

Session 1: Inside Information: Why and What Australian and New Zealand books Kane Miller USA publish

With Kira Lynn Publisher Kane Miller USA

Chair: Christoher Cheng

Kane Miller's core business is buying books from other countries to publish in USA. Kira described it as being like going to see a foreign film. Ostensibly, the film will be 'foreign' in culture and show differences but in reality, the experience often provides a connection with the familiar or with story that changes 'foreign-ness' to simply 'fascinating'.

Kane Miller publish picture books through to YA novels. Although mostly producing books already published in country of origin, they also publish some stories directly from manuscript. Manuscript submission guidelines are available on their website

Kira looks for books that will produce a range of reactions. It might be 'Wow, just like me!' or 'Wow, that's different!' or 'Wow, great story!'

She tries to change text as little as possible, but almost always changes the cover, saying that the Aus covers don't always work in the US market. Rhyme can be particularly challenging as what rhymes in Australian English, may well not do so in US English.

Kira noted

- 4th Graders in the US study Australia at school
- the best children's books are allegorical
- music and musicality in books is great
- books can provide both a universal life message and a different way of looking

Kira featured some Australian books that have done well for them. They included:

- Fox, Margaret Wild/Ron Brooks
- Noodle Pie Ruth Starke
- Museum of Mary Child Cassandra Golds
- Jack Russell: Dog Detective Darryl and Sally Odgers
- Extreme Adventures series Justin D'Ath
- Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge, Mem Fox/Julie Vivas a best seller since 1985
- Snake and Lizard (NZ) Joy Cowley/Gavin Bishop used in one book one school for children age 5-11.

Kira suggested that it was less of an issue that an author/illustrator was international in these days of Skype and online tours.

Kane Miller published 50 books this year, 40 bought from outside US. They will publish 70-80 next year, with about the same proportion being overseas titles. Print runs range from 6000 to 20000.

They market in traditional ways to bookshops, schools and libraries, but also have an enormous Home Sales division with 7000 consultants bringing books directly to consumers.

Report by Claire Saxby

Session 2: Australian Publishers reveal the new trends and what they are looking to publish

Speakers: Lisa Berryman (HarperCollins), Jane Godwin (Penguin),

Zoe Walton (Random House), Erica Wagner (Allen & Unwin), Maryann Ballantyne (Black Dog Books)

Lisa Berryman

HarperCollins is a large trade publishing house – the third largest in the world. Lisa has her own local list, publishing 35-40 books per year, ranging from picture books to YA. HC now also handles the ABC Books list.

Lisa's list is fiction only. Successful books include those by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley, Susanne Gervay, James Moloney, Duncan Ball and Alexandra Adornetto, whose *Halo* has sold into eight territories and is currently Number 4 on the New York Times best-seller list. Her aim as a publisher is to find and 'grow' new writers into full-time authors.

New trends:

- Publishing is becoming much more global. Many locally produced books are now being co-published with or sold to overseas publishers.
- Angels are the new vampires. Paranormal is very big – but needs a fresh take. You can't just serve up another *Twilight*.

The type of books Lisa loves:

- Historical fiction
- Humour
- Spy thrillers
- Contemporary YA
- Adventure for boys

What Lisa is looking for in a manuscript

- Strong voice and plot

- Engaging writing
- Style
- Something written from the heart, drawing on the author's own personal experience
- A book that is the very best that you can write.

Jane Godwin

Penguin is a large multi-national company but still has the approach of a small publisher when working with authors and illustrators. Recent successes include Ursula Dubosarsky's *The Terrible Plop* and *The Word Spy*.

Current trends:

- Vampire / paranormal
- Dystopian fiction
- Teenage writers gaining publishing deals
- Graphic novels
- Digital publishing with a multi-platform interactive approach
- Picture book apps for phones
- The return of the book as an aesthetically pleasing hand-made object, in response to digital publishing

What Penguin is looking to publish:

Jane says the publishers and commissioning editors try to respond intuitively to what comes across their desks. She suggests writers ask themselves: What do *you* feel compelled to write, rather than what fits a current trend.

- A fresh original voice
- Quirky
- Written from the heart
- Something that matters to you. If you can share it in an effective way, it will also matter to the readers (and the publisher!)

Zoe Walton

Random House has a local list of 50-60 books a year, as well as distributing overseas titles. Their list includes Woolshed Press, the imprint of publisher Leonie Tyle. Successful titles include John Flanagan's *Ranger's Apprentice* series, and books by Deb Abela, Wendy Harmer, Michael Pryor and Chris Cheng/Sarah Davis.

Zoe reports that books for children and young adults have weathered the global financial crisis well, and they are looking to grow their list even further. Their books cover all areas of the market, from commercial series from Bindi Irwin to more literary titles.

Current trends

- Paranormal
- Dystopian fiction
- Steampunk (Victorian mentality with magic and steam power)
- rejacketing series to find a new audience

Advice: Ensure your submission letter is the best it can be.

Erica Wagner

Allen & Unwin is Australia's largest independent publisher. Each book has two people attached to it which helps to create a nurturing atmosphere for the writer to produce the best book possible. Successes include Rebecca James' *Beautiful Malice* which has sold to 45 countries.

What A&U are looking for:

- Tell the best story you can and it will reach its audience.
- A&U respond most to a sense of excitement and joy about a book. Erica gets excited when she discovers a new voice with a fresh approach.
- Graphic novels are Erica's 'folly'. She says she knows they are risky but believes in them.
- Some of their books (e.g. *Mice* by Gordon Reece) have been taken on by adult publishers as well. Strong YA fiction has the potential to cross over into the adult market.

Maryann Ballantyne

Black Dog is a small independent Australian publisher. The team works out of a small terrace house in Melbourne. Maryann is keen to remind writers and illustrators that publishers are people too, and that all good books begin with a conversation. A classic example of this is Carole Wilkinson's brilliant *Dragonkeeper* series, which began with a chat about dragons over a cup of coffee.

Maryann was also keen to bust the myth that best-selling authors come from 'nowhere'. She stresses they have actually been working for years honing their craft.

Advice to creators:

- Keep working away honing your craft and make *your own* trend, rather than simply following others.

Questions from the audience

Q 1 *Is anyone looking for creative non-fiction at the moment?*

A&U: Yes – but sales aren't great at the moment. They are interested in narrative non-fiction but NOT in the picture book area.

Black Dog: Yes – but as long as it has a good story to it. They are not interested in lists of facts.

Q 2 *Do you accept unsolicited manuscripts?*

A&U: Not at the moment.

Penguin: Yes. An agent is not needed. Everything will be read.

Random House: Has an email query submission system. Check their website for guidelines. They have a quick turnaround for responses if this system is used.

HarperCollins: Yes. Everything is read, however there are only two staff members so response time can be lengthy.

Black Dog: Yes. They regularly publish from what they call their 'treasure trove' (as opposed to the 'slush pile'). They prefer not to deal with agents.

ALL publishers suggested checking their websites regularly for submission guidelines.

Report by Meredith Costain

Session 3: Reaching the world through SCBWI – inside publishing information, opportunities and networks,

With Lin Oliver and Christopher Cheng

Chair: Corrine King

Lin Oliver gave a brief history of her work as a producer of movies, most of them based on children's books, a writer of best sellers and educational children's books, and the co-founder of SCBWI - Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators in 1971 with Stephen Mooser. Lin and Stephen decided there was a need for a conference to train young writers and illustrators and to provide them with information and support to further their careers. SCBWI is now the largest organisation for writers and illustrators in the world, with over 23,000 members from countries all over the world.

Chris Cheng gave an entertaining brief history of his journey to becoming an internationally awarded writer and Lady Cutler Award recipient with such diverse experiences as Zoo Educational Officer to Masters Graduate in Children's Literature. Chris currently gives talks at universities in the USA and Australia, flies around the country and still manages to find time for his friends and family ... somehow.

Lin told us of her background as a comedy writer after finishing university when her first job was to work on *The Beverly Hillbillies*. When founding SCBWI she says she innocently

invited all the most famous writers she knew, such as E.B. White, Judy Blume and Dr Seuss creator, Theodore Geisel. To her surprise, many showed up to the very first conference, 35 people in total attending, and SCBWI was born. Lin told with wonderful humour how they set up a post office box in Malibu simply because all the famous writers lived there, then had to drive 50kms daily just to fetch the post!

Despite its enormous size, SCBWI is like a tribe or a family to Lin and she still finds it hard to believe how much it has grown from the early days of putting together the newsletter with rubber cement at her kitchen table.

Chris outlined the type of support and information which writers and illustrators have access to through SCBWI's website and encouraged all members to notify the SCBWI office in countries they planned to visit as he had been warmly welcomed everywhere he went in the USA on a recent trip with his wife.

Chris has been working on book trailers and showing people how to produce their own. The budget slashes in publishing houses has affected writers in many ways, meaning that writers and illustrators must now be more actively involved in promoting their work by whatever means they can and in a variety of medium. Chris expects the Asian market will soar in the very near future, with a huge market based most likely in Singapore.

Lin spoke of the "Pub Guide" on the SCBWI website and how it is designed to help writers follow the path to publication. She calls unpublished writers 'pre-published' and offers help in the form of craft work support at conferences. She maintained even experienced writers can still learn, hone and perfect their craft. These days writers are more like 'content creators' with the advances in digital technology.

Another very helpful feature of the website is the 'Speakers Gallery' where writers can upload short videos of themselves and spruik their work. This is particularly helpful for international schools looking for speakers to visit them.

"Edited By" is another section which is a brilliant concept for helping writers. Publishers from various publishing houses are interviewed showing their 10 best books they've worked with and why they enjoyed working with those particular projects. Writers can then match their work with a publisher and submit directly to them. These interviews are constantly updated to ensure the most recent information is available.

This session was exciting, informative, entertaining and affirmed the writer's journey may not always be an easy one, but that there are many along the way, in 'the family' who are eager to help.

Report by Dawn Meredith Hort

Session 4: Introduction to how to pitch a book and real life pitches

Seven courageous writers braved the pitching session and did an excellent job. Their pitches included historical fiction, creative non-fiction, a biographical work and a picture book. Congratulations Chris, Maria, Claire, Dawn, Angela, Sheryl and Samantha.

The panel comprised of Zoe Walton (Random House Australia), Maryann Ballantyne (black dog books) and Leonie Tyle (Woolshed Press).

To summarise the collective response to the individual pitches:

What impressed the panel was:

- a strong voice
- evidence of market knowledge
- detailed research particularly with the historical fiction
- a hook, a sense of mystery
- well presented story lines
- strong concepts such as a teen mother/daughter journey
- historical fiction
- a sense of place

Where the judges felt some pitches needed more work:

- some pitches didn't provide a strong enough sense of what the story was about
- don't pitch a work in progress until you have the main gist of the story
- some pitches needed to show more emotional depth in the story
- the story structure and style was sometimes unclear
- more consideration needed to be given as to the appropriate length for the piece. In a few instances the panel thought the given word length was too long.

Session 5: How to create a best seller from the concept to the marketing.

With Gabrielle Lord, Kira Lynn

Chair: Dianne Wolfer

INTRODUCTION:

Dianne Wolfer introduced the speakers, saying that Gabrielle Lord, a distinguished adult crime thriller writer, had achieved the dream of most writers at the Conference: to write a best-seller young adult series. *Conspiracy 365* is a series of 12 books, released one a month, following the adventures of a 15 year-old boy on the run and finishing at the end of the year, midnight on 31st December.

The series has been called 'fast-paced', 'edge of your seat writing' and 'a top choice for reluctant readers'.

GABRIELLE LORD:

Gabrielle generously gave credit for the series idea to her publisher. It was originally the brain-child of Scholastic publisher Andrew Berkhut, she said, a publisher who is full of enthusiasm and excited about ideas. She feels they spark off each other.

Originally Andrew contacted Gabrielle and suggested they meet to talk about a certain idea. And over two vanilla milkshakes at Bronte Beach the series was born...When he proposed a series of crime thrillers for boys, written especially for reluctant readers, each one only 3500-4000 words, Gabrielle had immediately said yes. All she knew at that point was that she had twelve empty boxes...and so she asked herself how she would fill them.

On the walk back home to her house in Clovelly after this meeting, Gabrielle pondered the question of how to sustain the tension during the series through a whole year, knowing she would need action, suspense and lots of tension. Put the hero on the run, she thought, that's the way to do it.

By the time she got home, said Gabrielle, she had the name of Callum Ormond, a 15 year-old boy, and knew she needed to set him a huge goal to achieve.

Gabrielle learnt from her screen-writing days that she needed action, so she decided her hero should be chased by not just one but two groups of criminals, and that he should have to find a 'something' (a Maguffin in Hitchcockian terms, a plot element that drives the action, something that the characters will do almost anything to obtain) by the stroke of midnight on 1st December.

Then she had to work out why her hero couldn't go to the police, so she made him the subject of a set-up in which he was framed by the police so that he is the most wanted teenager in Australia.

So she had the structure and the set-up. Then she said, her task was to make this idea work seamlessly and excitingly for book after book. Everyone knows, said Gabrielle, that we can tune into synchronicity. She herself was named Butler before she married and became a Lord (as she says, she married up...) So she found her maguffin within a secret in her own family history. Her family had originally owned the Tipperary, area in Ireland, and had owned a country house called Ormond Hall She devised a massive secret called the Ormond Singularity, though what exactly it is no-one in the book knows. Callum, the hero, is warned about the Ormond Singularity when he is brushed against by a sick and staggering stranger, who dies before he can reveal anything more.

Well, that was the set-up in brief, but then Gabrielle had to amass an enormous amount of story. She plotted and kept on plotting, she said, and produced a 90 page plot document rather like a film treatment. Gabrielle found that she had a number of problems to solve, for instance

- Where could Callum hide? She made up a list of different hiding places.
- What was his conduit to the world? Gabrielle's first idea was to have Callum write a diary, but to make it more contemporary she decided that he would write a blog. This hangs from her own blog. Some young readers even write back to Cal, offering

him, for instance, free accommodation if he makes it to their part of the country, such is their belief in the series...

- Where was his mother and why couldn't she help? Gabrielle decided that Callum's mother believed he was a psycho kid, an effective way of removing her as a protector.

The next problems to solve were structural.

- What were the natural breaks in the story? Gabrielle broke her huge plot into twelve units.
- Each of these stories then needed three acts, and each of these needed two acts.
- Each story then needed a cascade of events which resulted in a cliff-hanger ending for each chapter.
- Then there needed to be twelve resolutions, one for each book, which all had to be different and leave her protagonist in a dangerous predicament. Gabrielle said she found herself dredging up all the endings she had ever seen, for example:
 1. Being tied to a railway line à la *Perils of Pauline*
 2. Being caught like a squirrel in a crusher – then she found out another writer had recently used this and reluctantly had to give the idea away.

The result of this was a series of books that young people have been given detentions for reading in class (CUE LAUGHTER FROM THE ASSEMBLED THRONG). Parents have contacted Gabrielle saying that the series has turned their son around from an attitude of saying 'Reading sucks' into an avid readaholic. *Conspiracy 365* has become a worldwide phenomenon!

KIRA LYNN, AMERICAN PUBLISHER AT KANE MILLER OF *CONSPIRACY 365*.

Publisher Kira then explained how *Conspiracy 365* has marketed in America.

Kira went as she does each year to the Bologna Book Fair, with the CEO of the larger company that has recently bought Kane Millar. He was immediately enthusiastic about *Conspiracy 365*, and so the company bought the rights.

Kira explained that she originally had a few reservations. Her company is located in the middle of America, a very conservative heartland, but there are not many books around for reluctant older readers so she felt that the series would fill a gap in the market.

However, she has found that the trade market in the US was confused about how to market the series, because it didn't fit readily into their categories. However, *Conspiracy 365* has become the company's best-seller ever, without the help of the trade market, because it has been sold so well by their home market sales staff.

This 4,000 strong sales staff brings in over half the company's sales: an unusual sales model. They sell books directly to consumers through a home party plan. *Conspiracy 365* has been sold as an entire series which is then sent them one book a month to consumers,

like a magazine. The home sales staff has also found that the best way to sell the series is to give one book to a student in any school they are targeting, and simply let word of mouth do the rest. The series then sells itself. The product, as Kira says, has been embraced by its end-users.

QUESTION TIME

This information was elicited by questions that followed Gabrielle and Kira's presentations:

- Book 13 is coming! Gabrielle again blamed her enthusiastic publisher – 'it was Andrew!'

The problem at the end of the series was that there was still information left to tell; Gabrielle had lived with her characters for so long that she wanted to finish their stories. It was Rebecca Young at Scholastic who suggested the thirteenth book.

- How long did Gabrielle have to write the books in the series? Originally she had been asked for one book a month and circumstances meant that eventually she had two months to write each book, and it then took another 12 months for the series to appear. There were gasps from audience members as we digested the punishing work schedule this must have entailed...
- There has been enormous overseas interest in the series, which is coming out one a month during 2010, and the ABC wants to develop it as a TV series.
- The series' original market was seen as boys aged 8-15, but it has been embraced by adults as well.
- How did Gabrielle keep track of the 12 books as she was writing them? It was difficult, she said, because as she was writing one book there would be two earlier books coming back for their first and second edits respectively, so it was tricky keeping everything organised in her mind.
- How did the illustrations work? Gabrielle says that her editor is also the illustrator.
- Gabrielle also said one of the reasons she feels the series is so successful is the high stakes that she has established for Callum: his life, his father's reputation, and a mysterious much more important stake: the Ormond Conspiracy. This is a conundrum which readers have to work out for themselves, finding out first what the riddle is, then the jewel, then the conspiracy itself. She also feels the beginning grabs readers: a sick man gasping out a mysterious message...

CUE ENTHUSIASTIC APPLAUSE FROM ASSEMBLED DELEGATES!!!

Report by Wendy Blaxland

Session 6: Group workshop sessions with a publisher, SCBWI Leader and up to 10 delegates

Small groups of up to ten delegates were paired with either Kira Lynn publisher Kane Miller Books USA or a major Australian publisher and SCBWI leader to provide an intimate opportunity of discussions about writing, crating, submitting and publication of works.

Each group had a focus - picture books; middle grade fiction; young adult; illustration; literary fiction; commercial fiction. Publishers were Lira Lynn Kane Miller USA, Lisa Berryman HarperCollins; Maryann Ballantyne Black Dog Books; Zoe Walton Random House; Leonie Tyle Woolshed Press imprint of Random House; Erica Wagner Allen & Unwin Publishers and RA Christopher Cheng, RA Susanne Gervay, ARA Corinne King, ARA Dianne Wolfer; ARA Frances Plumpton (New Zealand literary agent) and coordinator Peter Taylor.

There was a concurrent master class craft session for published authors run by award winning author Sheryl Clarke.

Report Susanne Gervay

Session 7: Industry News

With Zoe Rodrgiuez, Teresa Culkin- Lawrence, Hazel Edwards

Chair: Frane Lessac

Teresa Culkin-Lawrence, illustrator, talked about how she applied for an Artist in Residence grant. She first came to attention to the local paper – they wrote an article about her. It was noticed by a woman who worked at the Victoria Performance Centre and her goal was to get artists involved working with children. She found a grant through www.artgrantsfinder.com and suggest Teresa apply for the Artist in Residence grant. In the meantime a local school requested Teresa do the artist in school's residency at their school. Teresa was told only 20 percent of people who apply for grants get them so she set out to make sure hers was successful. She discovered that it was important to ring and speak to the people administering the grant. They want to hear from you because it helps them to get to know you. She realised she had to involve the community so they came up with a concept of building a bridge to a destination in the past. This helped the project be educational. The children produced lino print illustrations for their books and afterwards they had an exhibition. Children from other schools and people from the community came to see it hence involving the community. Teresa went to the school once a week (Fridays) and spent several hours working with the children. (She spent many hours preparing for the lesson the night before.) You can see the children's work children on Teresa's blog: <http://teresaculkinlawrence.blogspot.com>

CAL – Cultural Fund (Creative Industries Career Fund)

Zoe Rodriguez is a lawyer at CAL working in lobbying and policy. She recently went down to Canberra arguing for provisions in the copyright Act i.e. Parallel Imports Act. CAL was established in 1974 in response to photocopying technology. They collect and distribute for creatives over \$120 million dollars a year from schools and government; where your works are used extensively. They survey what they're photocopying and how much and set licensing fees which are equitable. She encourages you to become members of CAL. You can register free online. She also runs CAL's Cultural Fund; it supports conferences and gives out fellowships. Authors can get grants to cover expenses to go to conferences and apply for Fellowships. They also support ASA, which has mentor and manuscript assessment programmes, grants, seminars and internships. They are also involved in the Creative Industries Career Fund. There are four rounds per year and you can apply for up to \$5,000 a year. It will assist your career by helping you develop your professional skills. It is judged by three independent judges. They decide which ones are best. She recommends getting in touch with them; all your questions are welcome. They have increased their funds so they can support more applications. They want to assist people moving into the digital world; so that people don't miss out. Look for forms and information on www.coyright.com.au Don't forget to register your works. They also compensate people from overseas – it pays to register so they can find you.

ASA – Australian Society of Authors – www.asauthors.org

Hazel Edwards, author of over 200 books, talked about how creatives are short of time, money and energy and why joining organisations such as the ASA is very useful for you. She said many authors and illustrators are shy types so it is extremely useful to say to people that ASA has a list of fees and direct people to those on the website. Why pay a sub? It is a professional organisation that lobbies on behalf of Australian authors and illustrators. The services you can use are:

- Mentoring services
- Style file – opportunity for illustrators to promote their work
- Newsletters
- Websites
- Opportunity ring on a free number to ask questions especially legal questions
- Networking in various seminars
- Issues arising in a rapidly changing world i.e. rights – being profiled in Australian Authors
- Producing resources and acting on your behalf

Hazel says that joining more than one organisation such as ASA, SCBWI and CAL can help you in many ways and is very beneficial to your career.

Report by Maria Gill

Session 8: All You Wanted to know about Bologna Book Fair

With Frane Lessac, Frances Plumpton, Dianne Wolfer, Corinne King, Peter Taylor

Chair: Susanne Gervay

SCBWI representatives from New Zealand and various Australian regions presented a PowerPoint discussion of highlights from the 2010 Bologna International Children's Book Fair and SCBWI Symposium, which is held every 2nd year on the Monday preceding the 4-day Book Fair. WA's Dianne Wolfer, introduced fellow panel members: Corinne King (Vic), Peter Taylor (Qld), Frances Plumpton (NZ) and Illustrator Liaison Frane' Lessac, all of whom attended Bologna.

Corinne and Peter began by giving an overview of the fair's physical layout, stressing the overwhelming size of the interconnected pavilions. Frane' spoke about the SCBWI 1-day symposium, giving a brief overview of her presentation, 'Books without Borders' which featured snapshots and illustrations describing special events in Australia. After this, Frances described the Literary Agents' Hall, and explained how agents hold back-to-back meetings at booths in an enormous open space. She gave practical examples of her experiences working as an agent at the Book Fair.

Corinne and Dianne then spoke about their role organizing the schedule for international regions and individual author/illustrators at the SCBWI Showcase stand and gave an overview of activities happening at the stand. From the illustrating perspective, Frane' and Peter talked about 'illustrating live' at the Australian Publishers' Association stand, as well as other popular sessions such as 'Duelling Illustrators' and story-mapping.

Frane' urged illustrators to submit their work now for possible inclusion in the 2011 (<http://www.bookfair.bolognafiere.it/en/mostrailustratori/>) **Book Fair program**

All panel members stressed how valuable it was to have the SCBWI stand as a friendly home to return to between meetings and appointments. They suggested that members mark their diaries and begin saving for Bologna 2012 when Australia will be the feature nation at the Book Fair.

The presentation concluded with a fun trailer featuring SCBWI members on a hair-raising taxi ride from Leonardo daVinci airport into Rome.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgAhRdyopSM>

Warning: select Roman taxi drivers with utmost care!

Report by Dianne Wolfer

Session 9: How to get Published Regularly in the Educational market

With Stephen Wilson and Pamela Rushby

Chair: Meredith Costain

Pamela Rushby opened the session. She said these are the books you'll never find in a bookstore. They are sold directly to schools, etc. The Educational market doesn't reprint

any series, but always must have new material. They publish all types of books, including fiction. Look on the web for Educational Publishers. The SCBWI website also lists Educational Publishers. Someone wishing to submit to an Educational Publisher must know the books they publish. Do research; hone in on the market. If you have an opportunity, visit a school library to see they types of books the schools are buying.

She suggested when querying publisher to say, "I think my work will fit into your _____ series. Tell the editor that you'd be interested in being included into their list of writers. Address the query to "Commissioning Editor, Primary."

Pamela said a writer must read the list of rules and stick to them; (word count, word list, On time, Don't argue about changes.) Always check carefully your spelling and grammar.

At the end of the session, Pamela gave the attendees the ten tips for successful submittall:

1. Read the brief carefully and stick to the brief. Contact the editor if you are submitting something outside the brief.
2. Check the word count required.
3. Check the list of words---use it.
4. Reading level
5. Proof read. Get a good critique before submitting.
6. Use the house style requested.
7. Never meet the deadline; always beat it.
8. Make changes as required
9. Give ideas for illustrations
10. Take time to send an email, postcard, etc, to thank the editor. They love it.

Stephen Wilson took over the second half of the session. Elit stands for The English Teaching Association. A writer must research and plan before submitting. The new market will get the written works in several ways:

1. Hard Copy
2. eBook
3. Book Trailers
4. Listen, Audio
5. Software
6. PDF format
7. Customise their own reading experience.

www.craigmore.com has articles about eBooks.

www.acara.edu.au needs material for National Education System

Since I knew very little about the Educational Market, I found Pamela Rushby's and Stephen Wilson's presentation to be extremely timely and helpful. Especially helpful were

the guide lines and rules to follow when submitting material, and the ten tips given to us by Pamela. It was one of the better sessions. I believe you and Susanne did an exceptional job putting the conference together. Well done!!

Report by Mark Thomason

Session 10: The Publishing Panel Q & A

With Lisa Berryman, Kira Lynn, Maryann Ballantyne, Leonie Tyle

Chair: Frances Plumpton

In this session, Frances asked Kira Lynn from Kane Miller, Leonie Tyle from Woolshed Press, Lisa Berryman from HarperCollins and Maryann Ballantyne from black dog books seriously specific questions about their industry.

What 3 things do you wish an author or illustrator sending material to you did before submitting?

MB: be professional, don't be lazy, target publisher, do a good letter

LB: research the best publisher for your work, write the best and engaging submission you can. We will eventually get to your ms (we read all submission) – but we read in our spare time so it can take a while before we contact you.

LT: know what type of books I like, look at my books, do not ring me and ask where submission is, don't tell me that everyone loves this ms and it's going to win awards

KL: don't send me gifts – it's creepy and not clever, follow submission guidelines (it shows you can take direction), don't ever call us

FP: don't send ms on coloured paper, or add fairy dust or sand!

Generally, to find where submission guidelines are, type in 'submissions' then the publisher's name e.g. submissions: HarperCollins.

What are the common areas where manuscripts fail?

MB: publishers have a lot of reading to do, manuscripts are always on our minds, make it easier on us – send us suitable ms, you can often throw away the first 5 or 50 pages as writers write their way into their story

LB : we don't publish that genre, we may have already published in that area, ms isn't ready to be submitted (do the bottom drawer trick – leave it for a while and then look at it again), present the best you can

LT: lack luster writing, talking down to readers, telling not showing

KL: all of the above, if the first sentence of your cover letter has a 'but' in it ('We know you don't usually publish this type of thing, but...'), people who haven't done their research and have no respect for the genre

FP: people don't understand the role of the agent either

Leonie then read 'The Perfect Pitch' – One Perfect Memory from the CYA conference and commented on its beautiful, understated, elegant writing.

Can you explain the process from the initial submission to the published work?

KL: when we're buying a book that's been previously published we do this: buy files from publisher, we do very few changes, usually design a new jacket maybe from inside book, from buying to publishing is about 9 months (mainly production time).

LT: submission via Random House kid's pitch, request whole ms, taken to acquisition meeting, sales team meeting, offer, contract etc

LB: submission acknowledgement, read, report, acquisition team meet weekly having read ms and compared to other title and sales, if accepted then costed, offer made, ms delivery date, edited etc. Sales plans occur about a year out, nothing left to chance. Publication date can be moved rather than rush job. Publicity work on press releases etc

MB: we are a smaller company so our processes are different. We meet amongst ourselves with drinks and cake! BDB is a bunch of editors so we enthuse our sales team directly. They work months ahead so delays affect sales. We do lots of commissions to suit market. Other than this, we're similar to other publishing houses. Editors job is to enthuse sales team, who enthuse bookbuyers etc

FP: the reality is that your ms is just the beginning. **LT** and **LB** sends ms back immediately. Deadlines are crucial. Publishers genuinely want to publish books so they look carefully at what comes to them.

In these days of easy internet access, plagiarism could be rife. What pointers can you offer to non-fiction writers?

KL: ask for supplementary materials, have fact checkers to ensure credentials.

LT: don't do non-fiction, but do historical fiction. Knows author's credentials and editor does checking. In fantasy, some stories are based on existing traditional stories. Very carefully checked. Writers need to know their facts. Also science fiction needs to be based on accuracy.

LB: expect all facts to be accurate and this is primarily the responsibility of authors. Facts are checked by fact checkers.

MB: plagiarism not a problem generally. Research is not usually a problem, authors sometimes need to be curbed. We have an expert reader for non-fiction. But readers often tell us our facts are wrong – even if they weren't. Sometimes people think they are right and issues can arise. Sometimes crazy things happen.

FP: remember to cite your references as you go, need primary resources. Permissions for quotes need to be got by authors including music. Start this process early. **LT** says make up your own work rather than use others.

References to current technology may date books. What should writers do?

LB: use subtle suggestion rather than specific information, use the essence of technology in the story. Technology should never drive the story

LT: books that use technology a lot will be fine for the next few years. If you want it to last longer, be subtle. Be careful with SF – if it's only 20 years out, then you need to research well to be accurate.

KL: try not to use technology-based storyline because of use of backlist but have recently acquired 'I lost my mobile at the mall' by Wendy Harmer. This is a very relevant story for now and so took it.

MB: agree

What can authors expect for promotion of titles?

LT: tough question. Authors need to be pro-active online and in schools. Book launches – Random House are loathe to do them because they don't sell books. Prefer money from launch into advertising in Magpies or Viewpoint. All books are sent out for reviews in many places. Radio interviews maybe. Hard for kids' books to be welcomed by media. Bookmarks are good. Blog, Facebook, Twitter, PIO – get the buzz going, hype it up.

LB: every title has publicity budget. Book trailers and Facebook and Twitter accounts are all useful. Book launches don't work so well. Books are driven hard in the weeks following release. If your local bookshop isn't selling, get in touch with us.

MB: book launches are nice but not good for sales. Local bookshops should have your books because they would have been shown books by booksellers. Maybe they're waiting on reorder?

Sheryl: blogs that review kids books are good. Chris Cheng, Boomerang Books etc

Chris: local primary schools will launch books for you! Contact teacher-librarian.

Hazel: ASA has link for launches

Also: libraries, CBCA, SCBWI websites

Wendy: Do publishers like authors who can actively seek out different markets for their books? YES.

Signed books can't be sent back!

What do publishers have to consider before you make an offer?

LT: publishers are businesses not charity. Saleability, literary quality

LB: how many copies that you can sell, RRP, format, rights, E-books, local author, how flexible authors are, what more authors can do

MB: (answering question from audience) - what if an editor wants to change something? This is a team process, it's all about working together. You must be open to having this discussion if things are requested to be changed.

What challenges do you face when you design a book?

KL: I wanted to buy a beautiful book about book binding but was challenged on who is this book for and is it going to sell? We change covers nearly all the time. Why? Trends (no body parts, no photographs, white covers for USA market), hardcovers with dust jacket. You have to trust that we know what we are doing.

LB: budget, look and feel for market, positioning, age range, we do a lot of embellishments – hard to keep them on covers as reprint happens especially with print on demand.

LT: we have great designers. Lots of discussion among team and with author. Need best and most commercial cover for the content (Woolshed has literary look).

MB: it's tricky when authors had different ideas. Need them to leap with you (trust us). We have budget restrictions.

General questions from audience:

- children as reviewers – everyone has them, poison tasters
- With so many books going digital, authors may be asking for tech stuff that may be impractical. Some authors have many ideas but best to let book work first. Have another department to do that.
- What if sales team override publisher? Keep taking it back, problem solve until compromise reached. You need to pick your battles to fight. But sales team are experts...

Report by Pam Harvey

Session 11: Pitfalls and trip ups: as SCBWI leaders pitch their work to a surprise publisher

Susanne Gervay and Frane Lessac presented a tongue-in-cheek 'anti pitch' – how not to pitch to a publisher. The skit was good fun and provided many a giggle but it was also a timely reminder of where to draw the pitch and query line.

Susanne and Frane presented Leonie Tyle from Woolshed Press with an opening gift (the first no! and never!) of a glass of wine and proceeded to tell her:

- they were good friends who had worked together as author and illustrator
- their book was just like Twilight

- it was for 8 -12 years
- it was about love and sex (not enough sex in Twilight, especially for young readers)
- it was complete and required no editorial work
- their mother liked it, in fact everyone they knew liked it!
- it would suit two markets – trade and education
- it was guaranteed to sell 42 million copies (like Twilight?)
- it was guaranteed to win an award.

And Leonie's first question: "But what is the story?"

There's a valuable lesson in that!

For the full conference programme please visit the national website at:
www.scbwiaustralia.org and then the 'Conferences and Events' page.

Or access the programme directly at:

<http://www.scbwiaustralia.org/conferences/2010/scbwi10%20sydney%20program.pdf>

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