

## Newsletter Number Eleven, June 2013

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Welcome to my June newsletter from Pinerolo in the beautiful Blue Mountains. It is a fabulous place to live, and every new day reminds us of this. Sunsets recently have been spectacular and the autumn colours have been magnificent. It's having four seasons a year that we enjoy about living here. It's also the community spirit here. Blackheathens are such 'booky' people and also very friendly. I have even joined the local choir 'The Heathens' and go to practice every Wednesday. That is a lot of fun. Even though I've been in it for only a short time, I've been part of two public performances, the latest one at Blackheath Public School last Saturday.

### ILLUSTRATORS IN RESIDENCE 2013

Please see on this page a list of this year's Illustrators in Residence. I'm very much looking forward to working with five very talented illustrators. It's always very inspiring to watch a picture book develop, and being able to see and be part of daily progress is very special.

### THE MAURICE SAXBY LECTURE

The second Maurice Saxby Lecture, organised by the CBCA NSW Branch was presented by Dr Mark Macleod at the State Library on 14 May. If you weren't there, you missed an absolutely fabulous presentation. Mark's lecture was an insightful and inspiring reflection on how children can be transported by reading. It was also a beautiful tribute to Maurice Saxby, with a poem dedicated to him at the end. Mark will be a hard act to follow!

For those who missed the inaugural Maurice Saxby Lecture presented by Robyn Ewing last year, a DVD is now available. It's a great way to relive this memorable night, or to see it for the first time. Order it from the CBCA NSW office: [cbcansw@bigpond.com](mailto:cbcansw@bigpond.com), phone (02) 9818 3858.

### PIXIE O'HARRIS AWARD TO DR SAXBY

While we're on Maurice Saxby, it was an honour and privilege for me to attend the Australian Book Industry Awards on 24 May, to present the twentieth APA Pixie O'Harris Award to Maurice Saxby - for Distinguished and Dedicated Service to the Development and Reputation of Australian Children's Books. This award recognises:

- outstanding contributions made to Australian children's books by people in the industry;
- achievements of children's book specialists;
- children's books and the people involved with them;
- the importance of children's books to the industry;
- children's books at the Book Industry Awards Dinner.
- Pixie O'Harris, one of Australia's best-loved children's illustrators.

Part of my citation read: 'It's high time that Maurice was allowed to rest on his laurels and enjoy his retirement, but anyone who is part of the Australian children's book scene hopes that this never happens. He has shared his life with us and there is still so much that we can learn from him. In being presented with the APA Pixie O'Harris award he also receives the recognition and gratitude he so deserves from Australia's publishers for children.'

Maurice was quoted in the Weekend Australian: 'Thank you to all the book buggers.' He was referring of course to people who have the book bug, an affliction usually contracted in childhood, for which there is no cure.

It's fabulous to see Maurice being shown the respect and recognition he so deserves.

### DON'T FORGET OUR ARTWORK FOR SALE

<http://www.pinerolo.com.au/gallery.html>

### ILLUSTRATORS IN RESIDENCE 2013

Applications came from far and wide for this unique opportunity for illustrators, now in its second year. It took all of last week to carefully consider all the applications and five lucky illustrators have been informed. Illustrators in Residence at Pinerolo for one week each in 2013 are:

Nette Hilton - July

Sara Acton - early August

Jill Carter-Hansen - late August

Laura Burroni - late September

Dale Newman - October

I look forward very much to working with these very talented people. It was so exciting to watch last year's residents at work and their daily progress. If you'd like to meet them and perhaps even see their work, you are welcome to ring and make a time.



2012 Illustrators (l-r) Shannon Melville, Rosemary Mastnak, Stephen Axelsen, Jedda Robaard. - Well done!

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## VISITORS

The Blue Mountains have been celebrating the bicentenary of the crossing by explorers Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson. There has been a re-enactment, a spectacular flyover of aircraft, and the entertaining play, called THE CROSSING, written by Blaxland descendant Wendy Blaxland. We were delighted to have Wendy and her family staying at Pinerolo for a few nights while the play was performed locally. Wendy called it 'Pinerolo Paradise'.

James Roy rang one afternoon to say that he was at Varuna, the Writers House in Katoomba with Gabrielle Wang. Could he bring her to Pinerolo for a visit? This kind of impromptu visit is something I like very much. Of course he could. So the three of us sat over a cup of tea and talked children's books. What a treat! It was very good to meet Gabrielle. She is writer in residence at Varuna, so I hope she calls in to see me again.

Also visiting recently was Alyson Simpson. It was also a pleasure to welcome her and her sister. They were such appreciative visitors. It gives me great satisfaction to see people who know picture books well oohing and ahing as they spy artwork they recognise and love. I had to say goodbye to a wonderful piece of artwork by Stephen Michael King, the cover artwork for 'All the Colours of Paradise', but I know it's gone to a very good home.

## NEW PICTURE BOOKS

I never tire of reading picture books and sharing them with anybody I can at every available opportunity. At our book club meeting recently, when we had read NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR, I read two picture books: BEARLY THERE by Alyssa Darlison and Jill Carter-Hansen and BARRY, my favourite book by Colin Thompson. I'd love to hear back from others who've shared picture books with friends.

ALFIE'S SEARCH FOR DESTINY by David Hardy (Magabala). A heartwarming story about Alfie's search for his destiny, travelling far and wide. He finally realises that his destiny is at home with his family. A beautifully designed book with expressive illustrations.

AUSTRALIANS ALL by Nadia Wheatley, illus by Ken Searle (Allen & Unwin). This is not strictly a picture book but it deserves wide recognition. It is a meticulously researched and beautifully presented history of growing up in Australia, from the Ice Age to the Apology. It tells the story of eighty young Australians and their place in our history.

BEARLY THERE by Aleesah Darlison, illus by Jill Carter-Hansen (Windy Hollow). A dearly loved bear, a constant companion, is nearly replaced by a well-meaning relative. The illustrations are fresh, simple and expressive. A fun book for anyone with a teddy bear.

BETWEEN THE PAGES by Joan van Loon, illus by Chantal Stewart (New Frontier). What a romp this book is! Two small children bravely enter an exciting book and run from page to page to escape dangers. This is a new, impressive partnership celebrating the joys of reading.

DAVY & THE DUCKLING by Margaret Wild, illus by Julie Vivas (Penguin). Even though it resonates with echoes from their previous books, this new one from this award-winning partnership is a moving and heartwarming story of enduring friendship that spans a generation.

HOLD ON TIGHT by Sara Acton (Scholastic). By the illustrator of THE UNEXPECTED CROCODILE comes this

charming story about the virtues of holding on to your mother's hand when out walking, imagining what it would be like if you let go and were blown away.

KING PIG by Nick Bland (Scholastic). King Pig has a lot to learn about being nice and he makes a reasonable start. Bestseller Nick Bland's books always delight and this book is no exception. Highly recommended.

THE LIGHT by Jo Oliver (New Frontier). The warmth of a close family and their love of music give this book its heart. The evocative illustrations, with the musical borders and atmospheric settings, bring the story to life. A poignant dedication indicates connection with people at Montague Island lighthouse, to whom the book is dedicated.

NOAH DREARY by Aaron Blabey (Penguin). Another quirky and amusing book from this award winner. Noah literally loses his head, but turns his predicament to his advantage and lives with it. Especially good for readers who might be struggling with a challenge in their life.

ON THE DAY YOU WERE BORN by Margaret Wild, illus by Ron Brooks (Allen & Unwin). MW and RB are now a formidable picture book partnership. This beautiful celebration of new life and family closeness is a gift for all new babies from these multi award-winners.

SCARLETT AND THE SCRATCHY MOON by Chris McKimmie (Allen & Unwin). Quirky, exuberant, funny and moving. McKimmie books never disappoint. This one, about a child's love of her pet dogs, demands several readings. There are even drawings by children.

SEADOG by Claire Saxby, illus by Tom Jellett (Random House). This rollicking move-along-quick book is lots of fun, like the dog who races through the pages. Anyone with a playful, mischievous, lovable dog will also love this one.

TOO MANY CHEEKY DOGS by Johanna Bell, illus by Dion Beasley (Allen & Unwin). A cheerful picture book highlighting colours, days of the week, numbers and rhythm, all with a mob of cheeky dogs. Fun for young readers.

THE TREASURE BOX by Margaret Wild, illus by Freya Blackwood (Penguin). When I finished reading this magnificent picture book I immediately turned back to the first page to read it again. It is deeply touching and Freya Blackwood's illustrations are inspired. Highly recommended.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WOBEGONG? by Phillip Gwynne, illus by Gregory Rogers (Little Hare). Coming only weeks after the untimely death of Greg Rogers, one of our best illustrators, this book is a quirky departure from his usual style, showing his versatility and creativity. Here he has teamed with award-winning author to produce a refreshingly new idea for a picture book.

YOO-HOO, LADY BIRD! by Mem Fox, illus by Laura Ljingskvist (Penguin). Anyone who has ever heard Mem Fox read one of her books will hear her voice sharing this one. It's a 'look and find' book for young readers. Colourful and cheerful and lots of fun.

YORK'S UNIVERSE by Heidi Goh (Windy Hollow). This debut picture book was shortlisted for the CBCA Crichton Award for illustrations. A city-dwelling boy finds his very own universe closer to home than seems possible.

Happy reading!

Margaret Hamilton AM