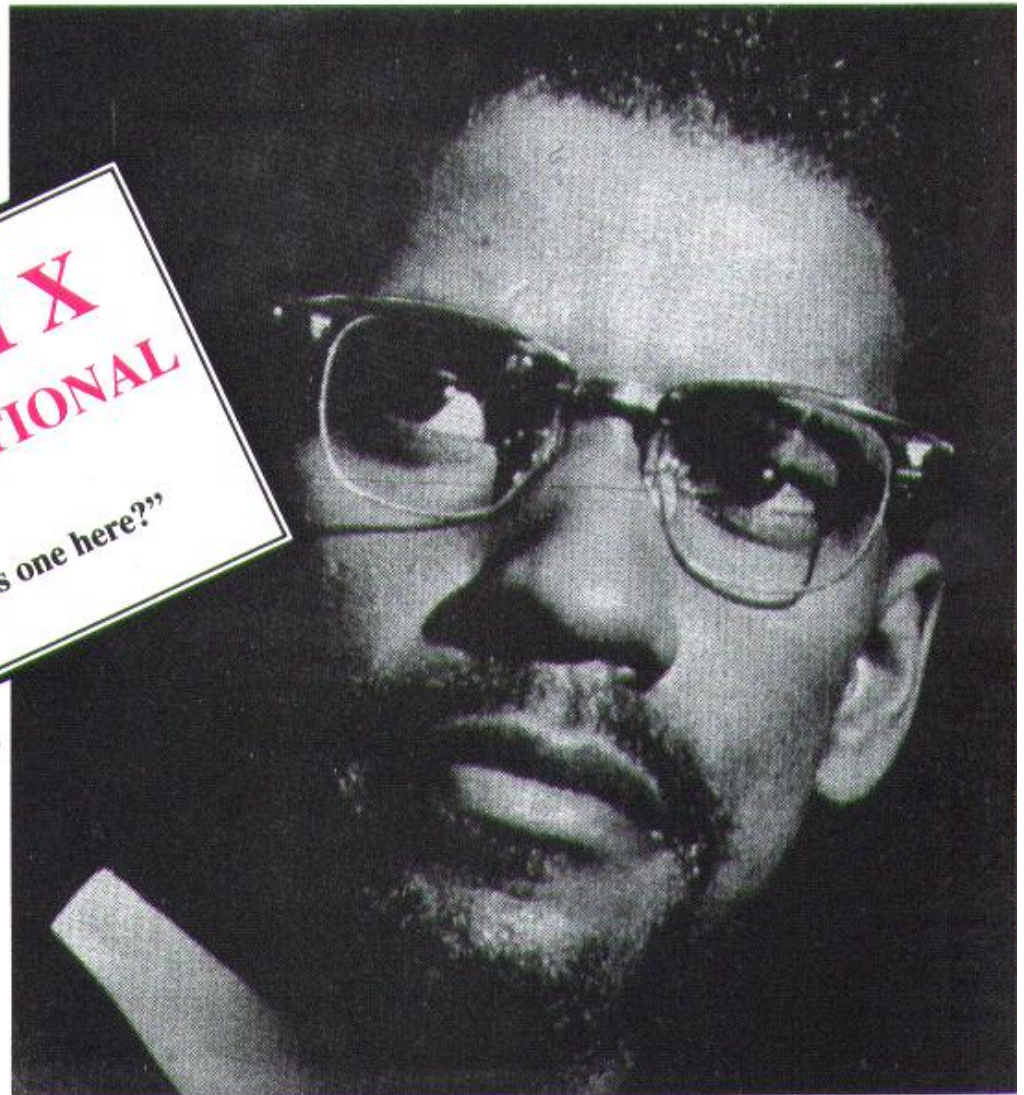


FEDeration

Formerly Fed News

The Magazine of the Federation of Worker Writers & Community Publishers

Vol. 1



MALCOLM X & INTERGENERATIONAL THEATRE

“Should we be doing this one here?”

turn to page one

GATEHOUSE IN BARCELONA

page 2

CO-OPERATION - WRITING FOR A CHANGE

page 4

TIM DIGGLES - THE SOLE WORKER

page 6

£1.50

Arts Council Funded

THEATRE ACROSS THE GENERATIONS

"Good morning, this is the British Broadcasting Company, coming to you live from Philadelphia..." This was my acting debut with Full Circle Inter-generational Theatre Company. We were at the Lutheran Senior Centre on Frankford Avenue, north-east of downtown Philadelphia.

Lamont, a 30 year old group member, had driven me there. It was 8 am and he'd been up all night working at his post office job. We had got lost trying to find the place and had driven down streets that had seen better days. This part of town was never intended for tourists' eyes, but, for me, it would provide valuable insight. That morning Full circle would be improvising scenes from day-to-day living - real life and how to cope in a crumbling urban environment. I did not know what was expected of me. I had come to observe but I was ready for anything.

At a Full Circle Workshop the previous afternoon my English accent created quite a stir. I joined in the warm-up games, enjoying the fun and physical contact. On a flip-chart were written the words "ROLE REVERSAL", "DOUBLING" and "MONOLOGUE". These were the techniques which would be practised in the workshop.

These exercises were things I had done with youth theatre groups in England - but I have never contemplated using them with such a mixed age group. The whole idea of "inter-generational" anything is new to us.

The workshop culminated in an exercise based on the use of newspaper stories, powerful dramas about injustice and powerlessness. The final vignette explored a

topic so current it made my hair stand on end.

Spike Lee's controversial film, "Malcolm X" was due to open in town that night. Already the newspapers were reporting tension on the streets and amongst the police force. The Full Circle improvisation was set outside the cinema.

We watched a tense cop



mark out his territory and heard his thoughts out loud. Friends began to gather and talk about the film; we saw the animation, excitement and apprehension grow. A scuffle broke out; in seconds a black youth was on the floor, injured by the policeman who sat on top of him.

Robb Hutter, Full Circle's professional facilitator, let the scene develop until almost everyone in the room was involved. Then there was a de-briefing in role; each character spoke his or her thoughts and feelings. An eloquent moment, full of real passion; everyone had played their parts to the full, including the older members of the group, for whom this was an important subject too. (It brought back memories of race riots, the civil rights movement, anti war

demonstrations.) The next day, at the Lutheran Senior Centre, we were to create another similar improvisation around the same theme.

When we arrived at the centre the seniors were having coffee and doughnuts. We had an hour to decide on roles and scenes, and rehearse the shape of the improvisation. The focus of the presentations was "assertiveness" - the middle road between the passive and the aggressive response. Each scene would be played twice with the central character (an elderly person) responding first in a passive mode and then in aggressive mode.

The scenes were very familiar to most of us: dealing with an insistent and unsolicited tele-sales person, being overcharged on an item in a supermarket, receiving the wrong order in a restaurant, returning faulty goods to a department store. Then, we were to present a family scene on a Thanksgiving theme - at dinner time on Thanksgiving Day, realisation dawns that no-one has remembered to invite the recently widowed patriarch. Lastly, we would do a re-run of the Malcolm X impro. I was given the role of the new reporter in the latter and was asked to play "Mum" in the Thanksgiving scene.

A little after 10 am, the seniors filed in. It was an all-white, mainly female audience. Some looked very frail. I worried that they wouldn't be able to hear us, that they wouldn't be interested, that we would mess up somehow! (This pre-show nervousness usually signals the flow of adrenalin and is supposed to be a good sign, but I wasn't so sure!)

Robb Hutter began explaining what Full Circle is all about. He asked the seniors about their centre - what they liked doing most and what they would like more of. "Men!" came the reply

In chorus. There was a lively atmosphere in the room already, but I was still not convinced that we would be successful. Then we started and they became quiet and attentive.

When the tele-saleswoman asked for a Visa card number they shouted out, "Don't give it!" - so they were listening and interested after all. After we had done the scene twice with the protagonist responding passively and aggressively, the discussion opened up. How should he have responded? How would you respond in an assertive way? A very frail woman came from the back of the hall to demonstrate her suggestion - "Send me the information, then I'll decide." Applause all round - then on to the next scenario and the next, each time enlisting the seniors to demonstrate an assertive response, that elusive middle ground.

It occurred to me that, because of their age, seniors are more practiced in this art than the rest of us. I tend to err on the more aggressive side of the scale, and whilst I often succeed in my aim, I also raise blood pressure and cause endless bad feeling. This was a learning experience for me too.

The Thanksgiving scene was particularly emotional. I felt quite a lump rising in my throat as "Pappy" spoke his feelings out loud, waiting in his lonely house for the lift that never came. It touched a chord with the audience who, notwithstanding their own feelings of loneliness, offered sensible solutions to the awful situation "Be nice to them but let them know how you feel...". "Don't wait for them to make the arrangements do something about it yourself they're busy..."

And then, the Malcolm X scene, which was causing a great deal of insecurity amongst the performers "We shouldn't be doing this one here...", "Even if they were going to see the movie, they won't go now!" As it turned out, the movie wasn't the real issue. Instead, the improvisation brought to light a whole series of questions about

the roles and responsibilities of the police and these seniors had strong personal views which they articulated loud and clear.

As far as the seniors were concerned, it was almost as if Malcolm X had been a red herring in the whole thing - sometimes, when we get to the heart of the matter, we realise that the specific concern which brought us there is simply that, a specific concern. At the heart we find a universality which transcends the ephemeral sensation-seeking media story - the truth behind the headlines.

With the discussion concluded, each of us actors told the audience who we really were and how old we were. Nat was in his 80s (and was a great hit with the female audience). At 16, Jennifer, who is involved in Full Circle as part of her school-work, was the youngest. Me, I'm somewhere in-between and trying to hang onto that middle ground which the Lutheran Centre seniors demonstrated so clearly.

Julie Ward

STOP PRESS...

Although 1993 has been dubbed "European Year of the Elderly and Solidarity Between the Generations" why limit ourselves to Europe? One project just starting is an international "inter-generational" pen-pal project. If you're interested in finding out more write to: Bernice Gross, Family Service Association, 4245 Center Gate, San Antonio, Texas, 78217, USA.

Meanwhile, closer to home Julie Ward has returned from the USA with loads of new ideas for initiating creative writing projects with older people.

She's happy to share her findings with interested individuals and groups in this country.

Tel 0388-730574

EUROPEAN LINKS

In late January three members of Gatehouse Books, Manchester, travelled to Barcelona, Spain, to lead workshops about community publishing within adult basic education. Gatehouse was invited by GAMA, a group based in Catalonia. GAMA (Grup d'Autoedició de Materials per Apreneuts, roughly "Self-Publishing of Materials written by Learners") is an associate member of the Fed. Like Gatehouse, it aims to work together with writers and tutors from adult basic education and to publish books by students who are building confidence in reading and writing. GAMA's first book "A Dream Realised" (Un Sueno Realizado) by Dolores Gallego, was reviewed in Fed News number 12, January 1993.

BEGINNINGS

Greatly excited, Gatehouse began preparing for the visit in Autumn 1992. A planning group consisting of Gatehouse Editor Stella Fitzpatrick, Management Committee members Victor Grenko, Gerri Moriarty, Amer Salam and Sheilagh Tynan plus Peter Goode met several times and pooled ideas for the workshops. Gerri is a trainer and drama worker, Victor, Amer, Sheilagh and Peter are Gatehouse writers. Peter is also a very experienced workshop leader. Peter, Sheilagh and Stella were the lucky ones chosen to carry out the work and we flew to Barcelona from Manchester on January 28th, 1993.

IN BARCELONA

We were met by Merce Redon of GAMA, who gave us a very warm welcome. We stepped out of the airport into warm sunshine. The sun shone from a blue sky on palm trees, cars speeding along motorways and buildings, some of which were put up for the '92 Olympics.

That evening we travelled with Merce to the Trinidad Valla Adult Education Centre, where she teaches English to Spanish students and where she also teaches adult basic education. We were introduced to two English classes, and spent time exchanging information about our families, our interests and our countries. There was a lot of humour within these two groups. By special request we brewed tea for them.

Returning to Merce's flat, we met GAMA members Immaculada Vilaterseda and Angel Marzo, tutor friends and also interpreters to have a meal and discuss our workshop programme. Fears were relayed of students' reactions to some of our proposed activities; learning is more formalised in Spain - students might be unwilling to draw as a visual bridge into writing. They might also be unwilling to write. These comments helped us to think in context about our plans. We changed some things and agonised about others, but decided finally that we had to keep certain elements in order to carry out the workshop in a Gatehouse way. It was a very pleasant evening. As well as a fine meal, a bottle of champagne was opened to celebrate our arrival.

THE FIRST WORKSHOP

The first workshop was held the next day. Its aims were to forge links between the writers and editors of both organisations and to encourage everybody to contribute and then to share some writing. Over sixty people attended, most of them women students from Barcelona and the surrounding areas. We met Dolores Gallego. She talked to us about her book and the writing she is doing at present. Tutors came too. Information was translated into Catalan, Spanish and English by Ramon, the first of our four translators who worked with us.

We had planned an "open" structure with a careful balance between information from us and activities for everybody to join in. We described our part of England and emphasised the similarities and links between Barcelona and Manchester. We

encouraged people to talk to each other about their backgrounds. Having established common bonds, we moved to the theme of our journey and recalled some of the stereotypical things we'd thought of Spain (bulls and bullfights, guitars and castanets, to mention just a few). We asked people to shout out some of the things that came into their minds when they thought of England. "Umbrellas", "Buckingham Palace"... the shouts increased. We next suggested we all drew a quick ten second picture of something that reminded us of England or Spain. To our relief, the more confident women hesitated only for a second. Then they picked up coloured markers and got cracking. Soon, a buzz of people gathered around the long sheet of paper. At first some people hung back, confirming our friends'

learning is more formalised in Spain - students might be unwilling to draw as a visual bridge into writing. They might also be unwilling to write.

awareness, expressed the previous night. But all was well and everybody drew. This, we felt, confirmed our hopes and insight too. After this, we suggested a short piece of writing which told readers what the writer's part of Spain or England was REALLY like.

READING TO THE WHOLE ROOM

People worked alone, or in twos. An industrious hum went on for twenty minutes. Eventually, this writing adorned the wallchart too. We added writing and photographs from Amer and Victor, who with Gerri, were with us in spirit. We worked in groups of six to read and listen to each other's writing. After the sharing of writing, Peter and Sheilagh read a piece of their work to the whole room. This was very important to the workshop. Both writers

find some difficulty with reading, especially to such a large crowd. Their hesitation and emotion showed they were just as courageous as we were asking participants to be. We felt that Sheilagh particularly was someone that the women at the workshop could completely identify with. We hadn't known that our audience would be virtually all women. Sheilagh's presence, which wasn't confirmed until the last minute when funding came through from the British Council for her airfare, turned out to be vital. Soon, other people were standing to read their piece of writing to the whole room and received the applause and approval of everyone. It was like a Fed AGM!

The underlying points we wanted to make about sharing power between ourselves and participants, were evident in our collaboration, in our appointing volunteers to various roles - a "word watcher", a timekeeper, and so on. We felt confident that this workshop went extremely well. As Peter said, "there were little fireworks here and there, and then a mighty explosion of freedom, music and light".

SATURDAY'S WORKSHOPS

On Saturday, two workshops for tutors took place. They aimed to answer the questions: why publish within adult basic education?; how publish within a.b.e.?; and how and why edit? About twenty people attended. We alternated the programme between information giving, group activities and a large discussion group. We talked about the processes that Gatehouse has evolved, of the importance of trust, collaboration and confidentiality in the development of writing for publication; of the writer staying in control of their writing on its journey to publication. We tried to answer questions and people drew parallels and differences from their own work. Overall, the evaluatory responses from the tutors were very positive. Sheilagh observed and recorded the following comments:

"Very impressed with Gatehouse's layout and procedure. Am eager to know details of more procedure and ideas for our own group, GAMA. We want to take new steps forward, open new doors, link our countries, spread their information to other groups whom we've had previous contact with".

"I like the circularity of the process; the writing comes from students and comes back to students through the books".

"I hope there can be further workshops transmitted between us all. I feel GAMA could really be put on the map".

Merce, Corinne and Spiros worked hard to translate all the talk. GAMA support was total and excellent throughout the whole weekend. Everything we needed was provided. They anticipated and supported. The workshop closed with a lot of handshaking and warm responsive hugs. Merce made the work of translating look deceptively easy. Throughout the whole weekend she had translated Spanish, Catalan and English almost non-stop. She was a wonderful hostess and guide.

Looking back now on that intense, sometimes anxious weekend for us and our hosts, we feel that our visit was successful, that our work did add to the impetus GAMA has created for writing and publishing within adult basic education. It was a very worthwhile experience for us, one that we have certainly learned from. We hope that the links between GAMA and Gatehouse will continue and flourish.

**Stella Fitzpatrick
Peter Goode
Sheilagh Tynan**

CO-OPERATION-WRITING FOR A CHANGE

The Co-operative movement was built up gradually, from the bottom up, by generations of working class families. It has been one of the major spaces for working class independence and democracy in our society (as well as working to transform that society).

"Co-operation - Writing for a change" is the working title for a writing project and book (awaiting final confirmation at the time of writing) to be jointly produced and co-ordinated by the Fed and the Co-operative Union (education department based at Stanford Hall, near Loughborough). Beside the obvious benefits to the Fed it will form part of an imaginative and wide ranging programme of events planned for the Co-op's 150 year celebrations.

You may have seen one of the 50,000 leaflets advertising



**Stanford Hall and the
Co-operative College**

the project. We want people to send in writing on the theme of "Co-operation". This doesn't mean that you have to write about the price of mushrooms in your local Coop Shop, but about anything that connects with the wider value system of co-operation in its broadest sense. No one is being prescriptive; for many people Co-operative values still have to be worked out.

No particular forms of writing are favoured, poetry, prose and short stories (no

more than 2,000 words), letters, reminiscences and even co-operatively written pieces are all being encouraged. We are also keen to explore the use of illustrations and photos. The writing for the book will be selected by a group of people primarily from the Fed.

We have tried to minimise the competitive aspects of this project. The book should not be seen as just a single product standing on its own, but more as part of an on-going process of discussing thinking and writing about co-operative values. This process will be celebrated in 1994: it is envisaged that all people who submit work, and others who are interested, will come to readings which will be organised to coincide with Fed and Co-operative events that will be occurring throughout 1994 (our AGM, training days and events as well as a co-operative banners exhibition, film season, launch of oral history publications etc.). Also, no one is saying that only the "best" pieces will be chosen for the book, rather it will comprise a representative selection of the writing sent in.

AN HISTORICAL DETOUR

A glance at the history of the Co-operative Movement reveals a rich vein of working class writing. Much of it was centred around the many Co-operative reading rooms, libraries, classes, and meetings which flourished in the nineteenth century. Co-operative newspapers featured poetry and stories sent in by members. Direct propaganda and soul-saving material featured strongly, with titles like "Co-operation vs. Competition", but a whole range of subjects can also be found. TW Mercer, a famous

co-operator, in "The True Poets" (from a self published book of poetry, "Harvest", 1917), expressed the view that

"But never yet did noble poetry
Flow from the lips of well-fed fops and fools,
And never have the songs of Liberty
Echoed within wealth's snobbish courts and schools
Ever with labour, marching in the van,
Sing the true poets, the true guides of Man."

(And Woman, we should add)

Many plays and sketches of all age groups were written in the early part of this century, some with snappy titles like "The Garden of the Earth of the Power of Co-operation: a one act co-operative play for children". In the 1930's full-blown pageants with casts of 100's were produced. Some were performed locally, whilst others filled Wembley Stadium. The writer of one of these, "Co-operative Century" (1944), stressed that

"This is a pageant of the People... kings and princes, statesmen, generals and armies find no star parts in it. Its star is the people."

Nor is community publishing alien to co-operative history. Many jubilee histories of individual societies were produced around the turn of the century. They were often based on oral testimony and some had print runs in the tens of thousands.

During this century these forms of writing and publishing were increasingly marginalised. A strong argument as to why this happened is that the distinctiveness of co-operative culture was gradually incorporated and neutralised by the State, through the provision of things like "public" education and libraries which were often framed in authoritarian and patronising ways. That co-operators let this happen is partly explained by an ambiguous

of "knowledge" they held. On the one had they had abounding confidence in treating "knowledge" on the same basis as bread or clothes i.e., things that could be effectively be distributed to the working class by the Co-operative system. The problem with this is that all these things too often come ready made. This might involve listening to a formal talk given by a university don or co-operative newspapers quoting Shelley and Wordsworth rather than their own writers. On one occasion the Co-operative news (1872) warned its readers: "from the novels which are ill-written, which are aimless, which are informal in their tendency - deliver our children, our country, and our printers".

"from the novels which are ill-written, which are aimless, which are informal in their tendency - deliver our children, our country, and our printers".

The novels of Dickens and Charles Kingsley however, were seen as the "noblest teaching".

As people in the Fed well know it matters a great deal who produces knowledge and how it gets made. This Co-op - Fed project aims to widen the numbers of people who take part in the process of producing knowledge in democratic ways. We need to develop this Fed - Co-op project; it is laden with potential.

Tom Woodin

If you are interested in the project, the closing date for people to send in work is autumn 1993, and we hope to have the book ready to launch in spring 1994. Contact **Tim Diggles, Administrator, FWWCP, 23 Victoria Park Rd, Tunstall, Stoke on Trent, ST6 6DX.**



eastside

THAP GOES EASTSIDE

In December '92 THAP books was relaunched as Eastside. This was because the focus had changed from a broad based Arts project when it was launched in the 1970's to a more specific writing/reading/ bookselling project now.

I spoke to Sean Taylor, one of the workers, who explained that THAP had not gone bust, but wanted to smarten up its image with a new logo, shopfront and developments to attract more local people to the project.

These developments include funding an events worker in the future, for example to co-ordinate readings in the shop; beginning a novelist's writing group; having a day event "Healthy Options" for drug users and ex users, and having a borough-wide short story competition towards the end of 1993. Eastside will continue to develop its existing roles - the fortnightly writers' group and bookselling.

Under this umbrella comes the outreach service to schools with discounts and advice on multi-cultural books and also the writer-in-residence scheme for local schools. With this school work and the launch of "Rising in the East" (see issue 12) best poems by young poets it is hoped to begin feeding younger authors eventually into the adult group.

I attended the launch of Eastside in December 1993 which was very exciting and spectacular, at the Jagonari Centre, purple balloons, a cake, music, speeches, readings, a buffet, and a bookstall! The 7 Eastside staff appeared on stage.

With their latest book "Cheese and Chips are related to the Moon" by adults with learning difficulties just launched Eastside can only go from strength to strength.

Sarah Richardson

Further details from:
Eastside,
178 Whitechapel Rd,
London E1
(opposite Whitechapel tube)
tel 071-247-0216

THE SOLE WORKER

Interchange Training, January 18th, 1993

The day was run by Christine Thornton, a management development consultant, and aimed at improving the awareness of problems faced by a sole worker in a voluntary or arts organisation. This applied to a worker such as myself who is the organisation's only paid worker, or, who is the only person running a department. It could not and did not attempt to give all the answers or solve all problems, but highlighted areas of concern.

The participants included a local authority arts officer, an AIDS counselling worker, a print room worker, community arts worker, health worker and a youth counselling worker. Each of us had many roles to undertake within our organisations and most worked with and were employed by a voluntary management committee.

STRESS

One of the main issues was how stress affects us, the causes and ways of dealing with it. Christine had produced a very useful questionnaire that gave yourself an idea where the main areas of stress occurred. The outcome surprised most of us. This led to discussions on how to deal with these.

The effects of stress are known to most of us and the effect can be devastating to health and work. Effects can include loss of weight, uneven sleep patterns, bowel disorders, short temper, often we don't realise they are stress related until after the event, so it was emphasised how important it is to look after yourself when working alone. It is easy to drift into stress related problems.

Christine explained the need to keep to a work cycle of stress-relax-stress-relax, rather than stress-stress-stress-relax/flop that can lead to the well known phenomena of going on holiday and becoming ill. We undertook a number of very useful stress relieving exercises. She also said that stress is often brought on by the unknown so it was useful to look at the question "What is the worst that can happen?" before getting into panics at work.

SUPPORT

Most people's stress comes from an actual or perceived lack of support. We tried to answer the following questions:

What are the signs that I am well supported?

Who are the people who support me?

What are the things about the job that give me satisfaction?

What are the signs that I am not getting enough support?

What prevents me getting the support I need?

What can I do to improve the support I get?

How do I support others?

We discussed levels of support in our organisations. For example, one of the participant's support system had totally broken down which contravened her contract of employment, she felt very alone and isolated. She had no support from her line manager, no review of job description, and explained how superiors took the acclaim for her initiatives.

We discussed the difference between support and interference, how management committees often have a lack of understanding of your job and how many of the people on those committees were there as a part of their own leisure activities so had little respect for the reality of the job.

TIME

Working on your own can make motivation difficult, too often you can get stuck in a minor or routine part of the post rather than undertaking the tasks that you are primarily there for. We discussed how to improve both working and leisure time through making sure you take holidays and work sensible hours, and how to care for yourself. We discussed why we always centre our discussions on the 10% of work that goes wrong rather than the 90% that goes well, and to learn to say we are good at this, not bad at that (culturally very hard for the English to do).

We analysed our jobs, looking at what was routine; what part of the work we would discard if we could, and the hours spent on the tasks. From this we discussed how to improve these so that within the framework of our job descriptions the routine got done efficiently and we allowed ourselves 20% of our time on what we enjoyed most and in the development of the post.

SAYING NO

After lunch we learned to say no. This is hard for most of us. It was pointed out that most of us believe we are superhuman or have a fear that if we say no we will be seen as weak or unable to cope with our job. We looked at where and how to say no and touched on assertiveness training, though this had to be shortened as time was closing in and we felt it was more important to look further at support.

ON REFLECTION

Support from management committees, volunteers or similar workers is vital for the worker on their own, as it is for all workers. The problems and strains faced by a worker in an organisation are similar whatever work that organisation undertakes. We have often chosen this type of work and are chosen for it. Working on your own means

that you are in control of a great deal and have wide responsibilities.

The day brought together a wide range of people. It covered items so that you felt you had been part of the process of finding these out. When travelling back home I felt that a section on Health and Safety at Work regarding working alone may have been useful.

I can thoroughly recommend this course to anyone in my situation and well worth the £65 cost. I suffered badly from stress in my last post, mainly because of funding problems, but am very lucky in having good support from the current Chair of the Executive committee, who is my line manager. I have regular discussion about the job and a 6 monthly full review of the post and job description. I have support from a very committed committee even though they are spread all over Britain, and we've got our funding for the next twelve months.

Tim Diggles



Tim Diggles

VOICELESS IN SHEFFIELD

Oh no! Not another diatribe about class!

Does it matter? To you? To me? To the Fed?

Well, I don't know about you, but it matters to me, as you'll find if you've the patience to read on.

It does matter to the Fed, I think. Every organisation needs an identity, a rallying cry, something the membership are enthusiastic about. Else no membership.

The Fed is about many things, but it has an over-riding goal to help the voiceless find a voice.

The problem with such a goal is that it is so general. Who are the voiceless? Well, the Fed particularly supports groups disadvantaged because of ethnicity, disability, gender and sexual preference.

That's a right on thing to do. Most of us who are not in these groups support them whole-heartedly.

But where does it leave us, the others? Who are we?

If you are black, disabled, a woman or gay, you damn well know who you are. You know what the Fed can do for you, and what you can do for the Fed.

Do the rest of us have in common only that we are male? Not a very right on thing to be. That we are "New-age Men"? I've been mother to my kids for most of their lives and I don't know what that means.

The title of the Fed gives us a reassuring answer. It tells us that we are working class. We like that notion or we wouldn't read FedNews, or go to Training Days or the AGM. But it would be nice to know what it means.

One white male body is much the same as another, so it must be in the mind, this thing that sets us apart from other social classes. It must be something about the way we think.

Here's what I think it is, put in terms of some very recent experience.

Last week I sent a parcel of anthology contributions to a publisher. Middle class? I sent it second class parcel post. Working class.

It was a very dumb thing to do because the parcel hasn't arrived yet and I'm not sleeping. It was working class, and not just mean or stupid, because I went into the Post Office knowing what I should do, but once I found out how expensive first class would be I dismissed it from my mind. My self-perception that I am not first class was reinforced. I did not think myself or my activities to be that important.

To me, my working classness is not (always) a lack of knowledge or understanding, but a more basic failure of perception. I do not think first class. I look but I do not see, I listen but I do not hear, I write perfectly but I have no voice. I move often in middle class circles (sic), but until the day I die I'll be a working class boy struggling to make out.

Alan Brown



Cartoon by **Robert Ernest**,
Basement Writers' London.

LAWRIE MOORE 1923-92

Many Federation members will be saddened to learn of Lawrie's death, after a period of illness, on December 31st. Lawrie, whose gentle and sensitive presence will be much missed on the Fed executive, was just getting into his stint as reviews editor for Fed News. He was a committed socialist with a long history, dating back to 1938 with the YCL/CPGB, and subsequently from 1966 with the Labour Party. In addition to his writing, he was a computer consultant, an Open University Tutor, and was involved with the recent revival of the Unity Theatre. He was a member of London Voices. Recently he had sent this in to Fed News:

"John Major is his own man. You know that, because he told you. But I know someone says she doesn't agree..."

The Witch in the Wardrobe

I used to be a fascinating witch
My friends and I are quite, quite rich
We live in mansions that you can't afford
And once in a while, we wreck an industry
Such as railways, shipping or coal.
The Tory game
Continues just the same
With millions living on the dole.

The Poll-tax was my poisoned chalice
I dreamed it up with spite and malice
But public fury killed it dead
So you pay more VAT instead.
And once in a while, in the Falklands or the Gulf
We'll win a wonderful war.
The Tory game
Continues just the same
Even though I'm not leader any more.

I used to be a fascinating witch
My friends and I are quite, quite rich
I bashed the unions and I soaked the poor
I closed more hospitals than ever before
And once in a while, I sold a million shares,
Stealing public assets galore
And the Tory game
Continues just the same
Even though I'm not leader any more.

Lawrie Moore

NEW BOOKS

NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL WRITING, VOLUME 7.

Heeley Writers, 40pp £1.00 plus 30p p&p

A confident new anthology, packed with recent poems and short stories by the members of Heeley, with some fine illustrations by Janna Doherty. (see right)



Heeley's writers regularly feature at local readings - now's the time to read their latest showcased in print.

Available from:
Heeley Writers,
c/o 60 Upper Valley
Rd, Sheffield S8 9HB

"Alehouse; Talehouse"



A collection of work
by
Nick Pollard

New Books continued

ALEHOUSE; TALEHOUSE by Nick Pollard.

Smart Publications £2
ISBN: 1 871474 60 4.

Madness, badness, gladness, sadness... and that's not all. Love, fish, beer, soul, in well over 50 verses and performance poems, from the murky to the quirky.

Nick has been a member of Heeley Writers since the group formed in 1980. This, his first collection, contains mostly recent material. Many of his poems take the form of stories or pub anecdotes, some funny, some controversial, some questioning.

Available from:
60 Upper Valley Rd,
Sheffield S8 9HB.

£2 plus 50p p&p.
Cheques to the author.

LOVE BETWEEN TOWNS

We arrived from across the Pennines to a right royal welcome; a hot meal served up with true Liverpoolian hospitality. The venue - Stockbridge Village, The Craigs Community Centre, for an afternoon of poetry and prose, a celebration reading for Valentines Day, with a pink flower for all the ladies. Sixty or so writers met for an afternoon of words on all aspects of love: from lost love, new love, old love, the thrills and spills of love, to passionate and deep feeling love, imagined love and love that never materialised. The sorrow, the joy, the humour; the magic, lust and desire.

The hostess/comper, Pat Smart, and Stockbridge Writers worked very hard to give us a really warm welcome and make us feel at

warming poetry. Barbara's words had to be read by her friend (also...) Barbara as she is unable to talk and communicates through signs and gestures. The feeling conveyed in the words reduced me to a state of self disgust for the excuses I make when not writing, and I'm sure everyone there would agree that they deserve a medal for their sheer bravery, honesty and determination.

The way Pecket Well students have overcome their inhibitions, lack of access to education, even the obstacle of not being able to read out their own writing to prove they have a big heart and something to say, should be an inspiration to us all.

Altogether a collective day, of human feelings rendered by everyone. It came to an early close, but the work that went into the event deserves a very big and special thank you for a very pleasant and successful day. Memories to draw on are made from days like these - let's have more of them.



Time for a tea break at Stockbridge Writers' event

home. There were readings from Reaching Out Writers, Croxteth Women Writers, Prescott and Whiston Writers, Whiston Reminiscence, Roscoe Writers, With even a member from Liverpool Writers' 'Circle'! along with us from Heeley. Childwall Writers' Hilda Nicholson gave a good performance with her usual dry humour.

After more wining, dining and pampering we were joined for the evening by writers from Scottie 83.

For me the highlight of the day was Pecket Well College, whose Barbara and Mike Callaghan gave us some heart



Cartoon by Robert Ernest Basement Writers' London

FORE-CAST?

You'll never guess what Heeley Writers are up to now! Well, some of us, there's some others as well, from all over Sheffield.

Sheffield Writers + organised this Saturday workshop on drama and performance. A local actor/director/producer John Goodchild - you know him, from Theatreworks, he did a workshop at Manor Lodge in Sheffield last year - he's working very hard with a group of about a dozen of us in an upstairs room at a local library.

We meet once a week. What we do is throw ideas around and improvise on situations, sort of act 'em out.

Another thing we do is; half of us are the audience sat at one end of this room, t'other half walk about as if we're on stage. When John shouts "FREEZE" we just stand there like statues. From these poses the "audience" watching seem to get ideas, stimulation, get their brains working, trying to picture what these statues could be doing in relation to each other.

Well, I mean, you can imagine if somebody's decided to sit on the floor and somebody's leaning over him, or her, imagine what you could make up of that. And somebody just behind them looking on as if they're just ready to do a runner; well it could turn out to be a bank robbery. It could be somebody doing a sit in and the others are coming together to join on this picket line. Or, some sort of demonstration.

After a bit we all change over and the ones that were the "audience" do the "posing".

Some of us have submitted scripts and we've done a bit of work on some of 'em; proper acting. What about that, eh? It could come about that we put a performance on, a proper production, in a proper theatre w' us names in lights. Could get booked at the London Palladium. Come on! We're only kidding. Anyway I'll let you know how we get on.

Yours truly,
Rene Crofts.

REVIEWS REVIEWS REVIEWS REVIEWS

LIGHTYEARS,

The First Collection of Merseyside Women's Writing.

Ed Cunningham, Irvine, et al, Headland £7.95. 128pp
Copies from: Flat 1, 39 Kelvin Grove, Liverpool L8 3UE

A resounding anthology from Merseyside which covers the whole range of women's writing from the region. Well illustrated, this book is just crammed with sharp wit, anecdotes, loves, sexualities, anger, and pride.

There's Ann Deegan's hilarious "I'm Changing" extolling the benefits of life post menopause, Hilda Nicholson on the phenomenon of male occupational role functioning "I'll start decorating the lounge on Saturday, so if you'll just empty the room, wash the paint down and strip the walls, I'll be able to get right on with it". When Elspeth McLean goes to buy a briefcase, she finds it, of course, in the men's department:

"It doesn't hold Marks and Spencers briefs,
Like women wear.
It's for serious briefs
Men's business."

And as for men:

"Too much affection gets in the way of getting things done."
He said, as he lay on his back beside me,
Rubbing his eyes absent-mindedly,
Absent-emotionally"

Rose Ryan, Briefly The Next Morning.

... that's the least of their crimes.

This book will certainly inspire its readers to write about themselves. There's a text in here appropriate to index virtually every mood, and in this tremendous variety its potential values are wide reaching, for example (and not to merely pigeon-hole) as a solid source book for students; Creative Writing, Adult Literacy, Women's Studies, Counselling courses... and more.

Most of all, it's THE book to give the one you love.

REMEMBERING WITH LOVE.

Celebrity Anthologies: Vol. 1
Come to The Edge, £3.99;
Vol. 2 **Love and all that Jazz** £4.99;

Remembering with Love "at least" £1.50 from:

Marie Curie Book Fund,
c/o Sylvia Lukeman,
Appeals Office, Speke Rd,
Liverpool, L25 8QA

Marie Curie Cancer Care have published three anthologies of poetry and selected verse to raise funds for the charity. Love and All the Jazz is a collection of love songs and verse chosen by music and drama celebs; Come To The Edge is a collection of verse chosen by a variety of celebrities, featuring some work by Merseyside Association of Writers Workshop poets - also interesting for the tastes of the various gilded and famous; and Remembering With Love is a collection of Sylvia Lukeman's work.

Sylvia Lukeman, from Rose Lane Writers, has made the many themes and possibilities arising from "Love" into a pleasant slim volume. A good idea to raise the profile of your workshop, and support a charitable cause simultaneously.

WRITINGS

An anthology from the 1992 Mike Haywood Memorial Creative Writing Competition.

Rotherham and District Arts Council, *New Writing*, ISBN 0 903666 69 3

This little volume is one of four put out every year by Rotherham council - for nowt. It's just part of their policy for

making more outlets for local writers. It's a great policy. You can just pick the books up from the library.

It doesn't mean to say that the 33 pages herein are not good value for money. New Writing anthologies have to be caught fast - or you've to hope for a reprint.

This collection starts with an earthy tale of jealousy between two neighbours, Anita Waller's Moonbeams

and Shooting Stars, and ends with Hilary Shields long poem of wistful memories of her children, "On Loan" (winner of the long poem prize).

Between these bookends are a string of excellent verses by South Yorkshire writers - not all hailing from Rotherham. If you hurry, there might still be a copy left.

WILD FLOWERS

SARA BOYES, *Stride*, 37 Portland St, Exeter, EX1 2EG. 75pp £5.95 paperbound.

This collection of poems trickles words across the page as if each phrase has been applied with a brush, then studied for effect; but retains its spontaneity. The careful phrasing results in an impression which is very private; the internal, guilty warts-and-all jumpy monologue of remembering a girlhood, the interactions with a now dead Mum that you can replay, and replay, in your mind but never check out how she felt about them. Is/was it OK to be angry with Mum - because then I was a child?

Boyes is most effective at reproducing the voice of that child in conflict with her mum, but keeping a grip on the hindsight:

"How dare you mother me!
with your big stomach and varicosed veins.
Order your disorder!
Clean up your shelves, I shout. But you don't
hear, too
 hell bent
on getting from one day to the next.
I'm showing you
how - I can do better; for you I do it, too."

(from *Cleaner*)

The poems exploring her relationship with her mother form the bulk of the collection. Amongst the others "Jumper" and "Specs Case" are examples of Boyes' technique of giving a detailed still life of a familiar object, but using it as a metaphor for an aspect of herself. See the ambiguities:

"I pick up my blue glasses case.
It's awkward, being

not round or comforting,
and yet the flatness

held by my thumb and spread fingers,
is satisfying..."

While writing this review I keep dipping back into the book to decide whether the poems I've quoted are the definitive ones to entice you with. For me, "Girl" is just brilliant - for the first time ever, reading anyone's poetry, I felt really gripped - by the threatening situation developing as the girl in the poem is about to cross the road, and gain a stage towards independence, self expression. It would ruin the effect to quote bits from it. You'll just have to borrow or buy the book.

SKELMERSDALE WRITERS' SPOTLIGHT 2

"(A4, 28pp) To obtain your copy, contact Skelmersdale (0695) 281119

"I'll never catch on, Huggy"



Cartoon by **Bill Clarke**, Skelmersdale Writers'.

Despite the basic publishing facilities available to Skelmersdale Writers' this is a jam-packed magazine with a lot of variety. It's the kind of presentation which strikes you immediately - "I'll buy that and have a look at it later". You can flick through it and look at the many cartoons, sayings, and jokes, and you can wade through it and read all the longer pieces. If you like it, there's even a map to tell you how to get to the group for more.

It's a lucky bag, one page moves you, another amuses, though sometimes there are purple bits that make your teeth itch, nor are all the jokes especially savoury. However, the rhymed seething precision of Noela M Mackenzie's "Contract of Employment" makes a biting Valentine on the inequalities of love; Bette Brodigan's "Big Kate" is one of those legendary local characters I'd enjoy reading more about; and this is Barbara Manley's plea "To a Grandchild":

When I am gone, will you with
a kindly hand gently touch my treasures?
Row upon row of ancient books,
old letters, recipes, cartoons,
Browning photos, long-gone faces.
Much loved, much blest, special places.
When I am gone, gently move my treasures.

Copies For Review

Publishing a new book or magazine?
Review copies for **FEDERATION** should be sent to 60 Upper Valley Rd, Sheffield S8 9HB

Please note that in order for work to be reviewed for **FEDERATION's** Winter issue, material should be sent by **August 31st**.

THE POPULAR FRONT OF CONTEMPORARY POETRY

APPLES AND SNAKES,

From Unit 11, Hatcham Mews Centre,
Hatcham Park Mews, London SE14 5QA. 239pp
£6.95

In this sweep of contemporary poetry from the UK are a lot of my favourites - Henry Normal, Ian McMillan, Brendan Cleary... its another thumping collection of verse, endowed with a good proportion of black writers. This anthology just crackles with poems that, on every page, make you go yeah!

Like Lemn Sissay's "Boiling Up"

"Can you soak me into this country
I would like to blend in
If rice and peas can do it, so can I".

Like Maighread Medbh's "Easter 1991"

"I am Ireland
and I'm sick
sick in the womb,
sick in the head.

and I'm sick of lying
in this sick bed,
and if the medical men
don't stop operating
I'll die....

...I am Ireland
and I'm not waiting anymore"

Like John Hegley's "Overruling the Bank of England"

"The Queen wears glasses
but not on any of them banknotes...

...but we can help the Queen
by taking pen to paper
and carefully putting them on."

It's vital, it hits hard, it's confronting the disgraceful disgusting underbelly of a society attempting to slap whitewash over the cracks even as they widen. It voices the culture of protest shouted in poetry readings up and down the country. Let this book fall open, and it will unfailingly open on something which will put a shiver down you. ...like poetry in motown.

Nick Pollard

FRANKENSTEIN'S DAUGHTER

ed SARA BOYES, *Stride*, 37 Portland St, Exeter,
EX1 2EG. 104pp £6.95 paperback.

Workshop this: Does the publication of anthologies of Women's Writing contribute to their work "becoming marginalised?" Sara Boyes disagrees, and this is a strong sally against the hoary old chestnut of querying women's and others' rights to separate publication. Rather, the reader is invited to focus on the work of these writers as Women.

A key to the continued need for women's anthologies can be found in the title poem, by Karen Whiteson. It's an issue of identity:

"...i could not make him see
the monstrosity
i was already a disguised thing
when from his laboratory table i rose
a metaphorical creature
a rough
diamond gloved in fantastic skin
displaying stitching along
the seams of my harlequin bones
a patched-together
doll reanimated by the hum
of a rusty tune..."

The imagery is reminiscent of the revolting "girl suit" of Harris's *Silence of the Lambs*. This too is a male (frankenstein's) construction, an ill fitting, gross and vile misrepresentation of

female, in which painful misshaping "frankenstein's daughter" struggles to reveal and establish Her Self.

Sue May succinctly deals with the pitfalls in trying to maintain a feminist identity in Women's Liberation:

"Hello sweetie home from work
I've cooked your dinner

I'm a berk."

Finally, in picking over her "compromise with Nigerian British" origins Patience Agbabi concludes her "Serious Pepper":

"Belongings are unimportant
but belonging
is. Everyone's born

no-one's found until
they find themselves hurting
in the back of the throat."

Finding out who you are is a conflict with yourself: something painful arises and prevents you speaking out, that's when you find your self. Establishing personal identities is merely one aspect of this rich and vibrant collection spanning sixteen women poets. There's a lot to enjoy, to mull over, come back to savour again, and much that challenges. A strong and essential anthology.

Nick Pollard.

THE 43 GROUP

by **Morris Beckman**,
Centreprise, £7.50

I read this book with great interest. It is a chronological account of an anti-Nazi group between the years 1945-50. The 43 group was so called because 43 people (mainly Jews) turned up for the initial meeting. The author was also a member of this group, which favoured direct action, particularly in breaking up fascist meetings and rallies.

Beckman goes back to the 30's to set the scene and talk about the formation of the British Union of Fascists (BUF) in 1933. Its leader, Oswald Mosley was interned from 1940-43 for having great sympathy for Hitler, Franco and Mussolini, all of whom he'd met in the 1930's. An apocryphal story tells of Mosley dropping stones off a cliff onto a crowded beach. The fascists also received support from the Tory Right Club whose evil motto was "Perish Judah", or "PJ".

After the war, even the Labour Party did not give Jewish people the support they expected. In 1945 Bevin



the Labour Home Secretary said "Jews must not try to get to the head of the queue". Although the Jewish Defence Committee verbally protested about the resurgence of fascism, the 43 group decided that more was needed.

The group tended to be mainly young men in their 20's. Some infiltrated the fascists to pass back information. They founded a paper, "On Guard" with cartoons by Jak. Particularly in the East End, in places such as Ridley Road and Bethnal Green, they challenged Mosley and his ill fated "Union Movement".

By 1950 the group disbanded, having beaten back the Fascists in the East End. As an East Ender I found the narrative interesting and inspiring. I had no idea that Fascist groups were so widespread in the 40's. Although in parts of the book the pace slackens there are some brilliant pieces of build-up, particularly before the 43 Group attacks the fascists. I recommend this book to East-Enders and anti-fascists everywhere.

Sarah Richardson

SCREENPLAYS BY WOMEN

ed. **Cheryl Robson**, Aurora Metro.

This anthology begins with an interesting introduction on the nature of women's playwriting and whether it differs from men's. Robson points out how much the Mother/Daughter relationship is unexplored by the great literary "masters", including Shakespeare. She also discusses the misogyny of modern plays, such as Osborne's "Look Back in Anger".

The plays in the anthology cover particular aspects of women's perspectives. Two I found particularly interesting were "Cochon Flambe" a monologue by Eva Lewin, and "Cut it Out", by Jan Ruppe.

"Cochon Flambe" is a long speech delivered by Wendy, a waitress. She explains in short sharp sentences how her job degrades her; how she is expected to flirt with the customers and work flat out; how the pay is poor and the work monotonous, like that of other women. Pursued by a male customer into the toilet her coolness evaporates and the play ends abruptly with her throwing a home-made Molotov cocktail at the man.

continued on page 14

THE AUTEUR

The Auteur ("the new wave in arts magazines") is a new quarterly magazine which isn't "just a vehicle for the established network of literary hacks", but "[opens] its pages to the abundant talents of the great many unpublished writers".

The launch issue, like many launch issues was patchy, but a glossy news stand new writers' magazine is something that should do well. On the whole, the feature articles were interesting, though chatty -

Raymond Queneau, Blue Ice and Patriot Games, a day with the RSC, an interview with Harriet Spicer, of Virago.

Around half the magazine features new writing, which is risking a good proportion, especially in a magazine which appears to be aimed at a broad population. The pieces featured were all pretty accessible, good examples of the kind of work hundreds of Fed group members are producing, and it may be an avenue away from those sometimes crusty and rarefied poetry review magazines published up and down the

country. Looks encouraging. If nothing else this venture will enable more new writers to come out of the closet, the biscuit tin, the dusty old box file; though, to carry this through, perhaps the review section should give a little space to small press publications.

The Auteur costs £1.50 an issue, or £7.50 a year to subscribe, from 35 Fitzroy Rd, London NW1 8TP. Manuscripts should be accompanied with an SAE, and all will be answered "promptly, with personal comments".

ARVON FOUNDATION WRITING COURSES

A new series of courses at the Arvon Foundation Houses begin from April 12th. The week-long courses offer a range of interests in poetry, fiction, and drama at all levels.

In addition to the houses at Lumb Bank and Totleigh Barton, a new house has opened at Moniack Mhor, near Inverness. Courses cost £220 inclusive of food and accommodation, and grants are available for those on low incomes, unemployed, pensioners and students. "Arvon's aim is to encourage those with a real commitment to writing, irrespective of financial considerations".

Write to the appropriate centre for further details: Lumb Bank, Heptonstall, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 6DF

Moniack Mhor, Moniack, Kirkhill, Inverness, IV5 7PQ

Totleigh Barton, Sheepwash, Beaworthy, Devon EX21 3NS

BRIDPORT COMPETITION 1993

Once again it's time for the Bridport Creative Writing Competition. 2 categories, short stories between 1,000 and 5,000 words, and poems of not more than 40 lines. Entry fee 3 per entry, prizes of 1,000, 500 and 250, and 20 supplementary prizes. The three winning stories will be read by a literary agent. Closing date: 30.6.93.

Further details from Competition Secretary, 9 Pier Terrace, West Bay, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 4ER.

NORTHERN LIGHTS

Northern Arts, North West Arts, and Yorkshire and Humberside Arts are promoting two opportunities for northern based writers to shine.

NEW VOICES

The first of these, in conjunction with Tyne Tees, Granada, and Yorkshire TV, is aimed at discovering new drama writers, especially women. Six writers from each tv region will be selected, and invited to attend workshops in June to develop their ideas. From these, three from each region will be commissioned to write a script. All forms of tv drama will be eligible, from location film to sit-com. Proposals with series potential will also be considered.

As the closing date is 30th April you'll have to work fast, but at this stage the participating tv companies want to see proposals (no more than 2 typed A4 pages), rather than scripts, with a sample scene, between 4 and 10 typed A4 pages.

Details should be obtained from your regional arts board: **North West Arts, 12 Harter St, Manchester M1 6HY** (Jane Tunn, 061 228 3062);

Northern Arts, 9-10 Osborne Terrace, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 1NZ (John Bradshaw 091 281 6334);

Yorkshire and Humberside Arts, 21 Bond St, Dewsbury, West Yorks, WF13 1AX (Terry Morden 0924 455555)

NORTHERN SHORT STORIES

The second is a short story competition, with Littlewood Arc. Short stories, no more than 3,000 words, in English or a dialect form of it, should be submitted by 30th June 1993. Entries should be from persons, aged over 16,

resident in the area covered by the three regional arts boards (North, North West, and Yorks and Humberside) and each should be accompanied by a cheque for £5. Prizemoney of £500 will be equally divided amongst the winners, who will be published in "Northern Stories 4", and will also receive 5 copies of the anthology. Judges are Michele Roberts and Glyn Hughes.

Application forms and further details from **Littlewood Arc, Nanholme Mill, Shaw Wood Rd, Todmorden, Lancs, OL14 6DA.**

SCREENPLAYS BY WOMEN continued from page 13

Put in these crude phrases, the play doesn't sound up to much. But there are clever references, to her "fig leaf" apron and at the end for Lady Macbeth "...my skin stinks of this place - how long will it take to clear?" The author touches on many issues for women in a short space of time.

"Cut it Out" is about self-laceration. It follows the story of Laura, who deliberately physically abuses herself. Gradually her story of abusive parents, abusive ex-boyfriends, and the loss of three children comes out. She is "counselled" by two friends, male and female. There is no pat, happy ending but she does see a counsellor eventually.

This play was very readable and you empathised with the character. I imagine seeing it on stage would be quite shocking. The play is an expression of Laura's anger and self-hatred. It is an accessible play on a difficult subject.

The other plays too have received good reviews. Overall the winner of the Raymond Williams prize is good value at £5.95, and interesting for all potential playwrights and feminists.

Sarah Richardson

FEDBACK FEDBACK FEDBACK FEDBACK

Send your letters to THE EDITOR, FEDERATION, 60 Upper Valley Road, Sheffield, S8 9HB

SWAP - A WIGGERLY WORD

Dear Ms Battle

I have just read your review of the book "Wiggerly Words" by Joan Vicente and felt I had to write in defence of Joan's work.

Joan wrote these poems over a long period of time and was asked by the Basement Writers to make them into a book. They were not written with a specific age in mind, and, although some schools have made use of the book, it was never intended specifically for use in schools. I can only imagine that you have no contact with children from this part of London, or you would not have considered the language "inappropriate". You use "swap" as an example of inappropriate language but when I showed your review to some local primary school teachers, they were most amused. One commented "Swap seems a most inoffensive word, compared to some I've heard them use, and swapping is a favourite pastime - one the children can relate to."

Your final comment: "A child's view of the world is quite different to an adult's..." is one I fully agree with, and if you could see the pleasure that children derive from this small volume, I am sure that you would have written a kinder review.

V Copley.

From Betty Battle

Dear V Copley

It would appear that you and your colleagues have missed the point of my criticism. I was not criticising the use of the word "Swap", but the content of the two lines in the poem, which were printed in Fed News:

*"I swapped my jumper for a brand new gun."
"I swapped my sister for an action man."*

These are actions that we as adults would not condone and rightly so. My criticism was about the content of the poem and the context that the word swapping was put into, not the word "swap".

Whilst I am aware that at times this is the sort of language children may well use, we as adults have a responsibility to see that children understand the inappropriateness of such actions. Therefore if a child reads about such actions in a book written by adults for children, it can hardly be condemned when it does similar things. I am quite aware if the use of the word "swap", one doesn't have to live in your part of London to know the meaning. It is a word widely used in all parts of the country and in many different contexts.

When asked to review a book the reviewer is expressing their own opinions, it is up to other readers of that book whether they agree or disagree. When a Federation member reviews a book written by another member or member workshop, it does not mean they should not be critical, so long as the criticism is constructive, not destructive.

From Sally Flood,
Co-ordinator,
Basement Writers.

I must protest at the review on "Wiggerly Words", a book written by Joan Vicente, a member of The Basement Writers.

I am familiar with her work amongst children at the primary school where she works, we have laughed and giggled at some of the antics performed within her poems based on children she has first hand knowledge of.

You expressed the wish she had included work from the children themselves, but this was "Joan's" book and each poem was chosen by the children, who participated and read with much enjoyment at the launching.

You surprise me at the choice of your objections, perhaps living in London we have a wider slant on language.

"Swap", for instance, is a word very reminiscent of childhood, where we would swap our comics. I expect today's children would swap videos. And what "horror":

"a puppy chews upon a shoe"

- I myself have lost many a slipper this way.

In my opinion Joan has captured and used childish images in an imaginative and delightful way.

You will be pleased to know the first edition of this book was sold out completely to parents for their children or in schools where Joan is a regular reader. This week Joan and myself produced another 150 copies most of which were sold before completion.

FEDSPREAD FEDSPREAD FEDSPREAD

NEW DOOR FRONT AT QUEENSPARK

Queenspark Books have moved from the Lewis Cohen Urban Studies Centre to a new location in the

**Brighton Media Centre,
11 Jew St,
Brighton BN1 1UT,
(tel 0273 748348 -
Mondays).**

A prolific and very active community publishing group, Queenspark are appealing for more volunteers to help with book production, office work,

FEDBACK *continued*

SECOND IMPRESSION

Thanks for Fed News which I enjoyed reading. One point though, some of the lines in "Surface Impressions" were printed in the wrong place and the poem therefore didn't make sense! In view of this, would you mind reprinting the poem in a future issue as it was rather embarrassing to see it in this form. Thanks.

Surface Impressions

A smile is painted
On the mask-like surface of
my face

As if immortalised
By the skill of an artist's
hand

I am shaped in your image
Of what a woman should be

And consent to be the object
Of your gaze

As I am nothing
If not forever versatile

Alex Benjamin.

OPPORTUNITIES

CITY OF STORIES

Commonword, based in Manchester, are looking for submissions for their "City of Stories" anthology, another in their exciting and successful series of themed anthologies.

Writers, who must live in the North West of England, are asked to submit up to 3 short stories between 1,000 and 5,000 words in length. The only criteria is that stories be fictional and set in a city. Commonword's Cathy Bolton says "You can write about any city - somewhere you've lived, worked, visited or even imagined..."

Send copies which are typed or clearly written in black ink, on A4 paper, and an SAE, by 30.4.93 to: **City Anthology, Commonword Cheetwood House, 21 Newton St, Manchester M1 1FZ. Tel Cathy Bolton on 061 - 236 2773.**

EVENTS

ISLINGTON POETRY WORKSHOP - SUMMER SEASON

The poetry (and short prose) workshops begin on Wednesday 21.4.93 at the Community Room, Gillespie Neighbourhood Office, 102 Blackstock Rd N4 2BX (5 mins walk from Finsbury Park Tube, Buses 4, 19, 106, 253, 279, 29). Costs per session are 7.70 room hire shared by the members present. The workshop has been running for 11 years, and the current anthology "Out of Our Heads"

GOOD FICTION

Ailsa Cox and Elizabeth Baines are starting a new bi-annual magazine, to publish "short fiction by new and established writers, and some cultural commentary". Called Metropolitan Magazine, it will launch its first issue in September or October 1993.

Ailsa Cox says that though the magazine is not limited to Manchester writers "we do have a strong regional identity". The magazine aims "to bring good fiction to new audiences and to contribute towards adding a literary dimension to Manchester's developing arts scene. We want innovative fiction of a high literary standard for a magazine with an urban and contemporary flavour, with wide appeal."

**Further information,
(send SAE),
from Flat 4, 12 Carlton Rd,
MANCHESTER M16 8BB**

(Fed News #11), details of the group, and an August Bank Holiday residential writing weekend are all available from **Bruce Barnes, 19a Marriot Rd, London N4 3QN, tel 071 281 2369.**

RAYMOND WILLIAMS PRIZE

Have you published a work of "outstanding creative and imaginative qualities which reflects the values of ordinary people and their lives"? Then you've not much time left to enter for this award, closing date Friday 30.4.93. Only non-profit making publishers are eligible.

**Details: Anne Bendall,
Literature Dept., Arts
Council, 14 Great Peter St,
London SW1P 3NQ
(Tel 071 333 0100)**

Federation Book Club

The Federation Book Club, which distributes books by Federation Member Workshops, will now appear in each Federation Magazine rather than as a separate leaflet posted out. We hope you will find this a more regular and efficient way to buy your books.

Aurora Metro

Seven Plays By Women

The winner of the 1992 Raymond Williams Prize
£5.95 ISBN 0 9515877 1 4

Basement Writers

Wiggerley Words Poems for

Children by Joan Vincente
£1.99 ISBN 0 9514474 3 2

Take It From Me

Poems by Sean Taylor
£3.00 ISBN 0 9514474 2 4

Burbury Writers

Memories From Home

By Shirley Cooper **£3. 50**

Commonword

Rainbows In The Ice

Anthology of poems by people with disabilities

£4.50 ISBN 0 946745 90 0

The Delicious Lie

Poetry by Georgina Blake
£4.95 ISBN 0 946745 07 2

Dancing on Diamonds

Writing by young people
£5.95 ISBN 0 946745 06 4

Cartwheel Community Arts

True Stories and Fantasies

By women on the Langley Estate near Middleton
£3.99 ISBN 0 9519627 0 1

Centerprise

The 43 Group

Morris Beckman's account of the fight against nazis after the War
£7.50 ISBN 0 903738 75 9

Eastside Writers

Words That Don't Make Sense

Tap by kids of the Marian Richardson School **£1.75**

Ethnic Communities Oral History Project

Sorry No Vacancies

Life Stories of Senior Citizens from the Caribbean

£2.00 ISBN 187 4206 01 5

The Motherland Calls

African Caribbean Experiences
£2.00 ISBN 1871338 03 4

Gatehouse Books

Telling Tales

Short stories, poetry and drama by writers from adult basic education.

£4.95 ISBN 0 906253 34 9

Islington Poetry Workshop

Out Of Our Heads

An anthology of poetry
£1.85 ISBN 0 9518212 0 2

Speakeasy Writers

Anthology of Poetry £1.50

London Voices

The Changing Tide

Poems and prose of our times
£3.50 ISBN 0 9509478 1 4

Northern Voices

Homespun

The Story Of The Spennymoor Settlement

£3.00 ISBN 1871536 10 3

Northside Writers

The Newcorker

Anthology of poetry **£1.00**

QueenSpark Books

Pullman Craftsmen the working

lives of three craftsmen Don Carter, Joe Kent and Geoff Hart

£4.95 ISBN 0 904733 50 5

Daring Hearts Lesbian And Gay

Lives of 50s and 60s Brighton

£5.95 ISBN 0 904733 31 9

Spiral Arts

Strong Words

An anthology by ex-offenders
£3.00 ISBN 1870011 10 4

Vertical Images

The Andy Warhol Happy Hour

Poetry by Brian Docherty
£2.00 ISBN 1 87 4127 00 X

Book Name	Copies	Price
Total (Add £1.00 per book P&P)		

Name _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

I enclose £ _____ Please make cheques payable to
 "FWWCP" and return to:
 Federation Book Club, c/o 23 Victoria Park Rd., Tunstall,
 Stoke-on-Trent ST6 6DX

Poem Page

Stockbridge Writers, Merseyside

Dreams of Love

With friends I went out one night in June,
To enjoy a drink and listen to a tune.
By the end of the night we'd had a ball,
The man of my dreams was in the hall.
Week after week I took the knocks,
But I loved him right down to his socks.
I even put my love into rhyme,
I didn't know I was wasting my time.
I really did love him, friends said 'it shows!'
He was so nice from his head to his toes.
For him to take me out I'd yearn,
But I guess I'll never learn.
To walk out with him I'd be willing,
But alas! he thinks I'm not a full shilling.
So this is my last, my final appeal,
To tell You 'I love you!' big Les O'Neil.

Joan Carroll

Brighton Beach

As I strolled along deserted beach,
no worries on my mind.
Suddenly before me in arm's reach,
rose a great big bare behind.
Around me there was nudity
far beyond the norm.
Male and female anatomy
in every shape and form.
I realised in my wanderings
just how far I'd come.
Seeing people without their underthings
I was in the land of the rising bum.

Harry Dempsey

One

I, have become lost
I, have been absorbed
I am now we.

We, are blended together
We have one being
We, cannot be parted.

You and I
Together
Us.

Pat Smart

Mother Love

A mother and babe is a joy to see
As she cuddles it tenderly on her knee
But as the babe in stature grows
It has to learn how to face life's blows
The world can be such a cruel place
As knock after knock they have to face
And the mother who bore them shares their pain
As they pick themselves up to start again
Pray God there'll be a brighter morrow
To wash away their tears of sorrow.

Beryl Wade

Friends

A Bobbie is your friend, sticks by you to the end
and he'll never, never, never let you down.
No matter what they say he'll stand by you on the day
that you're collared and dragged up before the Crown.
If you resist arrest, then just like the very best,
he'll speak for you in glowing sympathy.
As a Bobbie never fibs, and he never fractures ribs
and he's full of true compassion ... *Honestly!*

Norman Campbell



Working to make Writing and
Publishing accessible to All