



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS

Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao

Newsletter – 25 July 2008

ISSN: 1178-9441

This is the 126th in a series of occasional newsletters from the Victoria University centre of the International Institute of Modern Letters. For more information about any of the items, please email modernletters@vuw.ac.nz

1. “Relationships, world issues, families, love, grief . . .	1
2. Richard Powers visit	2
3. Sunday drama	2
4. Even more drama	2
5. What’s in a name?	2
6. Montanas	3
7. Two competitions	3
8. Two festivals	3
9. A bit of competition	4
10. From the whiteboard	4
11. Kapiti Coast Capers	4
12. Recent web reading	4
13. Great lists of our time	6

1. “Relationships, world issues, families, love, grief . . .

and individual observations are just some of the subjects explored by teenage poets in this year’s New Zealand Post National Schools Poetry Awards. But for the judges selecting a shortlist from the hundreds of entries it was less about themes and more about how the poets handled their subject.”

In other words, the finalists in the 2008 New Zealand Post National Schools Poetry Awards have just been named. The [press release](#), whose opening is quoted above, lists all finalists for the poetry award, judged by Paula Green, and the lyric award, judged by Samuel Flynn Scott.

The winners will be announced at a ceremony in Wellington on 22 August as a curtain-raiser to this year’s New Zealand Post National Schools’ Writing Festival, when about 200 year 12 and 13 students from around New Zealand gather at Victoria University for workshops and platform events with leading contemporary writers.

For students who can’t make it to Wellington, and for other aspiring writers, the 2008

Poetry Kit and a range of other writing ideas can be downloaded [here](#).

2. Richard Powers visit

US novelist Richard Powers has arrived into a Wellington southerly to lead a weekend master class with IIML students. (“Welcome to Wellington,” said the flight attendant, and the whole cabin burst into laughter.) He will give a Writers on Mondays presentation on Monday 28 July (National Library auditorium, 1.00-2.00 – a free event, but we advise early arrival). For out-of-Wellington fans, there’s the option of listening to him on National Radio at 9.00 this Saturday morning, in conversation with Kim Hill.

3. Sunday drama

IIML scriptwriting graduates have a pretty impressive moment on National Radio this weekend, too, when short plays by Tusi Tamasese, Sarah Boddy and Catherine Bisley are broadcast at 3.00 pm in the Winter Season of New Drama. All three were winners of last year’s student writers’ competition organised by Radio New Zealand’s Drama Department. More details [here](#).

4. Even more drama

Other scriptwriters making their mark are Matt Saville, who was the writer for one [48 hours filmmaking](#) Wellington finalist, and Kelly Kilgour, who co-wrote the Wellington winner.

Congratulations, too, to Mandy Hager, whose screenplay adaptation of her young adult novel *Smashed*, which began life in Linda Voorhees’s 2007 IIML master class, is currently a finalist for the well known Moondance Film Festival script competition. The novel itself is shortlisted for LIANZA’s [Esther Glen Award](#).

And Donna Banicevich Gera who was a finalist in the NZ Writers Guild 2008 Final Draft Short Film Script Competition, had her play [Anton’s Women](#) produced in Auckland earlier this year, and in September will be taking up a writers residency in Barcelona.

5. What’s in a name?

A story from the *Taranaki Daily News*:

“Some parents have been branded abusers because of the bizarre names of their children.

Family Court Judge Rob Murfitt stated his concerns in a written decision after a

custody hearing in New Plymouth revealed a couple had named their child Talula Does The Hula From Hawaii.

He was so disturbed at the effect on the nine-year-old that he ordered her temporarily placed under court guardianship so a suitable name could be chosen.

‘It makes a fool of the child and sets her up with a social disability and handicap,’ he said.

The girl, who had not had her birth officially registered in NZ, had not revealed her name to her friends.

The judge was stopped talking yesterday by Principal Family Court Judge Peter Boshier. His office did provide some New Zealand-registered names the court knew of.

They included: Fish and Chips (twins), Masport and Mower (twins); boys Yeah Detroit, Spiral Cicada, Kaos, Stallion and Hitler; girls Cinderella Beauty Blossom and Twisty Poi; and sex unknown Keenan Got Lucky and Sex Fruit.”

We feel a Great List of Our Time coming on!

6. Montanas

Congratulations to Victoria graduate Mary McCallum, who last Monday evening won the Readers’ Choice Award at the recent Montana New Zealand Book Awards as well as Best First Book (fiction) for her novel *The Blue*. Victoria graduate, Laurence Fearnley, was runner-up for the Fiction Award with *Edwin & Matilda*. Full results are [here](#), and there is comment on the evening and the results [here](#) and [here](#).

7. Two competitions

[Here](#) is information about the Tenth New Zealand Young Playwrights’ Competition.

And [here](#) you can find information about the 2008 *Takahe* Poetry Competition, to be judged this year by [Michael Harlow](#)

8. Two festivals

The Christchurch Writers’ Festival, 4-7 September, has just announced its 2008 [programme](#). Guests include Captain Cook expert Vanessa Collingridge, “The Child that Books Built” author Francis Spufford, and poets Bernadette Hall, Bill Manhire, and Chris Orsman, all of whom will also be attending the big “Imagining Antarctica” conference being held in Christchurch over the same period.

The 2008 *Going West* festival is back, too, with the centre-piece literary weekend taking place 19-21 September. Go [here](#) for further information.

9. A bit of competition

“The UK's existing creative writing courses could soon have a potentially formidable competitor. Faber is running a four-day, £500 course in Paris in October, with Tobias Hill and Jeanette Winterson as tutors, and if it's successful the publisher has plans for similar projects elsewhere. Jason Cooper, director of rights and new business development, says it's one of a number of ways in which the firm is ‘looking to expand the brand - we're still at the development stage, but Faber is perhaps uniquely placed to do this kind of thing’. ‘It'll be cities,’ he says, ruling out Arvon-style rustic retreats. ‘London next, then maybe Dublin and Edinburgh.’ Other sources suggest that their ultimate goal is a global empire of Faber Academies.”

From the *Guardian Review*, 19.7.08

10. From the whiteboard

“Writers have no real area of expertise. They are merely generalists with a highly inflamed sense of punctuation.”

Lorrie Moore

11. Kapiti Coast Capers

Poet [Hinemoana Baker](#) is reading this Sunday, 27 July, 4.00-6.00 pm at Raumati's Lembas Café. The previous day, Saturday 26 July, the Friends of the Kapiti Coast District Libraries are hosting “Off the Page: An Evening with Fiona Kidman”, celebrating her memoir *At the End of Darwin Road*. Paraparaumu Library 4.00-6.00 pm. Admission \$10.00.

And WEA Kapiti Coast have two weekends with Dinah Hawken coming up: “Writing About Place” – Sat Sept 27 and Sat Oct 11th. More information [here](#), or phone 04-293-8077.

12. Recent web reading

Page turners

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/ttpbooks.html>

Taking care of books

http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/prints_books/Preserving%20Paper%20and%20Books/cleaning_books/index.html

A Yeats exhibition

<http://www.nli.ie/yeats/>

Pigeon poetry

<http://www.pigeonpoetry.com/>

Bread and poetry

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/4609677a13.html>

Inventing the children's library

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/07/21/080721fa_fact_lepore/

Moonlight

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/thepress/4615647a13135.html>

A new Hue & Cry

<http://whitefungusnews.blogspot.com/2008/06/hue-cry-new-zealand-art-literary.html>

World's smallest book

http://www.labnews.co.uk/laboratory_article.php/1881/2/nanoscience-creates-worlds-smallest-book

World's smallest park

<http://www.portlandonline.com/parks/finder/index.cfm?PropertyID=265=ViewPark>

World's smallest guitar

<http://www.news.cornell.edu/Chronicle/97/8.14.97/nanoguitar.html>

Baxter's grave

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/writingprog/warwickreview/jun2008/rbbaxters/>

light

<http://poetryfoundation.org/archive/feature.html?id=179985>

Bravo to Braunias

<http://books.scoop.co.nz/chick-lit---braunias-in-birdland/#more-362>

Crosswords

<http://citylibrary.pncc.govt.nz/quizzes.html>

Bizarre experiments

<http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/hoax/top/experiments>

The Limerictionary

<http://www.oedilf.com/db/Lim.php>

A dictionary of slang

<http://www.dictionaryofslang.co.uk/>

Encounters with Alan Bollard
<http://www.publicaddress.net/default,5141.sm>

Hall reviews Orsman
http://www.listener.co.nz/issue/3558/artsbooks/11500/icy_clarity.html

Chris Else is blogging again
<http://www.ventiak.com/>

Wellington Writers' Group have a website:
<http://www.wellingtonwriters.com/ww2/>

A couple of Bob Orr poems
<http://nzpoetlaureate.natlib.govt.nz/2008/07/poetry-day-and-all.html>

Billy Collins action poetry
<http://www.bcactionpoet.org/>

13. Great lists of our time

English common names for orchids

Aunty Rosie
Window
Windowsill
Necklace
Toothbrush
Pencil
Comb
Fried egg
Moon
Popcorn
Moth
Fragrant sand grass
Sugar cane
Eyelash
Mirror
Many swans
Dense flowered
Bee swarm
Nodding
Stream
Slipper of the Queen, with shoelaces
Spider [Early]
Spider [Late]
Cut-grass
Three birds
Unicorn

Grass pink [Pale]
Pink slipper Queen
Pheasant-in-the-grass
Cascading
Wind
Coconut Pie
Yellow ball
Pineapple
Sun
Porcupine
Spinach
Angel without leaves
Moon set
Jewel
Bumblebee

From <http://www.canadianorchidcongress.ca/engname.html>
with thanks to Cath Vidler.

* * *

Supporting the IIML

The International Institute of Modern Letters was established at Victoria University in 2001 to promote and foster contemporary imaginative writing.

Our founder, philanthropist Glenn Schaeffer, continues to contribute to IIML activities, including his assistance for an annual fellowship exchange programme with the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

While not everyone is able to match Glenn's level of support, we value all those who have helped us to foster the development of emerging writers. We would welcome the opportunity to talk with you about continuing your support for the IIML, for example through a gift in your will.

All gifts are managed by the Victoria University Foundation, a registered charitable trust established to raise funds in areas of strategic importance to the University, such as the IIML.

For further information on how you can provide philanthropic support to the IIML, please contact our Director, Bill Manhire, Ph: 04 463 6808, Email: bill.manhire@vuw.ac.nz, or Diana Meads, Fundraising Manager, Victoria University of Wellington Foundation Ph: 0800 VIC LEGACY (0800 842 534), Email: diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz