

From the Kitchen

26 May 2010



Happy Birthday to this blog. One year ago tomorrow I wrote the first 'From the Kitchen' and this blog was born.

It started with a crazy idea of becoming a writer in residence at a Mount Eliza café, to write, drink coffee, talk to people about writing, eat cakes and talk to people about writing. The café changed owners on 1st July last year, but I'm still there. I'm in the process of collecting the first 52 columns into a book and launching it at the café in July. I'll let you know when and where and send you an invitation.

It has been an interesting journey for me. I enjoy the freedom to write what grabs me in the moment while, at the same time, making it interesting for others. I've indulged in deep personal reflection; shallower reflection; satire; social commentary and criticism; commentary on books, film and theatre; fantasy; and descriptions of the natural and invented worlds. I've enjoyed the comments – both those fit for publishing on the blog and those that weren't, and I've received much encouragement from readers.

I have also enjoyed reviewing books and it is my hope that the reviews, interspersed with the weekly Kitchen offerings, will have prompted some of you to take a book to bed, or somewhere else comfortable. There will be two new reviews posted before the end of May.

This week I am putting the finishing touches to a book for young teens, in time to submit it to a publisher early next month. I am still writing short stories and poetry and submitting works to competitions (with continuing success). My one exploration of horror, in the form of a short story 'The Candle Suicides', was recently published in the anthology [Shades of Sentience](#). Two other stories ('Diversity' and 'Dust Storm') are to be published in an anthology by Smink Works Books. 'Dead' was published in [Award Winning Australian Writing 2008](#).

Last year I completed a short story ('Escape from Austranita') which is a 'pilot' for my next big project: a novel set in a near-future Australia which has fallen apart and is at war with itself. I see warning signs of this actually happening and I hope to encourage people to take note and take appropriate positive action. Social changes tend to creep up on us slowly, as do advances in political madness and the erosion of rights and freedoms. I am heartened that others are also sounding such warnings, such as retired judge Ken Crispin in his book [The Quest for Justice](#), which is about to be released.

Writing plays also still turns me on and I've had two ten-minute plays 'performed' (by Crash Test Drama in Fitzroy) in moved readings – professional actors look at the script for half an hour and then perform with script in hand and with minimal set and props. It was a wonderful way of seeing what I've written put to the test.

I feel that this is my year for forging into more public recognition. However, like most luck in life, it is wise to give it a helping hand. The July launch of *A Year From the Kitchen* is part of that helping hand – lots of promotion and invitations to get out there into publicity land. So watch for me on *Sunrise*, listen to me on ABC Radio and read about me in the newspapers and on-line forums. After decades of writing and honing my skills, I will eventually be an overnight success. Don't misunderstand me – I write to write, but getting published and paid for it will allow me to do just that (writing) if it's what I choose. The time is also right for me to put more energy into getting my photos out there – framed prints in restaurants, prints for sale through a dedicated website and elsewhere. I feel I'm on a roll.

So how will my world look on 27th May 2011? I'll have a novel published as well as a collection of short stories, a syndicated column in newspapers and a regular gig in a journal. I'll have a full-length play in rehearsal and a radio play broadcast. If success is achieving what I set out to achieve, then I already feel successful. After all, success is not something static, but an ongoing adventure. Each time I reach one of my goals, I am already looking towards the horizon to pinpoint my next one. However, none of this would be as much fun without the companionship and support of my wife and family. I am surrounded by riches.