

December 2006**Contents**

[Welcome to new contributors](#)
[A snapshot of the year](#)
[Celebrating a centenary!](#)
[Writers in Schools programme](#)
[Glitter and gaiety at Learning Media](#)
[Contributor function 2007](#)
[Contributor profile: Lisa Fuemana](#)

[Contributor profile: Dylan Coburn](#)
[Māori writers' workshop](#)
[Artwork samples wanted](#)
[Meet Learning Media staff](#)
[Finance update](#)
[Birthday request from Tauranga Writers Group](#)



Welcome to our last newsletter for 2006! To send feedback on the trial html version, please [email us](#). Read on to find out about some of the things your hard work has helped us to achieve – not least 100 years of the School Journal! We hope very much to see you at next year's centenary celebrations.
Gillian Candler, CEO

Welcome to new contributors

We would especially like to welcome all those who haven't yet submitted work to us but are interested in doing so. We hope you'll find some useful insights in this newsletter. Full guidelines for submitting contributions to us are in the [Authors and Artists](#) section of our website. We recommend you check the [Series Guidelines](#) to see the types of content required, and send a brief outline of your proposal to the relevant editor before submitting material. We are always keen to see work from new writers/artists and wish you every success.

A snapshot of the year

To give you an overview of what's been happening at Learning Media, here are a few statistics from our latest Annual Report. Between 1 July 2005 and 30 June 2006, Learning Media has:

- Produced a total of 3,865,527 items for all its clients and partners, in a range of media
- Developed and published 177 resources for the Ministry of Education
- Developed 102 resources for publication or distribution overseas
- Facilitated professional development in 284 schools with 3,279 teachers
- Involved teachers from more than 40 primary schools and early childhood centres and 37 Māori-medium schools in trials of resources or working parties to develop them
- Developed and published or reprinted 336 resources for the Ministry of Health and related health organisations
- Sponsored 33 NZ Book Council visits to schools throughout New Zealand by 29 writers and artists, enjoyed by 5,347 students
- Sponsored performances of Taki Rua's te reo Māori tour or Taki Rauakura E to 11,450 learners of te reo Māori nationwide

Celebrating a centenary!

We're planning many celebrations to mark next year's centenary of the iconic School Journal, believed to be the longest running serial publication for children in the world. These include:



Exhibition:

An exhibition, including artwork from the School Journal and other artefacts from Archives New Zealand, will be held at the National Library Gallery in Wellington from 20 April – 22 July 2007. It will be curated by Gregory O'Brien (poet, anthologist, art writer and painter) and poet Jenny Bornholdt.

Book:

A lavishly illustrated 150-page hard-cover book by Gregory O'Brien will be released in May 2007. It will explore the Journal's significant contribution to New Zealand's artistic and literary history and the ways it has reflected social and cultural changes over the last hundred years. To request more information on the book, email cs@learningmedia.co.nz or phone 0800 800 565.

School competition:

As part of the School Journal Centenary, we ran a competition for primary aged school children around NZ so they could be part of our centenary issues of the Journal too. The theme was "In A 100 Years Time..." We had over 1000 entries!

The winners were:

Brittany Dick - Richmond School, Nelson

Wilson Cowie - Fendalton Open Air Primary School, Christchurch

Maddy Ross - Maraekakaho School, Hastings

Lucy Davy - Ponsonby Intermediate School, Auckland

These students will have their writing published in the May edition of the School Journal.

For more details of centenary celebrations [see our website](#)

Writers in Schools Programme

Learning Media sponsors the NZ Book Council's Writers in Schools programme, which provides visits to schools by top New Zealand authors and illustrators. A third of all the writers and illustrators who participated in last year's Writers in Schools programme have at some time been published by Learning Media.

The aim of these visits is to fire up imaginations and encourage young people's creativity. We hope that they will inspire students to become Learning Media contributors too! To find out more about this programme see the Book Council's [website](#) and to register your interest in participating as a visiting author/illustrator, please contact: [Theresa Crewsdon](#) on 04 499 1569

Glitter and gaiety at Learning Media

On Thursday 8 June 2006 around sixty writers, illustrators and photographers joined thirty Learning Media staff at our new premises in Willeston Street, Wellington for the annual contributors' function. While mostly Wellington-based contributors were present, there were a few 'out-of-towners' there – illustrator Fraser Williamson flew down from Auckland for the event.

The formalities were few – Gillian Candler spoke a few words of welcome and contributors were invited on a tour of the three floors of our new premises. The rest of the evening was full of animated discussion, laughter and enthusiastic consumption of food and drink. The last guests were reluctantly ushered out at the door about 9pm.

And the glitter? This was the finishing touch to the room decoration – a carpet of glitter on the floor.



Contributor function 2007

A date for your diary... Next year's function for contributors will be in Wellington on 30 May, while the School Journal exhibition is showing. We will send more details nearer the time. We hope to see you there!

Contributor profile: Lisa Fuemana

Author

Fakaalofa lahi atu and warm Pasifika greetings.

My father is of Niue descent and comes from the village of Mutalau. My mother is of Sāmoan and Irish descent. I was born in the tiny village of Malaemi, in American Sāmoa, and my early years were shared between Malaemi and Niue Island.



When I turned seven, my father moved his family to New Zealand, and I began to learn to read and speak English at school. The memories of this time are not happy ones. Books seemed to have no connection to my culture or language – what did I know of “red fire engines”? I did learn to love books, but only after I had spent several painful years trying to make sense of how the stories in them related to my new environment.

I encountered the same difficulty when looking for books for my son Ali. I found none connected with his Pasifika heritage, and so I started writing my own stories about life in the islands. It was a joy to offer these to my three boys, Ali, Ezra, and Iziq, as they were growing up.

It was when I “accidentally” attended a Learning Media writers’ workshop that I realised I wanted to write stories about the lives of Pasifika children in Aotearoa. I was working as a lecturer in the Auckland College of Education’s Pasifika early childhood programme, and a colleague who knew about my writing “snuck” me into the workshop. (I don’t think Don Long, Learning Media’s Pasifika resources editor at the time, would have minded!) At the workshop, I was introduced to an outstanding Niue-Sāmoan children’s author by the name of Lino Nelisi, and I was inspired!

I had my first story, *First Hair Cut*, published by Learning Media in 1998. It was followed by many more, mainly in the Tupu series. At present, I am delighted that Learning Media will soon be publishing my first children’s play, based on the characters of Niue native land crabs.

It has not always been a successful journey. I once sent a batch of five stories to Learning Media and all were rejected, which felt devastating. Now and again, however, a letter of acceptance is received. These are treasured moments, and I embrace them for as long as I can.

I am very interested in how humour can be incorporated into children’s lives, and this is evident in just about all my stories. Using a lot of humour as part of my own child-rearing practice has helped reduce the impact of those awkward moments that could be life-scarring.

My passion is writing material that is meaningful to children’s learning, relevant to their environment, and captures the humour of their innocence. Happily, my boys help with my writing; drafts are always submitted to my ten-year-old son Iziq before Learning Media sees them!

Ia manuia lava
Lisa Fuemana

Contributor profile: Dylan Coburn

Illustrator and animator

Director of [Karactaz Limited](#)

Ever since I can remember I've been drawing. As a kid I grew up with Batman and Hulk comics – and was completely obsessed with superheroes in general. I was consistently drawing character-based artwork. Luckily, it led to a career in animation and illustration.

After completing two years of a design degree at Wellington Polytechnic (now Massey), in 1995 I got a job at an animation production company called Gnome Productions as an Assistant Animator working on Disney TV productions. Donald Duck was my first task, and then I went on work on the Lion King series – Timon and Pumbaa. I then animated on the Hairy Maclary direct-to-video series and following that got a job animating commercials on a full-time basis for a company called No Straight Lines. After three years as the Supervising Animator at NSL I travelled overseas for a while, and quickly realized I needed to come home and start my own business. This would hopefully ensure I had creative control over the projects I was working on.

So – in 2000 I created Karactaz as a sole-trading brand and operated as an animator and illustrator for hire on a contractual basis. This is when I started to illustrate for Learning Media – and I have to thank Penny Newman for trusting me with my first assignment – Penny you rock! Actually as I write this, I'm in the middle of completing a job for Penny, so I'm happy to say I've enjoyed many years working with Learning Media and they offered great support when I was starting out.

After two years of sole-trading I produced a 30-minute animated film called "The Underwater Melon Man". This enabled me to start a limited liability company – so Karactaz Limited was established in 2002. The team I put together for Karactaz Limited is an incredible crew of creative and technical wizards. To date we have won four international awards for animated television commercials, and look forward to many more awards as we keep improving our skills.

The biggest challenge is to keep my crew busy while operating out of Wellington (such a small local market), and that's why many of our clients at this stage are from the UK, the US, and Australia. I've done a lot of travelling to secure great business – but it's when I get to work for my home country that I'm most happy.

I think it's amusing that after all my professional experience I'm still doing pretty much exactly what I was doing as a kid. Basically – I'm still completely obsessed with inspirational visual storytelling, and I'm on a continuous and evolving quest to create new and exciting characters. You have to be very tenacious to make it in the animation and illustration industry, but on reflection – it's totally worth it.



Māori Writers' Workshop

In March 2007 we will be running a Māori Writers Workshop at Takapuwahia Marae. The aim of this is to encourage people to write about contemporary Māori themes in English for our School Journals. If you know someone who may be interested in participating, email susie.ballantyne@learningmedia.co.nz

Artwork samples wanted

Please could our existing illustrators, photographers and designers provide us with four digital images of work for our new portfolios database. The database will help our Art Editors to select a suitable contributor for each project. We already have work from many of you, but we are inviting you to select the images you wish to represent you. Each image should be in either jpeg or pdf format, and no larger than 900 kb. (Images will be used for reference only.) Please e-mail the four images (plus your website url if you have one), to illustrators@learningmedia.co.nz. If you have not worked for Learning Media before, we are still interested in seeing your material. For guidelines on sending in your portfolio, please refer to our web page for [new illustrators](#). Thank you!

Meet Learning Media staff

Emma and Susie have just started new roles with us at Learning Media.



Emma Hopkinson-Sneddon

Project Manager, Publishing Sales Products

I have worked at Learning Media on and off for the past nine years, taking breaks here and there to study, travel, try different careers and just recently to have a baby! Luckily enough, I have always found myself back at Learning Media, and recently found my niche in the Publishing Sales Products team as a Project Manager. Organising other people is what I enjoy doing best, and when I'm not project managing at Learning Media, I'm project managing (or nagging as it's known to my partner) my family and my new home in Strathmore, Wellington. I may have met some of you already through IP clearance work and other communications, and I'm looking forward to working with more contributors in the future!



Susie Ballantyne

Programme Manager, Materials for Learners

Kia ora everyone! I am the contact and central person for my team of editors, who put together ongoing series such as the School Journal, Ready to Read, and Pasifika resources. I support them with their contracts and ensure that systems are working well so that the intended resource is put out on time. I also work with other managers to ensure that Learning Media continues to be a thriving company. I recently came from 10 years of teaching in the classroom and offer an educator's viewpoint on issues. I was a Deputy Principal locally for four years and worked on improving literacy teaching and learning with my staff and school cluster. I also worked closely with our community to share educational information and ran training workshops. It is very exciting to be working with the resources that I so much enjoyed using in the classroom. I look forward to meeting and working with you sometime.

Finance update

Payments are made around the 5th and 20th of each month. (Please bear with us in the case of occasional hiccups.) You have all been great at getting invoices to us on time, which is much appreciated. If you have any queries regarding payments please feel free to contact me: Helen Cordalis in Accounts Payable on 04 472 5522 x 8254.

Birthday request from Tauranga Writers Group

Tauranga Writers Group is also celebrating a big birthday in 2007, when it will be 40 years old. The group is seeking to contact old members and to find out about local writers (past and present) in preparation for the birthday celebrations. Please email secretary@taurangawriters.org.nz to get in touch.