

-CAMOOWEAL DROVERS' CAMP FESTIVAL
The 2018, '*Bronze Spur Award*' for Written Bush Poetry

JUDGES' REPORT

Firstly, thanks must go to the Camooweal Drovers' Camp for continuing to hold this iconic written competition and in particular to Ellen Finlay, the Drovers' poetry co-ordinator for her loyal, on-going support for bush poetry both written and performance. Thanks must also go to Isa 4WD Parts and Repairs for helping to make this year's competition possible and to my fellow judge Ken Knuth.

It has been a delight to adjudicate for this year's *Bronze Spur Award* and both Ken and I would class this to be one of the highest level and therefore hardest competitions that we have judged.

There was such a diversity of subjects from both past and present. There were stories of human endeavours, of Man/animal relationships, of country activities, of the land and its harshness, of concerns and characters and of dramas from both war and peace. The topics ranged from very serious to humorous and the majority of poems were well suited to the specific entry requirement, "*Poems to be keyed to the theme of rural Australia, its people, animals, way of life and values.*"

As always, technical skills did bring some poems down and prevented some potential prize-winners from succeeding. When a poem is presented orally, it is sometimes possible to adjust minor glitches, but when a poem is written on the page, any inconsistencies are revealed. If success in competitions is sought, it should be the aim of each poet to present his/her work so that it does not impair the readers' (including the judges') responses.

The most common errors, as in most competitions, were with Rhyme and Metre. Where critiques were sought, the individual inconsistencies have been pointed out to the poets' concerned. For all who feel that they wrote good stories but who do not yet fully appreciate the intricacies of the twin pillars of our *genre*, a lot of assistance is available from the ABPA website, www.abpa.org.au. In the 'Techniques' section you can access David Campbell's article *From a Judge's Desk* while the late Ellis Campbell's thirteen articles covering all aspects of skill development, are there to be worked through. Other help can be obtained from judges' reports in the 'Events and Results' section and I refer you in particular to the Dunedoo Report (2017 4th March) where there are specific details re many common errors.

Most successful writers are more than willing to pass on what they have gleaned through trial and experience and if you feel the need and have the chance to attend a workshop with a respected bush poet, please do so because they have learned from those who helped them in this way.

The top twelve poems were outstanding and congratulations to the winners on your achievement against such a strong field of contenders. Also, congratulations to everyone who entered. If you did not succeed this time, due to the hard work of Ellen and other organisers Australia-wide, there is always another place, another year and another chance to develop your work through the beneficial medium of written competition. Please accept the opportunities we writers are given.

Thank you from Ken and me for sharing your thoughts, emotions and stories in the 2019 Camooweal Drovers' Camp *Bronze Spur Award*.

Brenda Joy

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RESULTS OF THE 2018 *Bronze Spur Award*

1st Place Getter – Winner

Terry Piggott, Western Australia -- *A Time of Healing*

A beautifully written poem that conveys the deep sentiment of a woman's grieving for her lost child. It also embraces the concept of the curative power of being in harmony with Nature in the solitude and grandeur of the Australian Outback. This is a poem with depth that evokes a heartfelt and emotional response.

2nd Place Getter – Runner up

Kay Gorring, Queensland – *The Stockman's Choice*

A beautiful, lilting poem that touches the heart. Written with a simplicity suited to the personification of a war horse as narrator, the author brings forth the deep relationship between a man and the animal he loves and the trauma of their enforced parting. The ending is poignant and enduring.

3rd Place Getter

Wendy Seddon, Queensland – *My 1942*

As soldiers fight in distant lands, the women left behind fight the harsh landscape of relentless drought and the pathos of knowing that they may never see their husbands and sons again. Stoically, as country people do, they endure for the sake of the children and the hope for a future. These ideas are well expressed in this poem.

Highly Commended

Tom McIlveen, New South Wales – *Riley's Billy Lids*

In this well-written poem, the poet effectively portrays that through compassion, a station/bushman is able to turn the life of a Koori Boy around and win his love and respect in a relationship enduring beyond the physical.

Highly Commended

Helen Harvey, New South Wales – *Bullocky*

This beautiful, melodic poem of the cross-reliance of man and working team, echoes with the sounds and the spirit of the bush of the past.

Highly Commended

Catherine Lee, Thailand – *Feathered Arsonist*

The eagle with cunning and guile, oblivious to the devastation his actions have caused, is skilfully portrayed as possessing the detachment and single-mindedness of the brutal, supreme master-hunter at one with his world.

Highly Commended

Don Crane, Queensland– *Horsley's Mate*

A poem with an unusual structure containing pertinent country images, this eulogy for a best mate effectively expresses the close relationship and respect that developed between two men who worked together on the land.