



## Newsletter Number Eight, December 2012

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Gosh, what a busy year! I have to confess that I'm looking forward to a little free time in the near future. As Christmas approaches plans for celebrations with family and friends are taking shape.

Pinerolo seems to be developing a life of its own. Our Illustrator-in-Residence program, funded by CAL, has been hugely successful. All four illustrators this year have said they were inspired and energised as they enjoyed a week of uninterrupted work on their project. I too have felt inspired and very satisfied as I watched them work, each with their own style and approach to illustration. Results at the end of each week were extremely impressive and I look forward to seeing the finished books.

Before I go any further, here's a photo of our place – Blackheath in the Spring! Twenty centimetres of snow in October. It was very beautiful.



Spring at Pinerolo!

### ILLUSTRATORS IN RESIDENCE

Stephen Axelsen, our third Illustrator-in-Residence, spent a week here in October. He was working on a graphic novel *The Nelly Gang*, for Walker Books. Watching Stephen work was fascinating. His detailed and engaging illustrations are well-known, but watching him work on a Wacom tablet was a revelation to me. The amount of detail in this graphic novel is quite mind-boggling. An illustrator of Stephen's calibre could never earn enough out of royalties on a book to cover the mega-hours that it is taking to do this book. If he delivers the artwork on time, the book will be published next year.

Jedda Robaard spent her week here in November. Her illustrations are charming – simple, appealing watercolours just right for pre-schoolers. Five Mile Press published her lovely book *A Little Book about Me and My Grandparents*

and it has already done very well. What a good idea for Christmas. Jedda was working on a new book, so look out for her work.

One of the good things about having an illustrator-in-residence is that local people pop in to say hello and have a look at their work. So Tohby Riddle came for morning tea to catch up with Stephen. And both illustrators joined our winning Trivia team at the local Blackheath pub! Keep in touch for news about Illustrators-in-Residence 2012.



Stephen Axelsen at work



A break for morning tea with Tohby Riddle



Jedda Robaard with specimens from the garden

## OPEN DAY

Open Day on Sunday 2 December was magic! What a treat to have Glenda Millard and Stephen Michael King staying here. The day dawned beautifully and not as hot as the extreme heat we had experienced the previously three days, when we were touring schools in Sydney. People began arriving soon after 10am opening and continued to come until closing time at 4pm. We were overwhelmed and really touched when a whole family came dressed as the Silk Family, complete with Perry Angel in his Superiorman suit. Here are some photos:

Thanks to everyone who came - especially Astrid Lindgren's niece Barbro and Gleebooks, Blackheath - you helped make the day very special.



The Silk Family!



Special visitor Barbro, Astrid Lindgren's niece with Glenda and me



Chris Cheng with Stephen Michael King (in his Pinerolo T-shirt!)

## BREAKING NEWS!

Stephen Michael King has appointed Pinerolo as his agent for selling original artwork. Keep an eye on the website for a list of his wonderful pictures – or email for a preview if you're desperate for that really, really special Christmas gift.

## NEW PICTURE BOOKS

What better gift for Christmas than a picture book? I hope that every Christmas stocking under every tree contains a beautiful Australian picture book. Here are some suggestions from those received recently from publishers.

ALISON LESTER has produced two special board books, *RUN LIKE A RABBIT* and *GROWL LIKE A TIGER* (Allen & Unwin). Rhyming text roll off the tongue and simple action-packed illustrations make these books a must for pre-readers. Also available is the delightful *NONI THE PONY*.

*THE DREADFUL FLUFF* by Aaron Blabey (Penguin) Serenity Strainer was perfect – or was she? She learns to deal with an imperfection that takes her by surprise. An amusing story by this award-winner.

*LITTLE ELEPHANTS* by Graeme Base (Penguin) Another masterpiece from this expert picture book creator. A magical, lavishly illustrated book that will capture and envelope readers in its detailed, beautiful illustrations.

*RUBY RED SHOES* by Kate Knapp (A & R). Ruby, the 'aware hare' is curious about the world around her. An enchanting picture book full of old-fashioned charm by a new illustrator.

*SANTA'S SECRET* by Mike Dumbleton & Tom Jellett (Random House). Santa always looks very hot in his red suit. This humorous story solves the problem in a very Aussie way. Lots of fun.

*SOLID ROCK* by Shane Howard (Scholastic) 'Solid Rock' is a powerful song created by Shane Howard. This book includes a CD and is stunningly illustrated by children from the Mutitjulu, Kaltukatjara and Imanpa communities.

*TODAY WE HAVE NO PLANS* by Jane Godwin & Anna Walker (Penguin). Modern families are so busy that it is a luxury to have a day free of plans – a slow day for being together, to dream and to play. A lovely book for families to share together.

## CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO ALL!

As we approach the end of National Year of Reading, let's think about all the books we've read and how many children we have turned on to reading during the year. I never tire of talking about picture books and reading them to children and I've done a lot of it this year – at Gleebooks, at the Blue Mountains Public Library and of course, here at Pinerolo. Children are always delighted to hear a story and I hope some of the ones I've met over the year will continue to read and grow up to be avid readers.

This is my last newsletter for the year. I look forward to seeing lots of visitors next year, to hosting a new program of Illustrators-in-Residence and to seeing lots of children visiting in school groups. Thanks for your support, especially to publishers who send new picture books.

In the meantime, my best wishes to all for a safe, happy and book-filled Christmas and holiday. I hope to see you at Pinerolo in 2013.

Margaret Hamilton AM