

To: SA PEN Members
E-Newsletter No. 19/2013 – 27/10/2013



**THE SOUTH AFRICAN CENTRE OF
PEN INTERNATIONAL
A World Association of Writers**

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Message from Margie Orford, SA PEN Executive Vice-President, to the SA PEN membership - 27th October 2013

Dear PEN members and friends



This last year has been a very full and busy year for South African PEN, as it has been for PEN International.

This September the 79th annual PEN Congress was held in Reykjavik in Iceland. A fabulous and beautiful country, Iceland’s lively literary culture was evident in the festival that ran concurrently with the Congress that welcomed two new PEN centres. To welcome the Myanmar Centre after

fifty years of dictatorship was wonderful. Kiran Desai – who many of you will have heard speak on her visits to South Africa – introduced the new PEN Delhi Centre.

Central to much of the discussion at the Congress was the increasing threats to freedom of expression worldwide. Writers continue to be detained, persecuted and killed in Ethiopia, in China, in Belarus, in Bahrain, in Turkey. There is, in addition to the obvious infringements of the right to freedom of expression by repressive governments, the startling threat posed to both the right to privacy and the right to freedom of expression posed by the unprecedented surveillance done by and on behalf of the US and the UK governments. PEN's Declaration of Digital rights (to view go to <http://www.pen-international.org/pen-declaration-on-digital-freedom/declaration-on-digital-freedom-english/>) has proved both timely and useful in PEN's work defending the right to free expression online too.

I was pleased that our nominated candidate for Treasurer of PEN International, Jarkko Tontti, was elected. And that Mohamed Sharif of Sierra Leonean PEN was elected to the board of International PEN. But best of all was that Masande Ntshanga won the inaugural PEN New Voices Award. Just brilliant. The New Voices Award introduced us to some really promising South African talent. We will be publishing a selection of the entries online shortly. So watch this space.

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We have had some success in fund raising for new activities. American PEN has been very helpful and thanks to them we have a new strategic plan in place. I will be sharing that with you shortly. We also have sufficient funds to host a series of public PEN

Dialogues about creativity, literature, politics, and languages. The first of these dialogues was held at the OPEN BOOK Festival in September (Gillian Slovo, 25th President of English PEN, and Niq Mhlongo discuss the Politics of Literature and the Literature of Politics, 10th September 2013). We have partnered with OPEN BOOK since the first festival and I am thrilled that we will be working with them through the year until the festival in 2014.

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We are also working with the Nalibali Campaign (www.nalibali.org/), specifically by providing funding, via a grant from SIDA, for the translation of children's stories into a number of languages. We'll put those stories up on the website when they are published.

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November 15th is the Day of the Imprisoned Writer. Once again Finuala Dowling is organising an evening of readings and music at Kalk Bay Books. Do come if you can – last year's event was very special. Invitation to be sent to you in due course.

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We, together with the WITS Justice Project are looking forward to welcoming the board of Ethiopian PEN to Johannesburg from the 4th to the 9th of November for a workshop on writing in a post-conflict society, strengthening civil society, and freedom of expression. This is a pilot training programme that we hope will contribute to strengthening connections between writers and journalists in the South, something that is key for the establishment of a continent-wide commitment to freedom of expression. You will all have received invitations

to a reception to be held in their honour on Wednesday, November 6th. It will be lovely to see you there.

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I will be attending a symposium in New York in November. Entitled “*Surveillance: What’s the Harm*”, it is co-sponsored by the Fordham Center on Law and National Security and the American Civil Liberties Union. The day is built around this premise: Free expression and privacy advocates who seek to rein in proliferating surveillance powers are lacking a crucial tool to press their case in Congress, the courts, and the public arena: a clear and convincing explanation of how surveillance, and

particularly the increasingly complex and often subtle forms of governmental and private-sector surveillance currently in use in the United States and other democratic societies, impacts free expression and creative freedom.

I’ll be presenting there on the effects of surveillance and censorship on creativity and free expression under apartheid. I am very much looking forward to being there and will write about it in a future newsletter.

Best wishes.

Margie Orford  
Executive Vice-President

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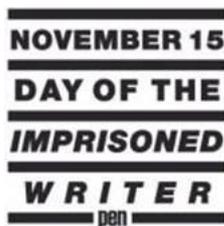
**SA PEN meets Ethiopian PEN – 6th November 2013, Johannesburg**



SA PEN will be holding a reception on the evening of Wednesday, 6th November 2013, to welcome members of Ethiopian PEN to South Africa. An invitation was emailed to all SA PEN members on the 24th October 2013. Please contact [rudebs@icon.co.za](mailto:rudebs@icon.co.za) if you did not receive your invitation. Kindly **RSVP to [dialoguecd@gibs.co.za](mailto:dialoguecd@gibs.co.za) by 1st November.**

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**PEN International Day of the Imprisoned Writer – 15th November 2013, Cape Town**



SA PEN and Kalk Bay Books will again be hosting an event in Cape Town to mark this special day. Please keep your diary open for the evening of the 15th November 2013. An invitation will be sent to you in due course.

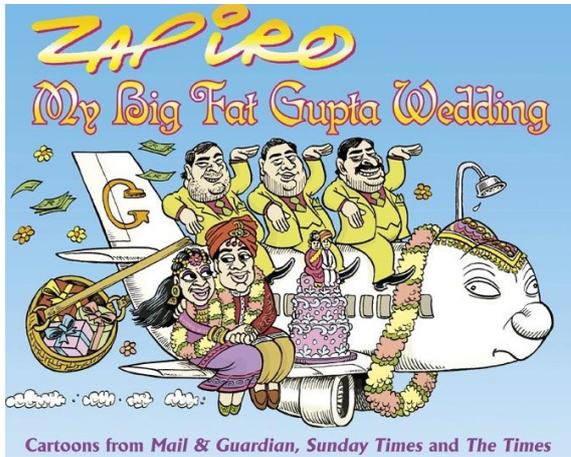
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**Forthcoming events**

- ❖ **PEN International Day of the Dead** – 2nd November 2013. [www.pen-international.org/newsitems/day-of-the-dead-2013/](http://www.pen-international.org/newsitems/day-of-the-dead-2013/)
- ❖ **SA PEN meets Ethiopian PEN** – 6th November 2013, Johannesburg.
- ❖ **PEN International Day of the Imprisoned Writer** – 15th November 2013

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**Book Launch – My Big Fat Gupta Wedding by Zapiro, 5th November 2013, Cape Town**



**My Big Fat Gupta Wedding**

Zapiro will be introduced by  
**Chester Missing**

**Date:** Tuesday 5 November 2013  
**Time:** 17:30 for 18:00  
**Venue:** Eastern Food Bazaar  
96 Longmarket Street  
(main entrance off Darling Street)  
Cape Town  
**RSVP:** [rsvp@jacana.co.za](mailto:rsvp@jacana.co.za)

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**Call for Submissions: Itch E.12: Taboos. Deadline = 31st October 2013**

*Itch* is the creative journal of the School of Literature, Language and Media at the University of the Witwatersrand.

We're delighted to announce the theme for Itch e.12: **TABOOS**

**taboo** (also **tabu**) • n. (pl. **taboos** or **tabus**) a social or religious custom placing prohibitions or restrictions on a particular thing or person. • adj. prohibited or restricted by social custom. ► designated as sacred and prohibited. • v. (**taboos**, **tabooed** or **tabus**, **tabued**) place under such prohibition. ORIGIN C18: from Tongan *tabu* 'set apart, forbidden'. (*South African Concise Oxford Dictionary, 2002*)

What does the word **TABOOS** trigger in your head? Tell us ... As usual, contributors should feel free to interpret this theme in any way that they wish, to speak to or against it, to explore or ignore it.

**Deadline for submissions: 31st October 2013.** More details on our submissions page at <http://www.itch.co.za/submit-an-article> or contact [mehita.iqani@wits.ac.za](mailto:mehita.iqani@wits.ac.za) / [bronwyn.lawviljoen@wits.ac.za](mailto:bronwyn.lawviljoen@wits.ac.za)

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Had a book published recently? Attended or participated in a Festival? Won an award? Achieved a personal milestone of note? The compiler would welcome any news of your activities for future issues of the SA PEN e-newsletter. Please e-mail your contributions to [rudebs@icon.co.za](mailto:rudebs@icon.co.za).

**September letter from John Ralston Saul, International President, to the PEN membership - 9th October 2013**

Dear PEN members, Dear friends,

By now all Centres will have the International Secretary's summary of the 79th Congress in Reykjavik and will know what an important gathering it was.

Let me highlight a few things.

There is now a Myanmar PEN Centre, after more than half a century of dictatorship <http://www.pen-international.org/09/2013/introducing-pen-myanmar-nay-phone-latt/>. The whole Assembly felt the historic weight of this moment. As someone who started writing about the situation in Burma in 1980, I was deeply touched. The situation is still uncertain in Myanmar, but the Centre is in place. And the Publishers Circle workshop in Yangon was the last step in making it possible.

We welcomed a second new Centre. A second from India – PEN Delhi Centre. Kiran Desai came over from the Reykjavik International Literary Festival to make the presentation to the Assembly (<http://www.pen-international.org/09/2013/introducing-pen-delhi-kiran-desai/>). It's always said that India is the world's largest democracy. And their literature is remarkable. But there are major challenges around the publishing of the many languages in the country; and the Delhi Centre will work to include those writers and their literatures. Also, freedom of expression is fragile. The new Centre began to work within days of the Congress by speaking up in defence of Professor UR Ananthamurthy, who has been harshly attacked for expressing his opinion of Mr Narendra Modi, a prime ministerial candidate in the forthcoming elections.

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We are finding solid ways to intervene on digital issues. Our Digital Declaration gives us a strong base and groups outside of PEN are starting to use it. In Reykjavik we took the next step with a group set up

to work out how we should deal with the increasingly unstable area of copyright. PEN has traditionally stayed away from copyright as a more professional issue. But in this explosive era of new technologies it is moving into our domain.

And with the leadership of American and English PEN we took a clear stand on the surveillance mechanisms which are cutting like chainsaws through long established citizen's rights, in particular free expression (<http://www.pen-international.org/campaigns/how-to-campaign/resolution-on-surveillance-submitted-by-american-pen-and-english-pen/>). Every day it becomes clearer that this situation is getting worse and that PEN has the responsibility to play as visible role as possible.

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We also took a strong stand against three laws in particular being put through in Russia to limit free expression (<http://www.pen-international.org/resolution-the-russian-federation/>). And these represent only a small part of the problems developing in that country. We began talking with Russian PEN about how to deal with this worsening situation. As many of you already know, the PEN Assembly suspended its work to walk as a whole on the Russian Embassy in order to deliver its Resolution.

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Finally, the Peace Committee brought its Manifesto to the Assembly and it was approved ([http://www.penslovenia-zdrufenje.si/en\\_photogallery](http://www.penslovenia-zdrufenje.si/en_photogallery)). This was an important step in strengthening our work by fleshing out the principles of each committee. We began with the Girona Manifesto of the Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee. Now we have the Bled Manifesto for peace. This was Edvard Kovac's final contribution as Chair of the Committee. A remarkable way to end his six year mandate. We are all very grateful.

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Eric Lax stepped down after six years as Treasurer and Officer. PEN is in solid financial shape. In fact we are growing. The perfect comment on a retiring Treasurer! During its post Congress retreat the Board co-opted Eric for one more year to a non-voting position so that he could work with our new Treasurer, Jarkko Tontti, to make the transition perfectly smooth. But now is the moment to say how grateful we are to Eric for all that he has done to make PEN International stable and increasingly strong in very difficult economic times.

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The Congress was filled with wonderful moments. Antonio Skármeta from Chile spoke in the Assembly – the first time the Chilean Centre has been present for decades. He then spoke again during the opening ceremony, which fell exactly on

the fortieth anniversary of the Pinochet Coup.

And it was important that a large number of delegates took part in the public events of the literary festival along with Icelandic writers.

Once it was all over, while everyone else was exploring Iceland, the Board and Committee Chairs went off to the quiet island of Viðey in Kollafjörður Bay, to work out how we can carry out the Assembly’s wishes. You will hear more about this.

In the meantime, many thanks to everyone at Icelandic PEN for their welcome and their hard work.

Best wishes to you all,  
John Ralston Saul



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**Literary shoplifting: can and should anything be done?**

How can SA PEN help writers and publishers reduce the shoplifting of poems and the photocopying of prescribed texts that is prevalent in some schools, universities and education departments at present?

It is not unusual for teachers and lecturers to put together anthologies of texts for their own use. The contents are photo-copied from books or literary journals and are used in the classroom or lecture-hall. Some are also used in exams, both local and national. The internet is also a source of such texts, and photocopies of texts are parts of texts are used by pupils and students, many of whom are without textbooks.

This is a complex and countrywide issue requiring research and discussion. It involves legally defined intellectual property rights within a culture that frequently regards a text as a free resource. The ethical process would of course be for teachers, lecturers and education officials to request permission from the publisher but the tragic inefficiency of much of the educational system implies that such a process is impracticable. Should writers give up on this issue?

I would welcome suggestions from members in your newsletter.

Chris Mann  
Honorary Professor of Poetry, Rhodes University  
[C.Mann@ru.ac.za](mailto:C.Mann@ru.ac.za)

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**“ADULTS ONLY...” for second National Arts Festival “Short Sharp Stories Award”. Deadline = 30th November 2013**

PRESS RELEASE, 24th October 2013

The National Arts Festival again partners with author Joanne Hichens for the second annual **Short Sharp Stories Award** for South African short-story fiction. An anthology of selected stories will again be published from submissions to the award. All writers are asked to submit a story under the theme “**ADULTS ONLY...**” this year.

“There are few writers of literary merit who approach the subjects of sex and sensuality. Advertisers and pornographers have annexed not only the terrain, but the language. It is very difficult to write about sex because the language is so limited, so blunt. Yet we can’t hand over such an important topic to commerce,” said Dawn Garisch, winner of the first Short Sharp Stories Awards in 2013.

This year’s collection will therefore be devoted to stories with an element of sex and sensuality. “We’re looking for stories that are raw, dangerous and powerful, as well as those that are delicate, sensitive and funny. Your story can titillate the senses, it can be highly provocative. It can be sacred or profane, playfully perverse or deeply poignant. It can be tender, reserved, and full of self-possessed restraint, or it can speak of rapacious appetites. The sex and/or sensuality must however be part of a strong, compelling narrative,” said Hichens.

The organisers are looking for stories that will challenge stereotypical thinking. “We want stories that explore the struggles and celebrations around sexuality in whatever form it takes, bearing in mind that Love can be heroic, it can be tragic, it can make you laugh and cry,” Hichens added.

The prize-winning stories of the second collection, selected from the stories to be published by a panel of independent judges, will be announced at a launch event at the 2014 National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. In addition to being published in the anthology, there are cash prizes to be won of R35 000 (thirty five thousand Rand). The winner will receive R20 000 and the three runners-up will receive R5 000 each. Plus each published writer apart from the winners will receive an honorarium of R500.

The competition is open to South African citizens regardless of residency, and to residents of South Africa, over the age of 18. Stories must be previously unpublished fiction, written in English. Stories are to be between 3000 and 5000 words in length (which will enable submission to the Caine Prize), and only one story per author is to be considered in any one year. Closing date for entries for the competition is **30th November 2013**. The full rules and requirements for the stories can be viewed on the National Arts Festival website: [www.nationalartsfestival.co.za](http://www.nationalartsfestival.co.za) as well as at [www.shortsharpstories.com](http://www.shortsharpstories.com) or contact Joanne Hichens at [enter@shortsharpstories.com](mailto:enter@shortsharpstories.com).

The final panel of independent judges to choose the winning stories from the short-list of twenty-five stories will be announced in 2014.

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**2014 Commonwealth Short Story Prize. Call for entries. Deadline = 30th November 2013**

This year *Commonwealth Writers* turns its focus solely on the Commonwealth Short Story Prize as a unique award. The Commonwealth Short Story Prize is an annual award for unpublished short fiction administered and funded by the Commonwealth Foundation.

All entries must be in English. Translations of short stories written in languages other than English are eligible if submitted by the writer (not the translator) and provided the translator is a citizen of a Commonwealth country. The story must be original and should not have been previously published anywhere in full or in part. Entries must be 2 000 words minimum, 5 000 words maximum

For full entry rules email [writers@commonwealth.int](mailto:writers@commonwealth.int) or go to: <http://www.commonwealthwriters.org/prizes/commonwealth-short-story-prize/entry-rules/>

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**Junkets Publisher – New Project. Deadline = 31st January 2014**

Junkets Publisher is a small independent South African publisher, founded in 2005 by Robin Malan. In 2009 it was the winner of the Arts & Culture Trust Excellence Award for Literature. It specialises in publishing *The Playscript Series*, new Southern African plays; as well as *The Collected Series*, anthologies of new Southern African plays.

Junkets announces a new project: **African Folktales Onstage!** plays for pre-teens  
Compiled by Fatima Dike, André Lemmer, Robin Malan & Omphile Molusi

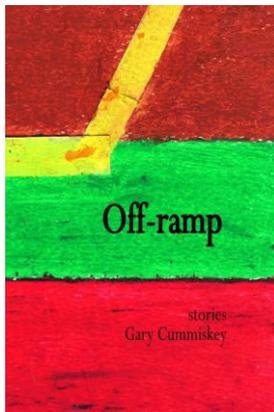
Junkets Publisher is looking for short stage adaptations of African folktales to include in a collection of plays for the upper Grades of the primary school and the lower Grades of the high school, especially for performance or for rehearsed class presentation. For more information contact Robin Malan at [info.junkets@iafrica.com](mailto:info.junkets@iafrica.com). Submissions deadline = **31 January 2014.**

This is not a competition; there are no prizes, there is no money involved at this stage. Junkets is usually a not-for-profit operation, so no fee is offered; instead, contributors will receive a gratis copy of the book. In the unlikely event of there being a profit after all expenses and bookshop discounts are factored in, contributors will be paid a small royalty pro rata. Authors retain the copyright of their individual plays.

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**Members' Publications**

**Off-ramp by Gary Cummiskey**



*Off-ramp* is the debut short fiction collection of Gary Cummiskey and consists of ten stories often characterised by a surreal eroticism. Set mainly in contemporary South Africa, the book opens with a young man's hallucinatory encounter with a derelict in a Johannesburg street; there is a couple's visit to a sinister Free State farm; an editor who reluctantly agrees to meet an aspiring woman writer at midnight; two young men who go on a drinking spree as the country teeters on civil war; a restless teenager who stalks an unknown woman; and a middle-aged academic who engages in an obsessive, sadistic relationship with a prostitute.

The stories offer a vision of individuals slowly being devoured by paranoia and absurdity, while beyond the off-ramp lies an unnameable, perhaps unknowable fear.

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All information regarding awards/competitions, residencies, festivals, etc., included in this newsletter is passed on to you as a service to SA PEN members. Any questions regarding entry rules, entry processes, festival programmes, etc., should be forwarded direct to the relevant organisers. SA PEN attempts to establish that the information received is genuine before passing this on to our members, but we cannot be held responsible should that not be the case.



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Please note that SA PEN Newsletters, from issue no. 1 of 2013 onwards, are henceforth available to members **and** to the public on the SA PEN website at <http://www.sapen.co.za/newsletter-archive>