



Janice Newnham – Author

Newsletter July 2026



Hello and welcome to my newsletter!

Sorry All, as an author, I make a terrible correspondent / newsletter writer!

Writing:

And no, ... I haven't been writing much recently. I certainly have not cracked the opening sentence for my next book.

However, I have gone back to the class, to a certain extent and have been participating in writing exercises and workshops to fine tune the craft.

I even entered a competition with NYCMidnight – a flash fiction challenge. It required participants to create a 1000-word flash fiction short story in 48 hours. Over 1300 participants were divided into 78 cohorts and, when the clock started ticking, each cohort was provided with a different combination of prompts in terms of a genre, a location and an object to include in the piece. My prompts were: Political satire, a blood bank and an action figure.

It was a real challenge; because to start with, I had to google the defining criteria of political satire! I produced what I thought was a worthwhile entry and then I sat back for 6 weeks awaiting a result.

In the meantime, my peers provided feedback on the piece via a NYCMidnight members forum, on which all participants could read other entries and provide critiques. It was very enlightening.

The top seven entries in each cohort were announced on Thursday, last week, and will proceed to stage 2 of the competition. I didn't get through! Sad face....

I received the judges feedback which was very helpful. I will share both, my entry and feedback, in the next newsletter when the embargo expires.

Books:

My latest release, *A Sandwich Short of A Picnic*, is still selling well, I have even supplied copies to Germany and multiple copies to the USA and UK. I thought the story of Claude Batson, would be quite niche with little

appetite for the tale beyond Australian borders but clearly there is a thirst for Australian novels across the world! Yay!

Maybe my book benefitted from the notoriety and publicity of the recent Sovereign citizen drama in Porepunkah. Afterall, both characters, Batson and Freeman, loosed a hail of bullets and then fled to the hills. In the Batson case of 1924, the protagonist shot up a picnic party and hence, hordes of civilians, supported by police troops from across Victoria and Southern NSW, were also energised to take to the hills around Walwa and Jingellic in pursuit of the fugitive. Freeman initiated a similar man hunt. Both men were captured within 30km of none another, 102 years apart!

Events:

I have attended several author and reader/writer events since I last created a newsletter!

I love going to literary festivals because there is always someone interesting to chat to, both in the audience and on the stage, and the networking is exciting! It is a fantastic opportunity to harvest a ton of tips and information, to learn about the journeys of other authors and to be inspired. I always leave to return home and hammer the keyboard and progress on the next piece of writing! (Yes, and I "inadvertently" add to my "To Be Read" pile)

This weekend, I travelled to Wagga Wagga to attend the **Riverina Readers Festival**, where, as usual, there was a stellar line up of authors.

We heard from:

Ali Lowe, Anita Heiss, Bridie Blake, Jeremy Lachlan, Margaret Hickey, Mary Colussi, Sulari Gentill, Tim Ayliff and Zoe Gaetjens. Moderators were Amy Doak,

Irma Gold and Samantha Leah, who are also authors in their own right.

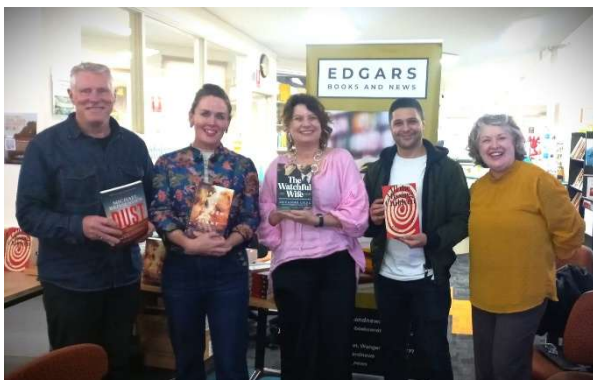
There were interesting panel combos and insightful questions from enthusiastic moderators. The great debate of Killers vs Kissers (Crime genre vs Romance) was hugely entertaining! Sulari Gentill sliced up the opposition in her opening defence of the genre of Crime topping Romance.



In June there was an event produced by the Alpine Shire Libraries which was also fabulous and I recommend that you mark your calendars for next year.... It was the **Winter Writers' Roundtable**. It was held on consecutive weekdays (an interesting switch up for literary festivals) in different locations (Mt Beauty Library on the Thursday, Bright on Friday and rounded out in Myrtleford.) The spread of locations and timing meant that non-local participants drove around the stunning countryside, and were "forced" to peruse shops and hospitality venues across the Alpine Shire. I found myself having a quick stop in to the Dederang Pub on the way home from Mt Beauty (to check out my chippie son's work on the renovation of course... the wine was secondary! I spent up big in the interesting shops in Bright. Had a

research stop over in the Stanley Pub (It was once operated by the matriarch of Walwa, Eliza Dunn in the 1860's) and yes, bought some trees from the famous tree nursery in Stanley! The most unusual aspect of this festival was the closing event a musical mash up of Sophie O'Brien (singing, beautifully) and Michael Brissenden on standup Bass!

Authors at this event included Zahid Gamieldeen, Suzanne Leal, Sophie O'Brien, and Michael Brissenden. (Pictured below, back left to right, then front left to right)



Memoir Writing Workshops:

I have had the pleasure of facilitating a series of Memoir writing workshops at Corryong Library over a period of six weeks in April and May. I stressed to the assembled group that I was by no means qualified to teach, but I was there as an enthusiastic writer keen to share what I have discovered to date about the craft and happy to encourage other community members to have a go! I was particularly keen for participants to record their own stories as I have heard so often, the regret expressed by friends and family members after the passing of a special person, that their legacy of personal history was never recorded. With the rise of dementia cases, we also need to get on to the memoir before we forget!

We wrapped up the sessions in mid-May and I hope that their enthusiasm has continued and that participants are progressing well into the mostly joyful confusion of revisiting their past, stirring some slumbering memories and recording their own stories.

I have been engaged for a repeat performance at Tallangatta Library commencing 14 July at noon and subsequently every Tuesday for 4 weeks. Everyone is welcome to attend and it is **FREE**!

Thank you for listening!

Happy reading!

Don't forget to leave a review for my books on the usual platforms or on my social media pages!

Cheers

