

To: SA PEN Members

E-Newsletter No. 3/2013 – 03/03/2013



THE SOUTH AFRICAN CENTRE OF
PEN INTERNATIONAL

A World Association of Writers

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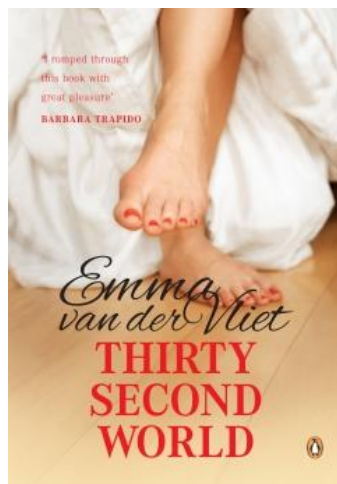
www.sapen.co.za or <http://www.facebook.com/southafricanpen>

CONTENTS:

- Book Launch – *Thirty Second World* by Emma van der Vliet, **15th March, Cape Town**
- International Mother-Tongue Languages Day by Adré Marshall
- Welcome to new members
- January letter from John Ralston Saul, International President, to the PEN membership
- Anne Schuster's 2013 programme of writing workshops, email courses and retreats
- Congratulations to Tan Twan Eng
- *Serbian Literature: An Intimate View*
- Marie Philip resigns from SA PEN's Executive Committee
- Publications received
- International Writers in Prison Committee Caselist – July to December 2012
- Congratulations to Robin Malan
- Forthcoming events
- Member's Publications: *Unspotted* by Justin Fox

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Book Launch – *Thirty Second World* by Emma van der Vliet, **15th March, Cape Town**



Date: Friday, 15th March 2013

Time: 6.00 p.m.

Venue: The Book Lounge, 71 Roeland Street, Cape Town

RSVP: Tel 021 462 2425 / email booklounge@gmail.com

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International Mother-Tongue Languages Day by Adré Marshall

On 21st February, the Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee of PEN International organised various events to celebrate International Mother-Tongue Languages Day. The T&LRC is concerned about the protection of minority languages that have been - or are still being - suppressed, as was the case with Catalan in Spain. In South Africa, we have given official recognition to eleven of our indigenous languages, but we need to encourage both mother-tongue speakers as well as non-speakers of those languages to appreciate the importance of using these languages and preserving our rich linguistic diversity.

According to the chairman of the Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee of PEN International, Josep-Maria Terricabras, the celebration of International Mother-Tongue Languages Day

“helps us to remember that what defines us as human beings is our capacity to speak, and that the particular language we speak - as our own language - shapes us as the people we are.

It is not true that language is only a means of communication. If it were only so, we should all try to speak the same language. However, beyond being an instrument for communication, language is above all the atmosphere in which we all think, love, play, curse, make peace and war. It is precisely this extraordinary depth of language that makes communication possible. Were it not that language gives sense and meaning to our global human life, communication between us would be just some limited, mechanical intercourse. Therefore, we can say, indeed, that in language we live, move and exist.

PEN International's T&LRC formulated the Girona Manifesto on linguistic rights which concludes with a request to the United Nations to recognize the use and protection of each language as a fundamental human right. The Manifesto aims to ensure the right to linguistic diversity as a basic good of humanity. It aims to help citizens and organizations of all countries to realize the enormous importance of linguistic diversity and to engage in its defence.”

SA PEN looks forward to hosting an event to celebrate International Mother-Tongue Languages Day in 2014.

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A warm **welcome to new members**: Jane Raphaely, Michael Morris, Andrew Feinstein, Christa Kuljian, Glynnis Hayward, and Anneke Rautenbach.



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January letter from John Ralston Saul, International President, to the PEN membership

15 February, 2012

Dear PEN members, Dear friends,

As you know, PEN now has a partnership with the Hay Festival network. This means our *Free the Word!* program fits into already existing festivals. And so through literature we are able to get across our messages about free speech, debate, translation, endangered languages, digital standards and so on! This partnership began in October in Xalapa in Veracruz State, Mexico - a difficult place where writers have been dying. The *Free the Word!* events at the Xalapa Hay Festival involved Peter Godwin, the President of the PEN American Center, Wole Soyinka, Michael Jacobs, Jeanette Winterson, Frédéric Martel, and Janne Teller . They ensured that our story was told. There were difficult moments, tense moments involving local powers, when Peter and others ensured that our message was delivered and clear.

I am just back from Colombia, both Bogota and Cartagena. The Hay Festival in Cartagena is a major Latin American event. It is a remarkable gathering of Hispanic writers from all over the Americas. Our former President and recent Nobel, Mario Vargas Llosa, was there, as were Herta Müller, Julian Barnes and David Grossman. PEN was represented by Sergio Ramirez and Gioconda Belli from Nicaragua, Luisa Valenzuela from Argentina, Carlos Vásquez Zawadzki, the President of Colombian PEN, Francine Prose, former President of American PEN and myself. PEN Colombia organized three extra public meetings drawing large numbers of local writers. I was deeply impressed

by the enthusiasm of the Cartagena writing community. Later in Bogota, there were a series of public and internal events in which I also took part.

The primary point is this: PEN needs to be the gathering place for everyone who is tied to writing. Our Centres need to be as big and inclusive and diversified as possible. The days of the “PEN Club” are long over. A strong PEN Centre is not small and inward looking. It is outward looking and acting; and it has the authority of its whole community. A growing number of our Centres have gone one step further by creating categories of associate membership and student membership for readers. After all, literature and freedom of expression belong as much to the reader as they do to the writer.

You may remember a year ago we took a Delegation to Mexico City where close to a hundred writers have been killed, often reporters on small newspapers or radio television stations in the north of the country. Many officials like to say that those killed are neither real writers nor real journalists. I have never understood the point of that argument. Is it less of a crime to kill a lesser known writer than a famous one? From the moment our Delegation arrived, we were asked to clarify who we spoke for, and to do that by defining what we meant by writers. This was expected. I simply said that a writer could be a Nobel Prize winner or a provincial journalist or anyone in between. Period. If we

look at the 850 names on our Writers in Prison Committee Case-List, many are not PEN members, most are not famous literary figures. But they live by language and are dying, being imprisoned or threatened or fired or beaten up for this. They are one of us.

PEN Colombia has taken on the challenge of building a large and diverse Centre. Their membership is growing fast and it is growing around the country. I hope they will become a model for reinforced Latin American PEN Centres, embracing the unknown and the famous, the controversial and the quiet, the established and the emergent. Our impunity program in Latin America, including our new Publishers Circle eBook on Impunity – *Writers Against Impunity* – is filled with the voices of Latin American literature. This book demonstrates just how important it is to gather together all of our community so we can speak publically as one.

A PEN Centre made up of the few leading and well known writers will have difficulty fulfilling its mandate because it has not reached out to embrace the community and perhaps those most at risk. Equally, a PEN Centre which does not include the leading writers or those writers who are at risk will have great difficulty fulfilling its mandate. After all, those writers who have the confidence of the public are key to our message. And those at risk are most in need of our umbrella. And we can never know when and where the courage of freedom of expression will most be needed. Of course, this inclusive

approach won't work everywhere. Centres functioning inside dictatorships may find it impossible to gather everyone in, as will Centres that exist in exile. But these are exceptions to the rule. What we all share is our desire to reinforce all of our Centres in order to strengthen their influence and the influence of PEN International.

The most common challenge is that writers and publishers are divided in a myriad of ways. There is always the standard local version of left versus right. But aside from extreme positions such as promoting violence and hatred – which break our Charter – these sorts of divisions are not PEN's business. We stand for literature and free expression. This is a big umbrella. We are not members of our PEN Centres or of PEN International because we agree politically, but because we believe in literature and free expression. And we believe that these belong to readers and listeners.



We can reinforce our Latin American Centres by doing just this – by reaching out to our full community in each country and by creating powerful coalitions of writers of all sorts who respect and believe in our Charter. As the crisis of impunity seems to be spreading, this reinforcement is essential.

With best wishes,
John Ralston Saul

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Anne Schuster's 2013 programme of writing workshops, email courses and retreats is available at www.anneschuster.co.za or email anne@kingsley.co.za.

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Congratulations to **Tan Twan Eng** on being **shortlisted for the 2012 Man Asian Literary Prize** for *The Garden of the Evening Mists*. The winner of the award will be announced on the 14th March in Hong Kong. Good luck!

Tan Twan Eng will be participating in this week's Dubai Festival of Literature.

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Serbian Literature: An Intimate View

Dear friends,

We are glad to inform you that you can now see the movie *Serbian Literature: An Intimate View* - which premiered at the 77th International PEN Congress in Belgrade 2011. Go to <http://www.serbianpen.rs/e-intimno.shtml>

Hoping you will enjoy it, we are sending you best regards,

Neda Nikolic Bobic, General Secretary
Ana Imsirovic Djordjevic, Administrative Secretary
Serbian PEN Centre
pencentar@ptt.rs / www.serbianpen.rs

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Marie Philip resigns from SA PEN's Executive Committee

Marie Philip and her late husband David, both revered members of SA PEN, published "books that matter" over many years, thereby encouraging literature and defending free-expression. Since 2003 Marie has served on our Executive Committee with distinction and it is with deep regret that I have accepted her recent resignation from that role. Marie remains a member of SA PEN, remains supportive of what we do, and makes the very good point that the organisation needs younger writers on its Board. We hear you Marie, and will be taking considered action during the coming year.

Thank you for loyal services to SA PEN.



Anthony Fleischer, President, SA PEN

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Publications received

SA PEN has received the following publication/s. Should you wish to read any of them please contact Deborah on rudebs@icon.co.za

- *Carapace 93*, December 2012

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International Writers in Prison Committee Caselist – July to December 2012



The latest edition of the six monthly caselist detailing over 870 cases of attacks on writers, journalists, poets, publishers and editors is now available via <http://www.pen-international.org/campaigns/how-to-campaign/caselist/>

Over the whole year in 2012, the Committee monitored over 870 attacks:

- 14 writers and journalists killed clearly in relation to their professions
- Another 31 murdered where the circumstances are not clear
- 157 writers are serving long prison terms for their writings in countries including China, Vietnam, Turkey, Eritrea and Uzbekistan
- Another 133 are detained whose cases are under investigation by PEN
- Around 10% of the long term prisoners were freed before the end of their sentences.
- 170 are on trial without being imprisoned
- Other abuses include death threats, imprisonment for short periods and harassment.

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Congratulations to **Robin Malan**. His children's book, *Sonny Jim and his Sister*, published by Songololo has been selected from the Western Cape Education Department's approved list to be transcribed in Braille, printed in large-print and read into audio format on CD, to be supplied free to the libraries of visually impaired schools in South Africa.

And his teen novel, *My Funny Brother*, published by Junkets Publisher has been named one of the Bookchat Books of the Year 2012.

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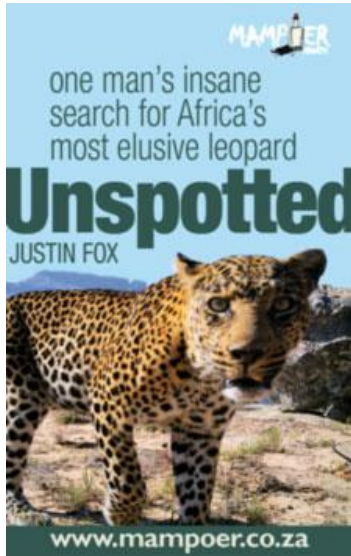
Forthcoming events

- ❖ **Woordfees** – 1st to 10th March 2013, Stellenbosch. www.woordfees.co.za
- ❖ **Dubai Festival of Literature** – 5th to 9th March 2013. www.eaifl.com
- ❖ **Mandela Bay Book Fair** - 15th to 17th March 2013, Port Elizabeth
- ❖ **Time of the Writer International Writers Festival** – 18th to 23rd March 2013, Durban. www.cca.ukzn.ac.za
- ❖ **Knysna Literary Festival** – 19th to 24th March 2013. www.knysnaliteraryfestival.co.za

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Member's Publications

Unspotted by Justin Fox



Quinton Martins is a patient man, if only when it comes to the Cape mountain leopard. In the harsh mountains of the Cederberg, he spends months in icy cold conditions tracking them, often with as little to go on as faint *spoor* or partially decomposed scat. Author Justin Fox spends time in the Cederberg with this half-man, half-leopard, conservationist, to learn more about the madness that keeps Quinton in the mountains day in and day out.

This E-book can be purchased at <http://mampoer.co.za/justin-fox-titles/unspotted>. Price \$2,99.

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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.

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