

The Australian Writer

November 2016 newsletter

Official newsletter of the Fellowship of Australian Writers (Vic)

Supplement to The Australian Writer

ISSN: 1327-340X Print Post PP 335740/0101..

Death of FAW Vic immediate past president Page 4.

Welcome to the first edition of our new plan to publish The Australian Writer. We welcome input and suggestions from members.

Short Story Anthology

FAW Vic is planning to produce a quarterly 100 page short story and poetry anthology of fellowship members' work. The aim is to provide a medium to ensure membership of FAW means publication. The books will be produced in a numbered series known as The Australian Writer series. The series will replace the magazine. The Australian Writer monthly newsletter will be a supplement to the series. The books will be marketed in hard print, and pdf on line, with profits going to the FAW Vic awards.

Royalties will be paid to writers.

Deadline for the first publication is Sunday 31 December 2016.

Authors must be members of the Fellowship of Australian Writers.

Contributions for publication

Please send contributions for publication in the Australian Writer to:- Jim Mynard, Editor, The Australian Writer, 453 Bourke Road, Katamatite, 3649 or to:-
mynardmedia6@bigpond.com

Please send details about competitions, publishing opportunities, events, and experiences of your work being published to share with members.

Be a published member

The Australian Writer is a medium providing opportunities for members of the Fellowship of Australian Writers to become published. We welcome all themes. Include a one or two sentence author bio with your submission. A photograph is optional.

Submissions may be emailed to:-

fawsubmissions@writers.asn.au

Or posted to The Editor

The Australian Writer

453 Bourke Road

Katamatite 3649.

Phone 0417 567 741.

Honorary Solicitor
Paul Natoli, LLB,
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Kew, 3101.

FAW Corporate Registration
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President's Message

Dear FAW Members,

Welcome to the Fellowship of Australian Writers Vic. The fellowship was established in 1928, and has branches and chapters across Australia. It has long been the same people running the fellowship. I wish to congratulate them for the years of hard work and dedication they have given. Remember these have been people who volunteered their time and energy to keep this non-profit organisation running. They were not paid and often had full-time careers as well as family commitments. Over time there has been a decline in our membership and our committee members with ageing and illness at the forefront and the sponsors who



Pauline Csuba
President

have supported FAW over many years have dwindled away. Running a magazine and a non-profit organisation without being paid is often a difficult thing to do. But there have been members who have contributed more than their fair share. If we are to keep this organisation afloat then you the members are needed. The FAW cannot run a committee with two people and should never have been put in this situation. If you are serious as a follower of the fellowship then we need you. Times are changing and we are entering a new phase. I not only expect, but insist we will fill all positions on the committee. That membership's increase and that members contribute works as originally intended. The fellowship is an organisation with aims to bring together all those interested in writing. An organisation made up of writers for writers to be able to write.

As the newly elected president for 2017 I am looking for you to step up and contribute to the committee. Submit your works for publication. There will be a regular newsletter and The Australian Writer Magazine will still be produced. I look forward to reading your many writings.

Sincerely,

Pauline Csuba; BA-Professional Writing and Editing-Journalism

Death of Gail Blundell

Fellowship of Australian Writers Vic, Immediate Past President, Gail Blundell, died on Wednesday 16 November 2016, after losing a long battle with cancer. Friends who worked with her at FAW, Lynn Smailes and Angelo Salamanca paid tribute to Gail. Lynn said a response by FAW member, magazine contributor, awards sponsor, and judge, Meryl Tobin touched on our feelings about the loss of Gail: *“So sorry to hear about Gail. What a courageous fighter she was and over such a long time. An exceptional person and a great loss to her family, friends and the FAWVic, which she has served long and faithfully. The FAWV has lost a valuable member. She will be greatly missed. Our deepest sympathy to you and to Gail’s family at this saddest of times. Meryl and Hartley Tobin.”*

Lynn said in her death notice, her family and close friends, described Gail as a ‘warrior’. Her fighting qualities enabled her to live an active and fulfilling life for years longer than many of her doctors predicted. This said a lot about Gail’s determination to get on with living and her love of the FAW. She relished, the role of fellowship president for the last two of those years, in addition to coordinating the FAW National Literary Awards and maintaining the databases. Family was important to Gail, and she regarded the fellowship as another family; she blended her families at times. Dot, Gail’s mum, was an essential and willing member of the envelope

stuffing team at magazine posting time and was regularly pressed into service at sausage sizzle fund-raisers and awards ceremonies.

Long serving FAW committee member and awards Judge, Angelo Salamanca, said Gail constantly displayed heartfelt and absolute commitment to the FAW.

“She put her heart and soul into making the awards and awards night event something special.

“Gail appreciated and lauded all manner of creativity in others, and towards the final months of her life chose to write of her experiences of living with cancer, in a disarmingly honest and erudite fashion, free of self-pity.

“Her love of fine writing, and associating with writers from all backgrounds and at various levels of experience, will be sadly missed,” Angelo said.

Lynn said while Gail could be very persuasive and carried people along with her enthusiasm, it was her generosity and empathy that drew others to her, and ultimately into the service of the FAW. Gail was in her element at the awards ceremonies, where she enjoyed connecting with members and celebrating the achievements of writers of all ages.

I met Gail when I became editor of The Australian Writer in late 2010, and worked closely with her on fellowship business for one or two days a week over the next four years. I marvelled at Gail’s mastery and intuitive understanding of the mysteries of Microsoft and data software. She was a natural teacher and I learned so much from her, including ways to work in the midst of chaos! Hell, she could even fix the photocopier after Philip and I had re-

enacted the photocopier scene from *The Castle*. 'Wanna coffee?' she would say, and make fine lattes with 'Dominic', the coffee machine Di Mattinas lent the fellowship after our machine was stolen at Box Hill. Over coffee I learned about Gail's adventurousness and her extensive travels to out-of-the-way places in the Middle East and elsewhere. I realised there was a lot I would never know about Gail, but I knew her travels and spiritual beliefs had reinforced her priorities in life, which put people before everything else. In the past few years Gail travelled frequently again, mostly with her close friend Philip by her side, and with her sister Ros, and Dot. Many of those trips were to places they would rather not have gone to, but Gail's openheartedness inevitably led her to form close bonds with people who were in the midst of similar upheavals and the staff who were administering treatment. This extended her life and enriched it further. While the past eighteen months have been tough and painful on so many levels; the death of two very close friends hit hard, Gail's sense of humour and optimism sustained her and the people who cared for her. She fought for so long it is difficult to believe she has gone. Gail served the Victorian Fellowship over many years as the first point of contact for members, awards coordinator, secretary, membership secretary, treasurer, president and as editor of a couple of recent issues of *The Australian Writer*. Her contribution was recognised with Life Membership in 2015. Gail will be missed and the fellowship sends condolences to Gail's family, close friends and associates.

Go well, good friend, and thank you. Lynn.

Secretary's Report

I was elected to the position of secretary of the Fellowship of Australian Writers Vic at the Annual General Meeting held at 53 Summerhill Road, Reservoir, on Saturday 29 October 2016.

My first challenge was to restore active communication with the membership, lost with the demise of our quarterly magazine The Australian Writer.

Files of the magazine were not available to me so I took an executive decision to start from scratch.

This was to revamp the magazine to a monthly newsletter, and replace the publication with a quarterly Short Story and Poetry anthology.

This is designed as a marketable entity and will be published under the FAW Vic banner.

After reading the last magazine, and the appeal for a new editor, I decided to offer my assistance. There is a need to rebuild the line of communication with members, and to provide a financial alternative to the massive drain the previous magazine had on FAW Vic resources. The monthly newsletter will be issued as a supplement to The Australian Writer and has sponsorship for at least three editions.

With the correct management the anthology will provide a profit to FAWV.

It is my wish to see this money used to enhance the awards and to eliminate the drag on the new committee 'begging' for sponsorships, a difficult task in any field.

I am in the process of updating the FAWV Rules of Association, based on the current version provided by Consumer Affairs. Jim Mynard. 0417 567 741.

Book Review

A Prescribed Life: Royalty, Romance and Medicine

By Meryl Brown Tobin

Tony Atkinson's autobiography, *A Prescribed Life: Royalty, Romance and Medicine* is not your usual autobiography.

As the blurb on the front of the book suggests, it encompasses stories about the British royals from a person who served the Queen, the romance of the subject of the book and his connection with Australia as a ten-pound Pom.

Co-written with Lynn Smailes, the book chronicles the life of Tony Atkinson from when he was born in 1929 to recent times. From the very first line you know you are about to tackle a book about a somewhat bizarre life: 'As a baby I was put in a wire cage suspended out of a sixth storey window at the back of our house.'

Tony's early happy life in a family changed when, aged eight, he was sent to an English boarding school where he endured conditions and experiences which today we would call child abuse. Of this time he wrote: 'We were living in a scenario that William Golding depicted in his 1954 novel, *Lord of the Flies*, with boys forming gangs and cliques.'

A great name-dropper, Tony told stories of classmates, including Tony Armstrong-Jones. He also wrote about suffering tuberculosis, of the deprivations during wartime and post-war England, and of the various part-time and casual jobs he got as a student. So apart from all its other attributes, the book is also a social history.

One of his memorable jobs was as footman to the

Queen. He was a waiter for others such as Winston Churchill. As the book's cover photo shows, he even attended the Queen on the day of her Coronation.

When a young man he was a practical joker and some of Tony and his friends' exploits were a concern. One could have easily lead to serious harm or worse.

Tony's love of Terry, the young woman who was to become his wife, and of his four daughters is one of the glues giving the book focus. However, life was hard for his young family because work as a general practitioner, and then an anaesthetist, involved long hours. He was unable to spend much time with his family.

Apart from telling entertaining stories, Tony also raised serious issues, such as the low payment and dangerously long hours worked by doctors, plus issues concerning the behaviour and ethics of some doctors. While he showed genuine concern for those in his care, there were others he worked with who did not deserve the title of doctor.

A Prescribed Life by Tony Atkinson with Lynn Smailes, is a 280 page entertaining read.

Published by Affirm Press, South Melbourne, 2016.

It is available from bookstores for \$29.99.

The Australian Writer invites contributions of short stories, poetry, and monologues, from FAW members.

Please send contributions to The Australian Writer,
453 Bourke Rd, Katamatie, 3649

or by email to:- mynardmedia6@bigpond.com

Publication in The Australian Writer does not preclude authors from publicaton elsewhere at any time.

Newsletter edited by Jim Mynard 0417 567 741

Buying Time

By Meryl Brown Tobin

Ben and Denise made their way between the supermarket shelves.

“Can we have some of this?” Ben begged, putting on his little boy expression.

His wife pointed to his stomach: “When you’ve stopped looking seven months pregnant.”

Rolling his eyes, Ben put the 200 gram block of chocolate back on the shelves. As he pushed the trolley along, Denise went back for the chocolate, mock-glared at him and threw it in on top of the bananas: “For our 20th Wedding Anniversary.”

Ben grinned. A slim woman with a loaded basket turned into their aisle and went to pass him as he was reaching for a packet of flour. Glancing at her, he went as white as the flour. Jerkily he held the packet up to his face and pushed past her, causing her to drop her basket.

“Sugar!” she said.

Ben didn’t pause but rushed up the aisle and around the corner.

Her mouth hanging open, Denise stared after him. Then, quickly bobbing down to help the woman pick up her grocery items, she glanced up at her. The woman looked in her mid forties, five or six years older than herself, Denise thought.

“I’m so sorry,” she said, “my husband’s not usually like that. I don’t know what got into him.”

“Who knows?” said the woman with a toss of her

bleached hair, “I’ve had three husbands and I’m still none the wiser.”

Denise took a closer look at the woman. If she didn’t have such a hard look about her, she would be quite attractive, she thought.

“It’s a good shopping centre here, isn’t it?” Denise said as they picked up the last few items.

“Wouldn’t know. I usually shop at Chadstone.”

“Oh.”

Shaking her head as the woman resumed her shopping, Denise turned and took off like a dog after the scent of a rabbit. ‘So help me, I’ll kill him’, she fumed inwardly as she looked down every aisle without seeing her elusive quarry. Finally she caught a glimpse of his maroon windcheater behind a display at the end of the farthest aisle. As she came up behind him, he was reading the information on the back of a packet of budgie seed as though it had the answers to the mysteries of life.

“What are you playing at, Ben?” She demanded.

“We haven’t even got a budgie.”

His face matched the colour of his windcheater,

He gave a start and quickly shoved the packet back on the shelf.

“You’ve got some explaining to do, chum. What was that all about?”

Like a small boy caught reading by torchlight under the blankets, he squirmed so much Denise almost felt sorry for him.

“I couldn’t stay!”

“Why not?”

“The woman - she was my first wife.”

Fellowship of Australian Writers Vic
Website:- writers.asn.au



LONGFELLOWS INSURANCE BROKERS

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To: Philip Rainford
Att: Fellowship Of Australian Writers (FAW) Inc

Certificate of Currency

In our capacity as General Insurance Brokers, we confirm that the following details are correct as at Friday 12th August 2016
This summary is subject to policy terms, conditions, limits, sub limits excesses and exclusions as detailed in the insurer's policy.

Insured: Fellowship Of Australian Writers (FAW) Inc

Situation: Australia Wide

Class of Insurance: Liability

Interested Party: Not applicable

Interest Insured: Public Liability

Sum Insured: \$20,000,000

Policy No: 141U197981BPK

Underwriter: QBE Australia

Expiry Date: 6th July 2017

The policy referred to is current at the date of issue of this certificate and whilst an expiry date has been indicated, it should be noted that the policy may be cancelled in the future. Accordingly, reliance should not be placed on the expiry date.

LONGFELLOWS INSURANCE BROKERS...INSURING THE FUTURE

This Long Fellows Insurance policy covers FAW (Vic) members while involved in official meetings of the FAW (Vic) committee, and regional groups.

The importance of journalism is to maintain the threat of fairness. JM

FAW regional branches

Please check meeting times with convenors.

Bayside Regional.

Meets 7.15pm on the third Wednesday at Black Rock Civic Hall, Corner of Balcombe Road and College Grove. FAW Bayside is a cohesive, supportive group and welcomes new members.

President:- Shirley Randles 03 9557 2771.

Email s_randles@optusnet.com.au

Ballarat Regional.

Meets 7.30pm on third Tuesday at Ballarat Community Centre, Corner Sebastopol and Errand Streets. Except dinner meetings in March, June, September, and December.

President:- Ken J Russell.

Bendigo Regional.

Bendigo members are notified of meeting dates and venues. The branch offers support for writers of all ages.

Peninsula Regional.

Meets 1.45pm on third Sunday at Contact House, 9 Albert Street, Mornington. All writers welcome.

President:- Philton 03 5974 4561.

Warrnambool Regional.

Meets 1pm on second Monday in the Boardroom, Flagstaff Hill.

President:- Jaccqui Downie, 12 Ormsby Court, Warrnambool, 3280. Phone 03 5562 8015.

Mob 0400 830 498.

Fellowship of Australian Writers Vic

Website:- writers.asn.au

Styrofoam Coffee

by Pauline Csuba

Michael was alive. There was an eerie silence. He stumbled out into the daylight through the debris unsure of where he was going.

“I know it's hard to be in this relationship, hang-on, you knew I was moody and shitty, why the fuck did you hang around? The way you always assume I know what you're thinking. Just say what you feel for Christ's sake, say it!” I spit the words out and wipe my chin.

“Oh you are so frustrating and such a bloody drama-queen, you make everything about you! That's right yes, about you!” He raises his voice and stands up.

“Fuck, there you go again, harping on, the same old bullshit. No, you never let it go, you were never one to tolerate my career, never, ever! Please, God can't even save you now; you're already too far-gone.”

“No! I said no! No! No! No more! Get out of my sight. I said I would not accept your bullshit any more! Screw you too. That hurt, you arse-hole!”

Jenny recalled her last words. Michael was never understanding about her work and how much time she needed to spend away, and, of course, their big fight.

“Yeah, yeah, see you never,” she said as she stormed out, slamming the door of their South Yarra flat and leaving for work.

They were always fighting, but this one was their worst. Did she really wish to never see him again?

Michael was looking out the window.

Black menacing clouds were rolling west, across the hills and suddenly, without warning, lightning webs flashed across the sky. A storm, with a vehement temper and gale force winds, erupted; give a succession of sounds, rattled windows in their frames with such force he thought the glass would break.

He can see the wind forcing itself into every nook and cranny. It screams like a wild banshee, tearing at everything in its path, as if a demented invisible giant wanted to rip out all the trees and bushes.

Michael watches with mouth agape fearing everything will be destroyed. Horror, as the wind forces itself under the eaves of the house across the street.

The roof lifts up, about half a meter off its foundation, and, like a toy, drops it back. He runs to the rear of the apartment; looking out to the backyard, in time to see the roof of the garage next-door, roll back, resembling the lid of a sardine tin being opened.

The thunder rumbles, imitating artillery in a war-zone and going off like firecrackers. Lightning flashes through the sky and scarring the dark clouds, the mark of Zorro. The rain starts to pour down from the heavens as if a dam wall has burst; the yard is flooded within a few minutes. He thinks of Jenny and their fighting before she left. Is she safe? He hoped she was okay. Then it happened. Noise like a train coming, vibration, and silence...

Once the art deco building, stood apart from others built high on the cliff-side of their street, looking down upon the city of Melbourne. Only the site remained. Instead, stood ugly wires, metal and rub-

ble mingled with cries of helpless children, and homeless families. The view, from where he stood was scary. There were hardly any lights; people coping as best they could and, not knowing where or whom to turn to. He then remembered Jenny. Is Jenny safe? He wanted to call her but was unable to locate his mobile.

“Someone please help me!” Michael hears a voice calling, moves toward the voice to help. It is as though he is in a war zone and there are people amongst the debris.

A sensation of bile rushes into his throat and washes over him, he shivers, and instantly he needs a latte and it seems bizarre.

During her drive to Creswick where she often stayed at the Novatel, Jenny usually enjoyed the changes in the remoteness of the country. She was only two hours from home and noticed a change in the weather. She is worried now and refrained from exhaling, sitting curled up at the desk, glad to be inside her room.

From the third floor of her building, Jenny felt the earth had taken an ‘in breath’ and ‘an out breath’.

The balcony shifted, as if it had swung out from the room. The rain beat against the window as the wind outside groaned. She had been finishing off some paperwork when she felt it. It was subtle, but she knew she felt it. Her whole body seemed to be affected by a sensation of whirling giddiness, causing her to feel as if she were about to fall off the chair. Maybe it was her fatigue, her imagination running on overdrive. She glanced at her iPhone, it showed 11.20pm. She was certain this was not her

immagination. She glanced at her iPhone, it showed 11.20pm. She drew her knees up under her chin, wrapping her arms around her legs. She wondered if she should call Michael, the thought was automatic, reflexive somehow, and, she knew inherently, that it was not a good idea.

Jenny calms herself and decides to go to bed. She tries to get comfortable, turning from right to left and left to right.

A storm had exploded in her mind and she struggled to sleep.

It was chilly when she woke and turned on the television before heading to the kitchenette to make a coffee. She walked to the lounge chair, sat back and drank.

The voice was saying, ‘residents in South Yarra ... cleaning up after a wild storm ... a mini tornado, had damaged homes and businesses. The storm hit at, around 11.30 pm.’

Jenny rubs her arms and leans forward in her seat. SES spokesman, Tony Portellaba, said: “Volunteers responded to calls for help ... most damage, being in Lawson Grove.”

Jenny stood up, staring at the television. She was stunned and grabbed her phone. She remembers the storm warnings being broadcast for weeks, before she left home. The earlier television reports met with cynicism and she recalls the meteorologists stating there was no way such a devastating storm would happen here. in Melbourne.

There was no answer. He should still be at home at this time of morning. She tried repeatedly, and still, no answer. In a haze the television blares that sev-

eral power lines, fences and buildings came crashing down and a favourite store was destroyed in Lawson Grove and a number of homes would remain without power.

Jenny's mind was swirling and she burst into tears. Was Michael okay? Where is he? It appeared the worst hit, was their area, their street. She wanted to go home right then and there and to be close to Michael.

She drove like a zombie along the freeway, in silence. Her jumbled thoughts, remember, in strange block-like images.

A group of art deco flats line up and down a narrow, hidden oasis in the back streets of South Yarra.

The surprise is how, after entering through a tiny terrace, crammed with a couple of tables and chairs, the room opens up.

Inside the low ceilinged space, a happy air of chaos abounds, with racks of magazines and blackboards, indicating in bold, free flowing writing demonstrating the menu choice.

At lunch baby capsules and laptops jostle for table space and later, Lego blocks are strewn across the floor.

It was here her life changed in a heartbeat. The Lawson Grove Shop and Cafe. She remembers sipping a coffee and quietly reading in the corner.

A distracting noise caught her attention and she noticed a man dancing and singing with Terry, the owner.

Jenny continued to read. Her mind was distracted. As she sat, a shadow seemed to be cast over her book. She looked up and he introduced himself and

with great confidence, ordered another two lattes and sat down.

Her trip home seemed to take forever but she was able to get to her street and managed to be, close to the action, but not close enough, to find Michael. State Emergency Service workers had taken charge and told Jenny people were evacuated from Lawson Grove. The building was almost demolished and their café was gone.

She walked over to the makeshift coffee station. It wasn't her usual latte but it would do.

“Storm in a teacup love.”

As she turned around, there he was, looking at her. Michael stood smiling. He rushed over, kissing her. “Styrofoam coffee, he said, where are we going to get our lattes now?”

Listings

If you have a book out there please join our listings; it just might sell a few.

*** A Prescribed Life.**

By Tony Atkinson with Lynn Smailes.

Affirm Press. 03 8695 9639.

*** Magical Moments of an Adventurous Life**

By Nenia Tavrou.

Available at:- nenial@bigpond.com

*** Changing Times, Changing Lives.**

By Dulcie M Stone.

Available free at:- dulcie.stone@exemail.com.au

*** On The Swamp**

By Jim Mynard.

Available at:- [Glenoword Books.com.au](http://GlenowordBooks.com.au)

FAW (Vic) Committee

President:-

Pauline Csuba.

pauline.csuba@gmail.com

Secretary:-

Jim Mynard.

mynardmedia6@bigpond.com

0417 567 741

Treasurer:-

Philip Rainford.

philip@thehivecentre.com

Committee Members:-

John Covill; David O'Dwyer; Angelo Salamanca.

Interstate branches

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www.fawnsw.org.au

North Shore NSW

fawnorthshore@gmail.com

Shoalhaven NSW

fawshoalhaven.org.au

Queensland

fawq.net

Tasmania

fawtas.org.au

Western Australia

fawwa.org.au

General Meeting

A general meeting of the new FAW Vic committee will be held at 2pm on Saturday 3 December 2016. at 53 Summerhill Rd, Reservoir.

Newsletter sponsored by
Glenoword Books

Glenowordbooks.com

0417 567 741