

Arnold Zable was born in New Zealand and grew up in the inner Melbourne suburb of Carlton. He attended Melbourne University and Columbia University, and has travelled extensively in the USA, Europe and Asia. Formerly a lecturer in the Arts faculty at Melbourne University, Arnold Zable is now a freelance writer and teacher of creative writing. He is well-known as a dynamic and compelling storyteller, with a tremendous ability to engage his audience. Arnold Zable is the author of *Jewels and Ashes*, which traces his search for his family and culture, and *Café Scheherazade*, a novel that roams between past and present, Australia and Europe.

Ruth Hellier lives in a house called Plumtree Cottage in Victoria's Western District. She has worked in the welfare industry and as information collector and collator, plus many lowly paid clerical positions all of which gave her background for the many short stories and essays that she has written. Known as a woman with a social conscience, Ruth writes regularly for the *Hamilton Spectator* and enjoys being known as a "stirrer" and "red ragger". Ruth is back at the Book Fair Debate by popular demand.

Rob Barfus has, until recently, been editor/writer with Port Fairy's *Moyné Gazette*. Rob is well-known in local government circles as CEO of the Municipal Association of Victoria.

Lynne Strahan – poet/author/historian/gardener. Lynne has written several books including histories of Williamstown and Malvern. 'Stone music' which features Lynne's poetry and husband Brian Dunlop's

paintings was published recently. Another book, based on Lynne's gardening column as her alter ego, *Rugosa*, will be published by Penguin later this year. She lives to the west of Port Fairy in a house surrounded by an exquisite garden.

Barry Jones was Member for Lalor in federal parliament from 1977-1998, and before that a Victorian State MP for many years. He was also Federal President of the Australian Labor Party until recent times. Author of *Sleepers, wake!* a clarion call to Australians about the future of the country, Barry Jones has been part of this country's culture for many years. He is remembered for his appearances on BP Pick-a-Box but is known and respected in latter times as an honest politician, great thinker and Australian Republican.

Christina Hindhaugh lives in "red gum" country in Victoria's west with her farmer husband. Her books include, *Life wasn't meant to be easy* (about her sister, Tamie Fraser), *I Love a Sunburnt Torso*, *For Better, For Worse*, and *For Lunch*. She is well-known as a public speaker and travels around Australia speaking about her life and books. Her latest book, *The Great Herb Tour* introduces the reader to herb growers all around the globe. From warm hospitality in America to grand chateaux in France the book reveals much about the growers and the plants they love. Told with a large helping of wit.

Peter McFarlane, from Adelaide, has written both poetry and fiction for younger readers, including: *A Book to Write Poems By*, *Doing Bombers off the Jetty*, *Blue Light Clear Atoms Among Ants*, *Between Bees Young Readers*, (all published by Harper

Collins) *Rebecca the Wrecker*, *Betty the Balloon Buster*, *Bruce the Goose*, *Soula the Ruler*, *The Tin House*, *Bomber Boy*, *Catastrophe Jones*, *The Flea*, *Lovebird*, *The Enemy you Killed*, *More than a Game*, (all published by Penguin) *Art of Writing and Exploring the Writer's Craft Books 1 and 2* (on the writing of fiction). Peter has moved from writing poetry to writing fiction for younger writers. He currently spends a lot of time in running workshops in both poetry and fiction and has been doing the author talk with lots of variations all around Australia for the last few years. Peter loves the coast of Australia, in particular Port Elliot.

Simon Griffiths has established himself as a leading photographer of gardens, food and interiors. His work includes collaborations with Paul Bangay (*The Defined Garden: The Garden Design of Paul Bangay*), Susan Irvine (*Rose Gardens of Australia*), Maggie's Table (Maggie Beer) and Sarah Guest (*Gardens of Australia*), and many others. Simon gained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Photography in 1989. He has travelled extensively and his work takes him all around the world as well as to the more remote areas of this country. Of special interest to Port Fairy and district residents is the fact that Simon is a descendant of Jonathan Griffiths, an early pioneer in the town. (Griffiths Island is named after his son, John.)

Joan van Loon Joan Van Loon is a well-known childrens writer. Her book, *Anyone can cook*, written with chef Gabriel Gate and Chantal Stewart has helped many young cooks. (It won an award too.) Her other books include *White Cockatoos*, and *The chocolate lovers* - the latter also with Gabriel Gate.

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