

# bookworm

FRIENDS OF  
BALMAIN  
LIBRARY

THE FRIENDS OF BALMAIN LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

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## The Making of Four Corners: In conversation with Sue Spencer

***"A good reporter doesn't get great stories — a good reporter makes them great."* Perry White in Superman**

We first met Sue Spencer at a street party in Elkington Park several years ago. In the course of a neighbourly conversation she revealed that she is the Executive Producer of Four Corners - "investigative journalism at its best" to use her words to describe the 53 year old program.

Sue has been involved with the Four Corners program off and on for many years and has been Executive Producer since the end of 2007. Before working at Four Corners Sue worked in London and Europe. She won a journalism scholarship to Oxford and spent time working in Cambodia and Vietnam for the UNDP and UNICEF. Sue's entry into

journalism was through volunteer work with 2SER community radio.

Calm and considered, Sue is the sort of boss a working journalist needs as backup. Dedicated and thorough, Sue and her team have brought you meaty morsels to feed your thinking. "Code of Silence", "A Bloody Business", "The World According to Lance", "Unholy Silence" and "Smugglers' Paradise" are all memorable programs which have won awards from the television industry and have done much to shape our views over the years.

Talking with Sue, what shines through immediately is her commitment to telling the story in the spotlight of truth. Her skill in telling stories in a way that "makes them great" led to

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### COMING UP @ FOBL

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March  
7pm for 7.30pm

**Sue Spencer**  
**Executive Producer**  
**ABC Four Corners**

Balmain Town Hall  
Meeting Room

Entry incl. supper:  
\$10 FOBL members\*  
\$15 non-members

\*join on the night

## FROM THE CHAIR



**Dear Friends of Balmain Library, Happy New Year! My very best wishes to all of you on behalf the FOBL Committee.**

Our first function is scheduled for March 27 when our guest speaker will be Sue Spencer (ABC 4 Corners Producer (see page 1).

For me, Italian born, the ABC has always been a source of enjoyment and a reason for great pride. To watch quality programs, without being brainwashed by advertising is a rare luxury. When I tell my friends in Italy their faces express disbelief followed by an enthusiastic exclamation: "Beata te! Lucky you!"

So it is a fantastic opportunity, to welcome the producer of a brilliant and respected program who will discuss her work with us.

I would also like to reiterate our long term commitment to the young people of Balmain, and am happy to report that our increasingly successful writing competitions will take place again this year.

Please check our website for detail of FOBL's complete program for 2014 and, of course, keep reading Bookworm. I look forward to sharing with all our members many more entertaining and stimulating events.

**MARIELLA TOTARO GENEVOIS**  
FOBL CHAIR

## FROM THE LIBRARIAN

### Meet the staff

Yet again this year Balmain Library is the beneficiary of a wide range of beautiful new books thanks to the annual FOBL Bookboost.

I would like to thank FOBL for their hard work and generous dedication. This library is truly the library of the people of Balmain. In selecting their favourite titles the library patrons have helped our book stock become a resource that meets the needs of the community.

Balmain Library also benefits from the dedication and hard work of its staff. The increase in patronage is due in no small measure to their efforts. Figures in Council's latest annual report clearly indicate the increasing patronage of Balmain Library. The number of people coming through our doors has grown from 129,441 last year to 132,772 this year, an encouraging result reflecting the dedication of staff and supporters of Balmain Library.

Our success as a community hub depends heavily on the skill and patience of all our staff and I thought I would take time in coming editions of Bookworm to introduce you to each member of our team.

Kajia Fletcher (above at right) is, like all our team members,

multi-talented. Her expertise takes in the delivery of the children's programs, author events and the Tuesday Evening Book Group.

With the book group, I was privileged to sit in on a very lively discussion of Tim Winton's latest work, *Eyrie*. It was an interesting evening where the exchange of ideas was both stimulating and entertaining.



Our author events are filling the Town Hall to capacity and our next event in the pipeline is no less than David Malouf. He will be in conversation at the Town Hall on Wednesday 19 March 2014. Organising three hundred people and bringing events together seems to come naturally to Kajia. But I know how much work it takes and I am so glad that she is part of our team.

Our children's programs have also expanded this year. In the coming months there will be yet another program for toddlers and a newly established book club to cater to school aged children.

They say that if you give a task to a busy person you are more likely to get it done

Kajia, with her wicked sense of humour and winning smile, certainly lives up to the adage.

**- Nola Pearce**

## Fifth Year of the Writing Competition!

2014 will be the fifth year of FOBL's competition for young writers! The competition started in 2010 with a limited number of primary school students and has grown to include all year 7-10 students at Balmain Secondary College.

The number of primary students entering the competition has increased steadily over the past four years from 84 entries in 2010 to over 150 entries in 2013. In addition to the primary school students all students from Balmain Secondary College participate in the competition.

As well as the usual prizes, the FOBL committee is exploring the possibility of arranging a writing workshop for the finalists in the competition. The workshop would

be led by a distinguished Australian writer.

As in previous years, winners will receive, a \$100 book voucher and a \$100 bank account from the Balmain/Rozelle Community Bank. Highly commended entries will receive a \$50 book voucher.

Entries must be submitted by 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014. Further information including posters, entry forms and conditions of entry leaflets will be distributed to schools in Term 1 and will also be available on the FOBL website.

The primary students competition will commence after the NAPLAN tests in May and the competition for the secondary students will commence on 26<sup>th</sup> March.

- **Maryellen Galbally**



**2014**

**PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
WRITING COMPETITION:**

**ENTRIES DUE  
1<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2014**

Open To Year 5 & 6  
students from:

Orange Grove, Rozelle,  
Balmain, Birchgrove,  
Nicholson Street Public  
Schools, and Father  
John Therry School.

**BALMAIN SECONDARY  
COLLEGE WRITING  
COMPETITION:**

Visit [fobl.org.au](http://fobl.org.au) for more info

### OPEN BOOK GROUP

Love talking about books?  
Come along to Open Book  
Group and join in the lively  
discussion.

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday each month  
Time: 1-3pm Cost: Free!



SUE SPENCE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

her being chosen to produce and co-direct the Gold Walkley and Logie winning series "Labor in Power" in 1993. Sue was also Executive Producer for "The Howard Years" in 2009.

In 2001 when she worked with Paul Kelly to make the series "100 Years - The Australian Story" Sue, as producer, had to watch the pennies carefully. All that archive footage cost \$30 PER SECOND! The accomplishment of assembling FIVE Prime Ministers in one show is a rare feat.

Come along to Balmain Library on Thursday 27 March 2014 at 7pm for 7.30pm for an informative evening behind the scenes of our most trusted current affairs program. Hear about how a producer translates a story into engaging television. What are the two award-winning Four Corners programs Sue particularly enjoyed working on? Sue will speak on these and other issues. Come and reminisce with Sue about the importance of holding a mirror up to society.

- **Bronwyn Monro**

## BIBLIOGESTION: Too much - or not enough- of a good thing?

Curses! I thought I had invented a new word but a precautionary Google search revealed a data management company based in Lausanne, Switzerland. My *bibliogestion*, however, is a common noun, not a company name so I will continue.

*Bibliogestion* is what happens to those of us who love their books in a series. You find a series, which really gets you in. So you track them all down and line them up for an enjoyable and hopefully reliable set of reads. Now several things happen: you can't get all of them; you get bored with them; or, worst, you love them to bits and then the series runs out. I lump all these unfortunate occurrences as *bibliogestion*.

What are the causes of bibliogestion? At this point I try and decipher what goes on with the author. Several scenarios: the author is mining a seam which runs out or gets bored out of their brain with the whole idea anyway; their publisher isn't happy with sales, doesn't encourage them or whatever; or, as with the Millennium Trilogy, the author dies! This is unrequited *bibliogestion*.

More often however, the author just keeps on writing – the quality deteriorates and the reader can absolutely predict what will happen next.

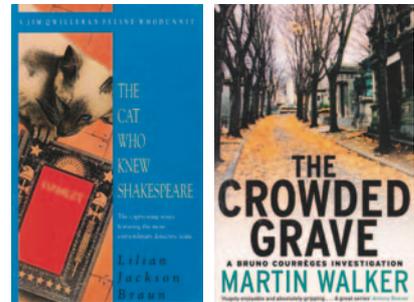
This is sugar high bibliogestion.

Inveterate consumer of detective stories, I recently found Martin Walker who ticks lots of boxes – set in France; agreeable detective; more about the local food than the crime; interesting clear plots which are well written. Yum! A kind man at the 2MBS FM book fair sold me a whole set starting with Bruno, Chief of Police.

Then we have Donna Leon, with the incomparable Brunetti and such detailed descriptions of Venice that Toni Sepeda wrote a guide called *Brunetti's Venice – Walks with the City's Best-loved Detective*. I actually hoard Leons and only allow myself one every so often.

I used to do this with Peter Corris. His *Cliff Hardy* series (about one a year) is set in Sydney and checking out the landmarks is quite fun as is the hard-boiled and reliably unlucky Mr Hardy who even mirrored his creator's heart attack. However we are now up to about thirty titles and I think I gave up at Lugarno, so named because Corris had never heard of this suburb and decided it should be immortalised.

Lillian Jackson Braun wrote her Cat series (*The Cat Who Read Shakespeare* etc.) at the same rate and then there is Sue Grafton who wrote the *Alphabet* series.



I notice *N is for Noose* on my shelf and Ms Grafton who is now up to *W is for Wasted* certainly put a noose around her neck when she embarked on this series - but it seems to have been a golden one! Kerry Greenwood's *Phryne Fisher* list – with its own TV series – seems to have reached this point too.

But series do run out – I fear Alexander McCall Smith is giving up on *Scotland Street* and the wonderful Bertie Pollock and the *Isabel Dalhousie* series. Tears before bedtime!

So between unrequited bibliogestion and sugar high bibliogestion I continue to indulge in these books. You can rely on them for a good holiday read – at least you know what you will be getting.

Bon Appetit!

- JAN AITKIN