

WORDPLAY

Writers' Forum

Intelligent, Interesting, Informative, Inspirational

Ezine, Issue 10, November 8th 2010

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DRIVEN AND DEVELOPING

Welcome to this month's edition of the Ezine. WordPlay was born in January 2010. As we approach the end of our first year it seems right that we should review the progress that we, and all our members, have made. You, too, can get involved in this (see below). As well as the Ezine (now read by around 5000 people worldwide) we are close to producing a sister publication 'The Story Behind the Story', the first edition of which is due out early next year. We still seek submissions from all writers, not just WordPlay members: please see inside for details. Our commitment as ever is to encourage people to write and then get them read. Our competitions thrive. Our locally based one is going to take on a slightly different format with the poetry and prose versions alternating each month. Our open cash prize competition will become quarterly (see elsewhere for the latest winner), to allow the judging panel to better assess the entries it attracts from all over the world. The website continues to develop and includes details of all our other services including our editing and critiquing services as well as our creative writing course. An online shop for authors is in the pipeline and will be the next addition. Again, see inside for further details. Individual members have had their successes too, not least

Simone Segal's publication of her book 'The Gift - if only you knew'. Too many to mention here have had stories and articles accepted for various publications. Now we throw a challenge out to our readers (and writers). As we approach the year end we would like to hear your views on the Ezine. Which bits do you like best, or least? Are there any other regular features you would like to see? Have you any ideas for 'one off' themes? Anything at all, really. Send your thoughts to wordplayenquiries@mail.com and maybe we will print in the coming months. Above all else thanks to everyone, especially our regular contributors, for your support.

Keep writing, and Play with Words.

Michael and Ian

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

This month we feature Spain based member, Maureen Moss.

After my family and my home, I love walking on the beach or in

the Nature Reserve with my dogs. I love reading, writing, yoga, and watching football. I love dark chocolate, red wine, Indian food, and paella. In addition there are languages and travelling. I have three fabulous children aged 32, 31 and 27: girl, boy, girl. As well as WordPlay, I belong to the Torreveja Writers' Circle, the Torreveja Costa Lions club, The La Mata Nature Reserve Volunteers group, and I sometimes go to Toastmasters' meetings in Alicante. I regularly participate in Landmark Education courses which have been a huge contribution to my life. My favourite authors are Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Jodi Picoult, but I've read lots of fabulous books by other authors. While travelling extensively in 1997 I wanted to record my memories: keeping a diary turned out to be one of my better decisions. The following year I started writing 'Dear Georgie', a humorous novel about a family travelling together. I'm on the third draft, only thirteen years later. I moved to Spain in 2003 and have been a partner in a publishing company for the last three years. I've had over 40 articles published, on line and in print, in publications as diverse as Mad for Adventure website and Retirement Today. I'm now working on my new business - an online training course in the tourism industry. All will be revealed soon!

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WORDPLAY OPEN SHORT STORY COMPETITION

WIN CASH AND PUBLICATION PRIZES

3RD QUARTER WINNER



CROBSON'S CHOICE by Fred MacGavran



The diagnosis of Crobson's Syndrome was alarming but not unexpected. After all, I am Anthony Crobson, M.D., and I invented the syndrome when I was strapped for cash after my second marriage fell apart thirty-five years ago. Like many physicians, I enjoyed experimenting with pharmaceutical samples. Many evenings, when I stayed late in the office waiting for my nurse to put her children to bed before joining me at a motel off the Interstate, I worked on a hangover remedy that combined caffeine, amphetamines, and aspirin. Success, however, eluded me, both in my experiments and in my married life. Joyce discovered my indiscretions when she checked into the same motel with a tennis partner. I was in the classic middle aged doctor's dilemma: high income, higher taxes, and alimony for two wives and child support for five children that reduced me to one night a month at the motel. Since I could not comfort myself with my nurse, I comforted myself with bourbon, making discovery of a fast acting hangover remedy critical. One night, frustrated and furious over Joyce's demand for ever more alimony, I angrily sprinkled synthetic estrogen, the female sex hormone, into the test tube, and drank the stuff off. The next morning I awakened refreshed, invigorated, and anxious to get to the office for the first time in months. My nurse noticed the change when I asked her to meet me that night at the motel just ten days after our last session. Together we put away a fifth of cheap bourbon, split a test tube of Crobson's Elixir, and bounded out of bed the next morning in time for her to get home and make breakfast for the kids. Clinical trials were the next step. Most physicians who experiment with drugs try to sell the big pharmaceutical companies on the basis of idiosyncratic studies, *i.e.*, their own personal experience. Unless their lawyers have locked them into an iron clad non-disclosure agreement, the companies conduct the clinical trials, misrepresent the results to the doctor, then use the same studies to push the drug through the FDA under a new name and, many times, as a remedy for a different disorder. To avoid this problem, I conducted clinical trials on my own patients, most of whom suffered from alcohol related illnesses. The results were startling. There were so many cures that my patient load dropped alarmingly, prompting me to bring my trials to an early end. When I took my formula to big pharma, I took my lawyer and a stenographer, too, just to be sure there were no misunderstandings. We teased them into signing the non-disclosure by letting them review the clinical trials, which showed the highest effectiveness of any medication ever submitted to the FDA. I thought it was a done deal, until the Vice President for New Products started to laugh. "It will never sell," he said. "The public will never go for it." "Why not?" I demanded. "Would you want to buy a hangover remedy in front of your friends and family at the local pharmacy?" he said. "Nice try, Doc. Come back when you have something that we can sell." That's when I had my second stroke of genius. "Don't call it a hangover remedy," I said. "Call it a treatment for Crobson's Syndrome." "What the hell's that?" he demanded. "Look in the next edition of *The New England Journal of Medicine*. In fact it took me nearly eight months to search the medical literature and document the appearance of an alarming new syndrome, for which there was no known treatment or cure. Within weeks of publication, Medicare approved Crobson's Syndrome for compensation, confident that without a remedy, no claim would ever be paid. That was all I needed to set off a bidding war among the country's pharmaceutical giants, and obtain the largest advance and best license agreement in the industry's history. With the proceeds I hired enough lawyers to bury Joyce, close my practice, and buy my nurse a house in the suburbs, thereby freeing myself to pursue more attractive opportunities in my new position as chief of pharmaceutical research at the winning bidder. I had so much money that I allowed the manufacturer to persuade me to take most of my license fee in its stock. This proved to be a mistake when I learned that patents, like most marriages, are not forever. As the expiration date approached, the stock swooned, and manufacturers of generics amassed huge short interests, gloating over our coming demise. Again my genius responded to pressure. I published another article in *The New England Journal of Medicine* entitled "Crobson's Syndrome Revisited," in which I reported alarming instances of depression and schizophrenia in long time sufferers. As the medical world raised its hands in anguish, I added an antidepressant plus one of the new generation antipsychotics to the formula. Just eight days before the original patent was to expire, I acquired a new one for a materially improved product. The price of the stock shot through the roof as the shorts covered their losses. This time, however, I had sense enough to diversify and to negotiate a new license agreement where cash was king. Crobson's MagicElixir®, the brand name for diethylamphetaminicitalopramris-peridonexanthinealkaloid, was the largest selling prescription drug in the world until Lipitor® came along. In an effort to improve sales, I developed a series of television commercials set in a doctor's office. As the camera zoomed in through a waiting room full of terrified patients, an attractive nurse smiled (something they almost never do) and announced: "There finally is something for Crobson's Syndrome. Ask your doctor." Then she turned to a well-dressed man and said, "Mr. Berkley, the doctor will see you now." Berkley flashed a superior smile at the other denizens of the waiting room and followed her through the door to the doctor's office so close that I thought he was going to pat her butt. That one infomercial revolutionized pharmaceutical advertising. By not naming the medication, we did not have to state the Elixir's side effects that were, in extreme cases, alarming. Soon every company in the industry was running "Ask your doctor" ads. Doctors' offices swelled with self-diagnosed patients demanding more and more pharmaceuticals until the country was awash in them, Medicare nearly went bankrupt, and operators of tour busses to Canada for drug buying excursions were making more money than heart surgeons. The income disparity raised serious concern in the medical profession. Then the industry figured out that where there was competition for an "Ask your doctor" drug, the doctor might

prescribe the competitor's product. So the whole system came crashing down, and the country was treated to shots of Bob Dole staring blankly at the camera while an off stage voice warned of the dangers of night sweats, insomnia, incontinence, involuntary bowel movements, and four hour erections. Unfortunately, many users misinterpreted the last warning as a promise, leading to so many product liability suits that the manufacturer had to pull the commercial. My "Name the Product" campaign won me my first Tony for "Best CEO in the sixty second or under" classification. Although reciting all the side effects took a highly skilled actor nearly the entire sixty seconds, I kept the audience focused on me rather than that litany of horrors. Dressed in a long black coat and stovepipe hat, I stood on a medicine wagon with a genuine Cherokee Indian® in tribal costume at the Iowa State Fair, hawking Crobson's Elixir along with a special tool for slicing apples or dicing the capsules thrown in for the first hundred buyers. (The offer also applied to the first 100,000 callers in the TV ad.) When the side effects voice over started, I began a dialogue with a ninety-year-old woman, whose only concern was that the medication not contain alcohol. The Chief and I assured her that it did not, each drinking a bottle and going through our version of a roadside sobriety test to prove the point. "God bless you, Mr. Crobson," she said just as the voice over reached the final frightening events reported by disgruntled users. Thus, like a magician performing card tricks, I not only diverted the audience from side effects to a long forgotten bit of Americana, but I created the impression that our competitors' products were alcohol based. The competition never recovered, and I was asked to become the television spokesperson for five insurance companies, three hedge funds, the National Republican Party, and Bob Jones University. Doctors could not write prescriptions fast enough for Crobson's Elixir, and that became the limiting factor for our company's growth. Approaching seventy, I came up with the greatest marketing device the pharmaceutical industry ever saw: go off prescription. With its efficacy so well established, and its side effects so well known, there was no longer any need for Crobson's Elixir to be stifled in the paternal embrace of the FDA. At least that's what we got the President to believe. No longer a prescription drug, Crobson's Elixir flew off the shelves of every drugstore, supermarket and carry out in the country. Whenever sales slacked, I added something new, such as a colon-cleansing feature, to keep up with the new generation's life style. Some long time users complained about being caught, so to speak, between Depends® and Crobson's ®. To stop a mass defection to aspirin, we brought out "Crobsen's Elixir Classic," complete with a picture of the old lady at the fair kissing my cheek, and "Crobsen's Fortified," with a picture of an anorexic actress and a stern warning not to eat oysters before ingesting. By suggesting that Crobsen's Fortified was helpful with weight loss, we captured a new generation of users and increased sales dramatically. My last year as CEO I was profiled in both Forbes® and Fortune® as America's most admired pharmaceutical executive. Strange as it may seem, I had not taken Crobsen's Elixir, either Classic or Fortified, in years. Instead, I amused myself with testing our firm's new line of psychotropic medications. Unlike other manufacturers, who feared side effects more than failure, I was always looking for some visual or auditory effect that would encourage users to take their medicine, regardless of its efficacy for the condition for which it was prescribed. Great science sometimes proceeds from accident to invention. Alexander Bell called for Watson over a vibrating electric wire, and the telephone was born; Marie Curie was the first to find a practical application for x-rays, and discovered that they cause cancer. Our lab was working on a painkiller less effective than aspirin. Management was about to kill the project, when a technician dropped a sample, and it shattered into dust on the lab floor. When she bent over to wipe it up she inhaled, and had the best high she had ever experienced in pharmaceutical research. Small minded investigators would have considered that an impediment, but I considered it an opportunity. "How will anyone know they have to inhale it?" the Vice President of Marketing demanded. "We can't put that in the product insert." "Plant a few stories in the media about addicts breaking it up and snorting it," I said. "The consuming public will get the message." In a consumer society addiction is a benefit to be sought, not something to be feared. It insulates the seller from the ups and downs of a free market economy. There is only one serious issue with addictive products: market share. Any new product must of necessity replace earlier, less addictive ones, or bring in a new class of users. The demographics for a pain pill that gave an instant high were unlimited. When I explained it that way to the President, the product sailed through the FDA approval process. Within weeks of its introduction, an army of physicians was cranking out prescriptions, and the plant was running 24/7, competing successfully against the meth labs that were springing up all over the country. America's war on illegal drugs started to turn the corner as users and addicts turned from street drugs to duly approved pharmaceutical products. Six months after the product was launched, the Medellin Cartel was bankrupt, and the Mexican drug smugglers were scrambling to get into off shore oil production. I will never forget that glorious day when the President invited me to the Rose Garden, where he awarded me the Medal of Freedom for finding a market solution to the illegal drug problem. Three days later he disbanded the Drug Enforcement Administration and cut the FBI's budget fifty percent. The Coast Guard was redeployed from the drug lanes of the Caribbean and the West Coast of South America to Alaska to stop the native population from depleting the whale supply by spear fishing. I was the first guest whom Larry Kudlow ever kissed. No one, however, has yet reached the stars, either by space ship or hallucinogen. If I had another lifetime, I would spend it looking for a pharmaceutical fountain of youth. Ponce de Leon nearly died in the Florida swamps on his failed quest, but with enough venture capital, I could have trekked through the jungle and climbed the mountain until I, too, stood silent upon that peak in Darien. I tried to share that vision with my administrative assistant, when she found me collapsed over my desk, but I could not speak. I could not move anything except my right hand, and that only in a vague flapping gesture. Now I lie alone in a private room in the same hospital where I once fretted about alimony and child support. I thought it was obvious that I had a stroke, but nothing is obvious in medicine any more. My physician smiled as he pronounced the diagnosis: Crobsen's Syndrome. Instead of a few nips of Crobsen's Classic, however, they are wheeling me into surgery. My career in pharmaceuticals made me forget the surgical bias of American medicine. Nothing is more frightening to a surgeon than a medication that replaces him. Faced with a worse threat to their income than a single payer national health system, surgeons now treated Crobsen's Syndrome by removing several organs no longer thought essential to the elderly. Because I can't speak, I have no say in what happens to me now. I can feel the prick on

the back of my hand as the anesthesiologist puts in his line. “Would you prefer Crobson’s Classic or Crobson’s Fortified, Doctor?” he asks politely. When I don’t respond, the nurse takes my free hand and whispers, “Don’t be afraid. Many of our patients like going to sleep better than waking up.” I doubt that I will be able to compare the two experiences.

JUDGES’ COMMENTS

The judges’ felt that ‘Crobson’s Choice’ was original and written with authority. Dialogue was convincing, and with a sharp, thought provoking twist at the end. £75 is winging its way to Fred as we write!

A very close second place was ‘The Party’ by Danii Emery. Light hearted, and humorous, a story that is a moral to us all. Read your party invites well before dressing up! Congratulations, £25 is on its way to you.

Highly recommended comments go to the following:

‘The Trophy’ by Alyson Hilbourne

‘Past, Present, Future’ by Louise Charles

‘The Pink Pack’ by Susan Tornga

CASH PRIZE SHORT STORY COMPETITION

NEXT CLOSING DATE 25TH JANUARY 201

Members and non members of WordPlay can enter our open short story competition

First Prize

£75

publication in Ezine and Showcase Anthology, WordPlay Writing Accreditation

Second Prize

£25

WordPlay Writing Accreditation

**Entries judged by judging panel,
more details at**

www.wordplaywriters.com



WHAT ARE YOU READING?

Our members review their latest read.



RACHEL'S SHOE by PETER LIHOU

This spellbinding story of two young lovers faced with danger from an unknown source begins as a simple love story but develops into a thrilling race against time to uncover the reason for murder and attempted murder. Scared, alone and missing her family, thirteen year old Rachel sits on a beach on Alderney, a small island occupied by the Germans in 1941. Fourteen year old Tom is sailing his wooden sailing skiff 'Fish' off the coast of the island when he has to shelter, to avoid capture by the occupying German forces. He hears Rachel's sobs, rescues her from her miserable life in a labour camp, and takes her with him to his home on the Channel Island of Guernsey. As months and years pass, they grow both physically and emotionally, and eventually fall in love. Danger lurks, however, and what had once saved Rachel's life now returns to threaten her – a secret known only to a German officer and to Rachel's mother, now long dead. Spanning the wartime 40s and upbeat 70s, Rachel's Shoe describes a young girl's transition to womanhood and her resilience to the deadly threats brought about by fanaticism and the greed of others.

Maureen Moss

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TON UP!

Let off steam in 100 words....

A (COMMON)WEALTH OF SILLY SPORTS

So, The Commonwealth Games are over – like as if anybody noticed them starting. This is little more than an overblown School Sports Day. Leaving aside the safety and sanitary issues, here are just some of the medals won by the plucky Brits: Solo Synchronised Swimming (Solo? Synchronised? With what? The music? If so we have a new sport SwimDancing!); Recurve Team Archery (!) – presumably somebody else won the Curve version earlier; 50m, 3 position prone pairs shooting (how many prone positions can you adopt, irrespective of shooting?). No mention of any success in The Egg and Spoon race, but this is doubtless due to hypocritical headteachers banning such cutting edge competition on the grounds that losers (presumably called ‘near-winners’) might be traumatized for ever, complete with ensuing lawsuit. These same anti competitive apparatchiks conveniently forget they got their jobs in, er, competition with other candidates. Thank you.

Ian Alexander

DATA PROTECTION? DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH

The first thing that we are all told in this day and age of electronic data is to never divulge your personal details to those you don't know. If you do, you are asking for trouble. So why is it that Banks, Solicitors, Credit Card Companies, etc. ask for these details when they phone you? They have dialled *your* number, and still want to know *your* password, date of birth, account number, to be able to verify who *you* are and discuss *your* financial details. If you can't tell them, or refuse to tell them, they can't discuss those important issues with you. Let me ask you this: how do you know who they are? I'm pee'd off with the hypocrisy of these terrible working practices. I'm going to send them passwords that they must quote to me, changeable every thirty days. And I want to know the name and date of birth of the person that will call me. So I can verify who they are. I suggest we all do the same. Thank You.

Michael Barton

LITTLE HORRORS

Halloween has been and gone. What are we thinking of? As a child, I was always chided by my Mum never to accept sweets from strangers. What happens now? Once a year children are actively encouraged to dress up in what, frankly, can only be described as fetish gear, and to go knocking on the doors of strangers asking for sweets! Am I the only one confused? Thank you.

Ian Alexander

WORDPLAY

Writers' Forum

Intelligent, Interesting, Informative, Inspirational

How our internal competition works:

Any genre of writing is allowed.

The maximum length of work is 1,000 words of prose, or 40 lines of poetry.

Entries are judged by all the members of WordPlay, on an anonymous basis, so the winner is the piece most enjoyed by readers of writing.



THE WORDPLAY INTERNAL WRITING COMPETITION WINNER

Theme, First Sentence. *'To a casual passer by, 11 Windmill Close was no more than an ordinary house in an ordinary country cul-de-sac.'*



THE DARK SECRET AT NUMBER 11 by ROB INNIS

'To a casual passer by, 11 Windmill Close was no more than an ordinary house in an ordinary country cul-de-sac.' Yet number 11's dark secret had lain undiscovered for ten years now. I still visited my ex-neighbours and friends, Basil and Maggie, in number 4. They had been so sympathetic, always ready to proffer a cup of tea and a slice of cake, sometimes an invitation for a curry. Basil was Anglo Indian and his curries were better than the local Indian restaurant. They sensed I needed to escape No 11 now and again and so were always willing to be neighbourly and chat for an hour. I felt deceitful; they were such a nice couple. Once I had almost told Basil what I had done. However, I changed my mind at the last moment. Basil was very law abiding, would not even drop litter. I knew they had not liked her but perhaps my unpremeditated action would have been too much for them to understand. Anyway, it was now all a long time ago – and who really cared? Her parents were dead and she had no siblings. Her few distant relatives had lived around Grantham, which she had happily deserted to live in southern England. Forever anxious to keep her family history private, ashamed of her father having been a farm labourer. The apparent glamour of living in the south an important part of her adopted new persona. I always thought how well kept the front garden looked at No 11. The same couple that I had sold it too still appeared happy there – unknowingly living with the secret. Once they had invited me in, but I had made an excuse. Their offer was never repeated. That suited me fine and I continued calling in to see my friends at Number 4. Unconsciously checking the secret remained undiscovered and burly police officers were not cordoning off the cul-de-sac only permitting access to the forensics team. Occasionally it gave me nightmares – seeing her face, those staring eyes looking up at me, the deep gash on her head oozing blood. I quelled my conscious by knowing it was unplanned – it just happened. Finally, she went too far. A man can only be taunted so much – it was not my fault she was unfulfilled. I never had any problems in the past. Or had they never told me. No, I was sure it was just her. Always disappearing with her high heels, black stockings, and revealing her ample cleavage. Arriving home late – with no explanation where she had been or who with. All the innuendo I was not adequate, it would have made any man snap. I had pushed her harder than I meant too, she had fallen, cracking her head on the corner of the solid walnut table. Her disappearance had not caused any problems. The neighbours assumed she had moved out and her few friends soon stopped calling. Her boss seemed relieved. I think he had been trying to find a way of dispensing with her services. But, with the law being how it is and more importantly with her being how she was – difficult, he seemed relieved she had apparently moved away. I could hear it in his voice. You would think these things are impossible, after all the villain always is caught in TV dramas. However, here I was still on the loose after 10 years. I had not dated much, keeping myself to myself. Initially I had considered moving away as far as possible, maybe abroad. Then she would have remained in control of my life, dictating the terms. I hated travelling. Why should I give up my local area – so I stayed put, albeit living in a different house. And that was how things were until October 17th 1987, the night of the great hurricane. A few days later, I called round to visit Basil and Maggie, to see if they had much storm damage. There were police vehicles parked outside my old house. Basil told me the hurricane had blown No 11s shed away and that the contractors had discovered a grave whilst preparing the foundations for a new patio. He gave me a peculiar look. Maggie didn't make eye contact. Had they guessed the graves occupant? Doubtless, they would come looking for me now. I should have moved abroad after all.

ALTERNATIVE HORROSCOPES

Joy Lennick has been looking into her crystal ball this month, and has news for all of us!

Aries (Mar 21-April 20)

This week, give generously to the Mongolian Beekeeping Benevolent Society (your honey will taste the better for it.) Don't fret over reports that your mother has been seen lurking on round-a-bouts. A good time for pruning bushes and trees in your garden. Lucky numbers 5 and 10

TAURUS (April 21-May 21)

Giving a donation to the Guatemalan Goat Herding Assn. will be good for your soul. Stay clear of tall men in top hats. Watch your intake of gorgonzola. Lucky numbers 9 and 11

GEMINI (May 22 – June 21)

A letter from a former lover will put the cat amongst the pigeons. The probability of being bitten by an insect is high, so cancel planned picnic. View a problem on Wednesday with careful thought. Over-all your clouds are nickel lined, so don't worry unduly. Lucky numbers 2 and 12.

CANCER (June 22 – July 23)

A great aunt will come out of the closet after thirty years (a relief your mother will no doubt state "As she suffered from claustrophobia."!) A suspect parcel on your birthday will contain (at a guess) socks. Your feelings of unease will turn to anger on Tuesday when a funeral wreath is delivered to the wrong door. Lucky numbers None.

LEO (July 24-Aug. 23)

You may be in the spotlight this week, so get that rent in your trousers repaired. Your partner's behaviour will give you cause for alarm. Don't worry, some guys have been known to wear Flying Helmets in bed. You could be in for a wind-fall (hope it's not apples.) Lucky numbers 3 and 15.

VIRGO (Aug 24-Sept. 22)

Make sure you are wearing clean underwear on Friday as you may have an unfortunate encounter with a bicycle. Stress due to overwork can cause health problems – tell your boss you are taking the week off. If he sacks you, ring The Samaritans. Lucky colour Blue, lucky numbers 7 and 22.

LIBRA (Sept. 24-Oct. 23)

Rock-climbing is not a good idea as an alternative to attending Bingo on Tuesday. Staying at home with a good book is an even better idea. Try and moderate your intake of gin. Things look rosy with the opposite sex. Lucky numbers 4 and 8.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)

Look out for a man with a red beard. It may be dyed (seen in the tea leaves.) Outlook: Weather bright and sunny, if cold. Outlook on the romantic front: think Arctic... Trust your intuition when eating suspect meat. Take up Morris dancing. Lucky numbers 1 and 45.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21)

Beware of an over-familiar postman this week. News of the death of an aged relative imminent if not financially rewarding. Saving string is the latest craze (?) Also elastic bands... Check. The word "Why?" might be bandied about. Lucky numbers 17 and 31.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)

Now is the time to scotch a story doing the rounds that Father Christmas is really your Dad. He's not, he's your Uncle Bert (although he will deny it.) But, it is time you were told that there's no such thing as a Tooth Fairy. Sorry! Life's a bitch to be sure. You will get more than you bargained for under the tree... HAPPY CHRISTMAS.

PISCES (Feb. 20-Mar. 20)

Hope you made and kept your new year's revolutions (sorry resolutions.) Opportunity to shine, so wear your new red satin dress on Sunday (not you Stan!) Why not try the Argentinian tango? (If things go wrong living near a hospital will be an advantage) Career opportunities loom ahead: (Saffron picking experience necessary.) Lucky numbers 21 and 50.



THE WORDPLAY INTERNAL POETRY COMPETITION WINNER

Theme: 'IF'



'WHAT IF' by MERY KILDUFF

What if I were you and you were me
Would we still be friends
'cos if I were you and you were me
We'd see things from different ends

I'd see things about myself
I'd never seen before
And things I liked about you my friend
Could now seem just a bore

I'd see inside your mind
What you really feel about me
The same would apply to you dear friend
Oh what a tragedy

It's best to leave things as they are
Or we're heading for a fall
So you be you and I'll be me
And I'll love you warts and all

THE CARDINALS OF SCHENGEN
The exciting debut thriller by Michael Barton
www.peterhudsonthrillers.com

Michael Barton, WordPlay Executive Director, talks about our novel initiative for all authors serious about their sales



THE WORDPLAY WAY TO MARKET AND SELL YOUR BOOK

Here at WordPlay, we want to help all writers to get their material read. Many of our members have written and published books. All agree that one of the hardest things to achieve is the next step to becoming a successful best selling author: marketing and selling your hard work.

We have canvassed many of our published members to discover what sort of post publication help they require and, having heard their needs and listened to their concerns, have developed a product that addresses all their wishes in a unique and innovative way.

The overwhelming problems of new – and often established– authors have been the marketing of their book, the route to sales and the cost of doing all this.

WordPlay's newest product will offer both authors and book buyers benefits not available elsewhere, and be available to ALL at the end of November.

Authors can place their books for sale on the WordPlay online bookshop, at no cost to them. WordPlay will list all books available through its website in its various globally distributed publications – our monthly Ezine, quarterly fiction magazine, and annual anthology – as well as on its website.

The seller – the author – chooses the price he wants to sell his book at, and adds on the cost of postage (one price for national post, one for international). To this price, WordPlay adds a nominal administration fee (typically around £1 per book sale), and when a buyer makes a purchase will pass on the delivery details to the author. The author then mails direct a signed copy of the book to the buyer.

The author's personal details are kept anonymous to the buyer, and the book lover receives a unique signed copy of the chosen book.

This package is free to all authors (WordPlay members or not) who want to increase their market presence and sales potential. Enhanced marketing packages will be available at very competitive rates and WordPlay members will be able to take advantage of discounted charges on these.

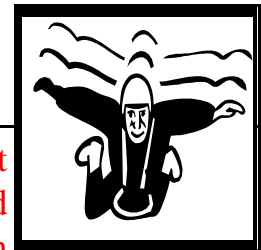
This is just one more way in which we are proving to be more imaginative and accommodating to writers in our approach to encouraging them to write, and then getting them read. For more information, see our website www.wordplaywriters.com.



FIND THE RIGHT WORD IN WORD

Here is another great function, which is ideal for writers, buried away in Microsoft Word. Sometimes we tend to repeat the same word or get a touch of writers block trying to recall a word. Let the Word program help you out with its built in Thesaurus, a dictionary of synonyms and antonyms. **Just highlight (hold left click on your mouse and drag across) the word you wish to replace and then press Shift (upper case key) and F7 on your keyboard. Word will automatically open a box giving you a list of alternatives.** You will also see the Thesaurus option on the Review tab toolbar next to the Spelling and Grammar icon (this depends on your version of Word loaded into your computer). **Is this cheating? I do not think so. It is just an electronic option of opening a thesaurus book – and nobody ever called that cheating, just writer's research.**

Skydiving over Far North Queensland, Australia



Kneeling in the open door of the aircraft, wind and engine roar drowning out all other sensations, I can only tingle with a mixture of terror and anticipation. Below me, clouds swirl like disinfectant in water, and far down I glimpse a ring of prime colours which I take to be some kind of target. Viewed from 10,000 feet, a rainbow takes the form of a complete circle. I'm determined to keep my eyes open. Every second is to be relished. "On the count of three, lean forward, dip your chin to your chest, and roll out, okay?" We rock forwards, then back. "One!" Forwards again, and my heart has somersaulted. The instructors cheat, in case someone yells 'no' at the last second. Plummeting now at 100 miles an hour, the noise of a thundering express fills my head. My mouth is parched: it is gaping open. The cloud vapour dissipates. I am bathed in sunlight. The earth is hurtling upwards. Am I upside down? I can make out the peak of a mountain, directly beneath me! I pass through layers of red, orange, violet. I am falling through the rings of the rainbow. This is the most powerful experience ever. I have relinquished every vestige of control. Inside, I am quivering with intense pleasure. A tap on my shoulder. Way above, I make out three black dots tumbling towards me – my children! I must be crying, but I can't tell. A jolt at my back, and I am floating in complete silence. Peace descends; the wings of an angel are flapping above me. I am convinced I will break my legs when we land, but I don't care. Spread-eagled on the grass, I scrutinise my children's faces: they landed before me. Twitching from adrenaline, we scream for joy from the bottom of our lungs. Each time I look up at the sky, I glow with the same excitement. I know how it feels to be up there, and nothing will ever be the same again.

Maureen Moss



AN EXPAT

Saddled, or favoured, with an Iberian name
Yet foreign to their tongue, he resides in Spain;
Retired and assigned by age to idleness
He remembers with regret, the vicissitudes of his past.

What brought him over to this hospitable terrain
Were genes bequeathed by an Iberian swain,
A navigator or trader, that settled in the tropics
With a brown-skinned helpmate from an
island paradise.

The facts are more prosaic than all such claims
Even though the Med may run deep in his veins;
Living in the UK was patently impossible
With assets fast becoming- dwindlingly invisible.

Migel Jayasinghe

The Book

Feeling fingers on a page
Turning when leafed gently
With the anticipation of words
Wound by a magician's pen
For the delight of the eyes
The mind
For the reader to explore
Depths unknown
To discover treasure
That only the written word can yield
To give pleasure for a few minutes
A few hours
An entire lifetime
Man's greatest possession
In paperback

Roberta

WORDPLAY: OPENING
DOORS FOR POETS
WORLDWIDE

Poets abound. Not only can members get their efforts read here in the Ezine, but WordPlay will be holding quarterly competitions dedicated to the verse voices amongst you. (Scriptwriters note that we will be running similar opportunities bi-annually). Keep an eye on www.wordplaywriters.com and our other publications for details.



Rain in Spain

October rain
Visits us with a vengeance
When least expected;
For baking July and August
Had left us wondering
Whether thunder and lightening
Aren't the foes we had forgot?

The roads are turned into torrents and rivers
Not quite what's expected by holiday drivers.
A round of golf or a dip in the sea,
Are denied to folk like you and me;
We do not see the best of Spain
When scurrying for shelter from the October rain.

Most of us are expatriates here,
Lured by sun, sea, sangria, and the beer.
Some of us are resident - others come and go
Seeing the seasons change with temperatures high
and low.

Those who fought forest fires early this year
Welcome the rains, to them most dear.

Migel Jayasinghe

To advertise here contact
Wordplay
via Email:

wordplayenquiries@mail.com

ORGANISED TO DRAW, WITH BOREDOM

A football poem

England, My England

Centre backs sitting on the 'D'
holding the fort in regression.
Wing backs fly forward, fast and free –
men possessed with no possession.

Midfield tucked in front of defence:
Losing ball, unable to boss.
Wide men predictable and tense,
each wrong footed with no meaningful cross.

Advanced, missing marauders
two isolated, two hopeless, two goalless.

Michael Barton

TEAM SPORTS POETRY

- Number of lines must equal the number of players in the team
- Organisation of verses must be in a recognised formation of the team (eg football, 1-4-4-2, or 1-4-3-3, etc)
- Number of syllables must be the number of minutes of normal time (eg, football 90)
- Rhyming patterns open

How about giving it a go? Tell the story of a match, a team's performance, or a team's history in a football poem, and send it to us.

NEWS FROM WORDPLAY AND ITS MEMBERS

WORDPLAY – WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

We hope you enjoy our monthly publication, the content of which is provided by WordPlay members and competition winners and read around the world.

You'll find each issue packed with a variety of great writing, from short stories to poetry, as well as valuable tips for writers, and regular features such as the A2Z of Words.

WordPlay also offers a **comprehensive range of services** to suit all, and we are adding to these all the time. See here for more information:

<http://www.wordplaywriters.com/servicesforwriters.html>

WordPlay Members can take advantage of **huge discounts of up to 50% on all our services**, as well as access member only pages and submit contributions to our publications. This link provides you with more information:

<http://www.wordplaywriters.com/membership.html>

The WordPlay Short Story Competition

Our monthly short story competition is open to all, with a first prize of £75 and publication of the winning entry in the Ezine and end of year anthology. Entry is free to WordPlay members, £5 to non-members. Find out how to enter here:

<http://www.wordplaywriters.com/writingcompetitions.html>

Finally, as part of our main aim of encouraging writers to write, and then to get them read, we will be developing **a range of e-courses**, the first of which (Creative Writing) is available here:

<http://www.wordplaywriters.com/id30.html>

Each issue of the WordPlay Ezine is delivered to your email account at the beginning of the second week of the month. Please read and enjoy, and feel free to post onto your contacts, and print off a copy to place in your local bar, café, sports club, etc.

STOP PRESS!

EZINE HAS A SISTER

Here at WordPlay, we love great fiction. We also love to promote great fiction, particularly stories penned by (as yet) unknown talent. We also love to reward writers of great fiction.

So, we thought it would be a great idea to give great writers of great fiction an outlet, and reward them for their efforts.

This is where our new quarterly publication, working title “The story behind the story”, comes in.

We want YOU to submit stories of between 1500 and 2500 words, in any genre from thrillers to romance, murder mystery to humorous (excluding erotica).

Add in a 100 word biography, written in the third person, and a couple of sentences about the inspiration that led to the writing of your story.

For each story submitted by a WordPlay member, and accepted for publication, we will pay £10.

All stories accepted for publication from non members will be rewarded with a WordPlay Writing Accreditation for the author.

Initial circulation will be to subscribers of the WordPlay monthly Ezine, and selected Literary Agents.

Closing Date for submission for the first edition is 30th November 2010, with and expected edition date of January 6th 2011.

For more information see our website www.wordplaywriters.com

Member News

- ◆ **Michael Barton has short story “An Inconvenient Engagement” accepted by Ink Bean magazine, USA.**

THE WHYS AND WHEREFORES OF WRITING

WordPlay co-founder **Michael Barton** tells us his **Why's** and **Wherefore's**.

Where do I write?

I write anywhere the mood takes me, but most comfortably sitting at my desk at home, currently in the corner of the living room. I hear the television in the background, or music from the sound system, and can see the outside world through a picture window. Blue skies, clouds, conversation, and song. Couple it with a cup of coffee, or perhaps a beer, and the reassuring presence of my wife, and I have all the triggers I need!

When do I write?

The early morning. Late at Night. Mid afternoon. After food. Before eating. When I'm tired, when I'm fully awake. Whenever the mood takes me. I keep a pad in the drawer by my bed. For when dreams come and speak to me.

How do I write?

Out and about with pen and paper. But my best writing is done direct to my screen. I edit as I go along, which means very often a story, or chapter, or even sentence or paragraph can take longer than it ought to. But it's the finished article when its done. Until I go back and edit again. I've learnt from previous mistakes.

Why do I write?

I write to see where the journey takes me, or - if I know the destination - then to find out how I will get there. I write to find out more about the characters in my novels, and to discover more about the world around us.

What do I write?

Mostly suspense, thrillers, action adventure. My novels are facton - stories wrapped around actual events, weaving them into conceivable plots. My short stories are purely fiction. I'm considering rewriting one as a novel, but perhaps I ought to finish the four books I've started first! I have started dabbling in poetry, and expanding my short story writing to cover other genres. I've just had one of these accepted by Ink Bean in USA.

OVER TO YOU.....

Tell us about your writing.

Email them to wordplayezine@mail.com

A TO Z OF WORDS

PLAY WITH WORDS

WordPlay's regular last page is the final, favourite part of the ezine. Here members are simply invited to do what we all do - Play with Words. Sign up at www.wordplaywriters.com and start playing. Whatever you do, enjoy writing.

Accessible, Bold, Clear, Descriptions Exhort Future Generations How Influential Judges Kept Leaving Much Needed Observational Procedures Quiet Requiring Secrecy (Tight), Until Voluntary Workers' X-rays Yielded Zaniness!

Migel Jayasinghe

WORDPLAY CONTACT DETAILS

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wordplayenquiries@mail.com**

**To make contact with any writer published within
wordplayenquiries@mail.com**