people, but it is rare you hear from such a young woman experiencing the trauma while caring for a new born child. Journey with Stacey as she shares her feelings in her darkest moments. She is honest and thorough and will hope you through your own journey, or to help a friend in need.

Even Before You Were Born

Edited by Rochelle Manners

ISBN: 978-1-921633-00-3

Rec Retail: \$15.95 Page count: 96 Paperback
From the publisher and editor who brought *Unborn Beauty: Celebrating Pregnancy and Parenthood* come a new anthology about pregnancy, its joys and challenges, from a Christian's perspective. Use this book as a gift for anyone who is pregnant, they'll laugh and cry as they share their experience with the authors of this book. Over 20 authors have contributed to the anthology, including some stunning artwork, amusing anecdotes and poetry and stories from the heart. Pregnancy is a special time, a God given gift, and being a parent is always a blessing. Share the joy of it with someone today.

Disclaimer: the usual apply. *Zaphon* is a free e-magazine put out by Omega Writers. It's done in the spare time of the editor, Anne Hamilton, and happens when it happens. It is more or less regular (sort of) and generally coincides with one of our meetings or events. Should you have anything which may be of interest to Christian readers and writers across Australia and New Zealand, we welcome your input. The editor reserves the right, should no one contribute, to write about mathematics, meteorites, medieval poetry or the meaning of names. Whichever she happens to be researching at the time. Advertising is free.

