



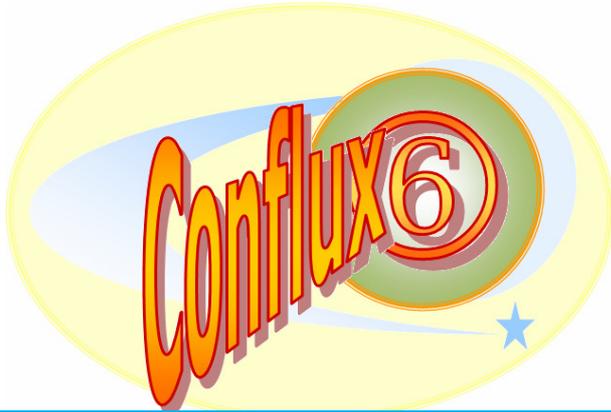
conflux@6

**TOP
SECRET**

PROGRESS REPORT 2

**SPECULATIVE FICTION
CONVENTION
THE MARQUE HOTEL CANBERRA**

**Friday 2 October to
Monday 5 October 2009**



SECRETS

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The Conflux logo used on the cover was created by Jane Virgo.	

Please visit our website for all the
secrets about CONFLUX 6 at
www.conflux.org.au

From the Chair

There have been so many exciting developments over the last three months! We are very pleased to announce our Author Guest of Honour - Emily Rodda (Jennifer Rowe). You will find more details about Emily Rodda and our other special Guests inside this issue.

The program is certainly filling fast, with all sorts of interesting panels, talks, demonstrations, activities, reflective and fun items on offer. Check out our website for all the details (thanks to our webmaster Stuart Herring), and do check back for program updates.

If you have any ideas, or would like to be involved in an item or panel, I would certainly appreciate hearing from you. I can be contacted at Chair@conflux.org.au

See you in Canberra!

Karen Herkes

The Committee

Phill Berrie
Ross Hamilton
Karen Herkes
Stuart Herring
April Herzog
Simon Petrie
Gillian Polack
Cat Sparks (Official Ninjaz liaison)
Jane Virgo



OUR CONVENTION THEME FOR 2009

“SECRETS”

Each year the committee chooses a theme to be used as the basis of programming, fun and puns! This year we have chosen “Secrets” as our theme. “Secrets” covers all things mysterious and clandestine! As you will see from the Program section, we are already finding some interesting material to work with. So why not come along and join in the fun! Who knows what will be revealed...

CONFLUX GUESTS OF HONOUR

We are very pleased to welcome these guests to Conflux 6:

EMILY RODDA



Photo by Michael Small

Emily Rodda is one of Australia's most successful and popular authors for children and has outstanding success with her Deltora Quest and Rowan novels and more recently her Rondo series. She has won the Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year Award (Younger Readers) a record five times and in 1995 she received the Dromkeen Medal for services to Australian children's literature. Her best-selling Deltora Quest series has sold over 10 million copies world wide, with 3 million copies distributed in Australia alone. The success of this series has been far-reaching including it being published in 32 countries and translated into 25 languages. Her latest Rondo series is a trilogy and is also proving to be extraordinarily successful. Her first book, *The Key to Rondo* was shortlisted for

Book of Year (Younger Readers) in the Children's Book Council of Australia's 2008 Awards and the Patricia Wrightson Prize in 2008 New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards and was the winner for Best Children's (8-12 years) Long Fiction in the 2007 Aurealis Awards. The *Wizard of Rondo* was published in October 2008 and the final book in the trilogy will be *The Battle of Rondo* due for release in October 2009. Emily Rodda's real name Jennifer Rowe, first began writing as a small child and continued that passion by becoming involved in the book industry as an editor and publisher. She was later the editor of the *Australian Women's Weekly*. For the past 15 years she has been a full time writer.

JAMES MINZ



Photo by Ellen Datlow

James Minz was recently alarmed to discover that he has been working in publishing for more than fifteen years. It all began in a dark and dreary basement in Madison, Wisconsin, where he started out as a lowly ~~slave~~ intern for James Frenkel. By the time he left four years later, the offices had been transplanted to a bright and cheery attic (fully finished and everything). While there he worked in a

wide variety of capacities--mostly as an editorial assistant, literary agent and packager of anthologies, including co-packager of the highly regarded annual *The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror* edited by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling (at least it was still Windling at that time). In September 1997, the siren song of the New York City publishing scene was simply too strong to resist, and he joined the editorial staff of Tom Doherty Associates (i.e. Tor, Forge, Orb, etc.) as David Hartwell's assistant. After several years of working on way too many books in way too small a window of time, he had accumulated enough of a list of his own authors to justify his very own job as a full Editor. Coffee, cake and scotch ensued. After they were all gone, there was nothing left to do but join the other German publishing empire, so on January 31, 2005, Herr Minz joined the editorial staff of Del Rey Books of the Random House Publishing Group (i.e. he moved from Holtzbrinck to Bertelsmann). After a couple years with the largest publishing company in the US, it was time to move on. So on the centennial of Heinlein's birth, Minz joined Baen Books as Senior Editor. And he has been there ever since...

Authors he has worked with include Catherine Asaro, Hal Duncan, Terry Goodkind, Elizabeth Haydon, Nancy Kress, Elizabeth Moon, Frederik Pohl, Robert J. Sawyer, Harry Turtledove, Jack Williamson, and Gene Wolfe, among many others. Of course, that includes a number of Antipodeans, such as John Birmingham, Stephen Dedman, Jennifer Fallon, Penelope Love, Sean McMullen, Graham Sharp Paul, Jane Routley, Lucy Sussex, not to mention a few transplants to Aus, such as Paul Brandon and Jack Dann. He also had the distinct pleasure of working on *Centaurus*, the US edition of *Dreaming Down Under* and George Turner's final novel.

MARC MCBRIDE



Marc McBride was educated in Northern Ireland at Bangor Grammar School. Graduating in 1990, he moved to Western Australia to study design at Curtin University.

Marc graduated in 1994; his final year project was the design and manufacture of *Dracula's Castle* at Adventure World in Perth. Working as a set designer for television commercials and short films, Marc was the winner of the 1995 WA film and Video festival for Best Art Direction.

In between his design work he painted murals for various restaurants across Asia including the Dome Cafes. He also began illustrating for magazines. This association soon led him to book illustration where he has illustrated some one hundred and fifty book covers and nine picture books. Marc has had work exhibited with the New York Society of Illustrators and won the Aurealis Award for Excellence for the *Deltora Quest* series and, more recently, for *World of Monsters*.

His latest book is *Secrets of Deltora*, an illustrated travel guide through the world of Deltora.

*Our special Sunday evening
guests are*

Ninjaz with Attitude



Ninjaz with Attitude are Shinoko Chikara, Hammermoto Chikara and Tadaki Chikara. Says Shinoko:

I was born a ninja. It's a common misconception that ninja are trained to be ninja and then are thus ninja, no. Ninja are a race, the inhabitants of planet Ninjitsu. We've always dug the music from Earth though, so a lot of ninja have come here seeking awesomeness.

Ninjaz with Attitude describe their musical influences:

Limp Bizkit (without a lame frontman), Judas Priest (without the leather), Eminem (without the boring live show), Faith No More are awesome. Queen inspire us as a live act, also ACDC and The Red Hot Chili Peppers. We are the concentrated essence of everything that was awesome about these bands and nothing that made them crap.

Thank you to Cat Sparks for acting as Ninjaz liaison (appropriately for a 'secrets' themed convention) for Conflux this year.

**Also a panel of Canberra
Region writers as special
guests (details to be
announced next PR!)**

At the Marque

Conflux 6 will be held at the beautiful Marque Hotel, on Northbourne Avenue Canberra. Please reserve your rooms early, as last year the Hotel was booked out. Room rates will be available on the Conflux Website.



THE VIRTUAL MINICON

The second Conflux Virtual MiniCon was held on the first weekend in August 2008.

Guests included Ellen Datlow, Sherwood Smith, Jackie French and Kevin J Anderson. We had a lot of fun, and we hope everyone else did. The MiniCon forums are still available on line and make a great read. If you want to read more, go to www.conflux.org.au/forum

This year's Virtual Conflux Mini-Con will be held on **Sunday 30th August 2009, from 9am to 5pm**. The Forum program and guests for this year are:

9am to 9.30am -	Welcome
9.30 to 10.30am	Liz Argall
10.30 to 11.30am	Gillian Polack
11.30 to 12.30pm	Richard Harland
12.30 to 1.30pm	James Minz
1.30 to 2.30pm	Maxine McArthur
2.30 to 3.30pm	Bruce R Gillespie
3.30 to 4.30pm	Cat Sparks
4.30 to 5pm	Gillian Polack and Stuart Herring.

Last year we had a “Speakeasy” forum for general conversation, this year we will have the “Secret Meeting Place”! More details about the Virtual Mini-con will be available on our website.

THE CONFLUX 6 PROGRAM

A full program of Panels, Workshops, Author readings, a mass book signing, and other events are being planned.

With your feedback in mind, the program will include Workshops on Friday, single programming for special items such as guest’s talks and book launches, and an expanded “Creative Corner”.

If you have an idea for an item or a panel, or would like to be involved (yes, we do need Panel Moderators and Panellists), please contact Karen Herkes.

Some of the Program and special items include:

- Panels and items about writing, art, media, fandom and publishing matters. In fact, there are panels on all sorts of topics...
- Book launches
- The Astounding Race – A treasure and secret scavenger hunt with special prizes announced at the closing ceremony.
- A Panel “Help, a dingo ate our Prime Minister and other conspiracies”...
- A talk by Canberra Skeptic Peter Barrett on the Moon Landing Hoax story.
- Program items celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Canberra Speculative Fiction Guild.

- Author Kaffeeklatsches — Conflux will be hosting breakfast author kaffeeklatches from 9am to 10pm Saturday and Sunday morning. A casual breakfast (a la carte is available from the Hotel Restaurant or BYO) with tea/coffee supplied. Numbers will be limited to 10 people.
- Literary Beers – similar to a Kaffeeklatsche but takes place in the bar. No catering provided, but the bar is open!
- A Panel about designing an Evil Over Lord’s secret headquarters (yes, in the past years we’ve selected the Evil Lord’s attributes and his ideal henchmen – now s/he needs a place to live!)
- Sunday evening Masquerade, Music and Ninjaz with Attitude event!
- A Dr Who / Torchwood Freeform role playing game.
- An auction
- A Whodunnit Panel
- Media Secret Agents of the 1960s Panel
- Workshop: Literary Beer with Baen Senior Editor James Minz. Have questions about the business of publishing? Want to hear some scandalous publishing gossip? Or do you just want a chance to hang out with a small group in a relaxed atmosphere with someone who’s been in the publishing trenches for more than fifteen years?
- The Dead Dog Party on Monday evening
- Not to mention tea and coffee supplied and longer bar hours this year.

But wait...there’s more! Check out the website for exciting updates...

THE BANQUET 2009 “Secrets of the Bayou”



Dr Gillian Polack is planning a fascinating banquet experience this year! Pre-dinner drinks will be set in 1945 – the first Mardi Gras after the war.

Then for the dinner we move back in time to the culinary delights of the 1880s.

The Bayou is full of mystery and secrets – perfect for our Convention theme. There are many excellent horror and mystery novels in this exotic setting. Creatures from the Black Lagoons, Vampires, dark family secrets, and pirates’ hidden treasure all have resonance on Contraband Bayou in 1883.

For example, Jean Lafitte (1776-1826) a pirate and privateer operated in the area, and is believed to have hidden treasure in the Bayou. Other pirates operated in the area during 1800s.



More information can be found on the Banquet Booking Form at the end of this Progress Report.

OUR BANQUET CELEBRITY CHEF!

'Undies hero' wrestles 'roo out of house

By staff writers | *March 09, 2009 The Australian*

A CANBERRA man was described as a hero for wrestling a kangaroo out of his house after being woken in the early hours by the marsupial smashing in.

Beat Ettlin, 42, who lives in the leafy suburb of Garran, awoke to the sound of glass splintering and saw a dark shape bounding on his bed about 2 am (AEDT) yesterday.

"My initial thought when I was half awake was: it's a lunatic ninja coming through the window," the 42-year-old Mr Ettlin told Associated Press.

"It seems about as likely as a kangaroo breaking in."

As he struggled to comprehend what was happening he was spurred to action moments later when his 10-year-old son Leighton Beman screamed "There's a 'roo in my room!"

"I thought: This can be really dangerous for the whole family now," Mr Ettlin said.

Despite only being clad in Bonds undies Mr Ettlin took on the frenzied marsupial as it lashed out.

Despite suffering scratches to his legs and buttocks he managed to wrangle the animal, which was about Mr Ettlin's height and an estimated 40kg, out the door.

"I had just my Bonds undies on. I felt vulnerable," he Mr Ettlin, who added in retrospect he felt "lucky".

The kangaroo, which had left a trail of blood in the house, disappeared back into surrounding bushland.

The intruder had jumped a backyard fence and then leapt up 1.5m to break through the window.

Mr Ettlin was left with shredded undies and the admiration of his wife

"I think he's a hero: a hero in Bonds undies," Verity Beman said.



Yes – it's true. Our Banquet chef is a genuine Kangaroo wrestling hero. With speculations on whether it was actually a "lunatic ninja" in disguise – we declare you can't BEAT this for a "secret" theme Conflux!

CREATIVE CORNER

Last year we had some tables set up near the Art Show as "creative corner". It provided space for people to do art and craft or just sit and talk. We also had some great demonstrations courtesy of Marilyn Pride and Lewis Morely (thank you very much indeed!)

This year we are planning a bigger area for creative corner with all sorts of interesting events, including those items which proved so popular last year.

Although we are not holding an art show this year, artists and craft-persons are most welcome to display items. Creative Corner is secured overnight.

CONFLUX WEBSITE

If you want to keep up with what's happening at Conflux between the progress reports, log onto www.conflux.org.au regularly, and check out what's new.

STORY COMPETITION

Story entries must be on the theme of the convention "Secrets". Stories are a maximum of 2000 words. There must be a speculative element. Otherwise, the sky is the limit. Stories that fail in any of these elements will be judged ineligible.

Entries will only be accepted April 1 to July 31, 2009. (The closing date was extended following several requests for extensions). Stories may be emailed to storycomp@conflux.org.au.

You must be a Conflux 6 member (or supporting member) to enter, entry after membership is free. The winner will be chosen by a panel of three authors.

The winning story will be edited by Conflux GoH Jim Minz for publication in the Convention Magazine. So here is your opportunity to work with an experienced editor! Two runners-up will also appear in the Convention magazine. All winners will receive a surprise package of books and a certificate.

The Convention Magazine Cover Competition is now closed. Thank you to everyone who entered artwork for the competition. The committee will select the cover at their next meeting and the results posted on the Convention blog.

Flash Ninjaz competition!

A call for speculative flash Ninjaz stories... with attitude. Stories will be judged on style, imagination and awesomeness.

500 words max. Limit of 3 submissions per author. Top 3 winning stories to be published on the award-winning Undead Backbrain site [<http://roberthood.net/blog/>]

First place winner to be awarded a Secret Ninjaz prize at Conflux!

Judges: Robert Hood and Cat Sparks

Deadline: end of September 2009

Don't quite get the Ninjaz thing? Read this:

<http://roberthood.net/blog/index.php/2009/03/06/gettin-attitude-with-the-ninjaz/>

Email flash Ninjaz entries to:
ninjazflashfiction@gmail.com

DEALERS

Conflux 6 will be running a dealers room at The Marque, which will be open to Conflux members and the general public. The dealers' room will also house "creative corner".

The dealers' room will be open to convention members and the public Friday (10am to 6pm), Saturday (9am to 6pm), Sunday (9am to 6pm), and Monday (9am to 3pm).

Please see the website for an application form if you wish to book a table (number are limited, so book as soon as possible to avoid disappointment).

Mr Peter Strong of Smith's Books (books@SmithsBooks.com.au) has kindly consented to be the Convention dealer. Publishers and agents are most welcome to contact him regarding their stock.

RAFFLE



Once again we are holding a MONSTER raffle. The prize is a HUGE basket of goodies, which will be drawn at the CONFLUX 6 Closing Ceremony. The Basket will be on display at CONFLUX 6, but you can purchase tickets anytime. Tickets are \$5 each or three tickets for \$10.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are absolutely essential for any convention, and we are very appreciative of all those who have volunteered at Conflux over the last six years. If you would like to assist (minding rooms, timing events, working on registration, being involved in program items) we would love to hear from you! Please contact Chair@conflux.org.au.

FLORIADÉ

Floriade, the Canberra spring festival, is held at the same time of the year as Conflux. Visitors will be able to detour to the other side of the Civic Centre to see the beautiful flower displays and enjoy free entertainment.

See www.floriadeaustralia.com for more information.

THOSE SOUTHERN VAMPIRES



Jane Virgo

The novels are set in Louisiana, mostly around Bon Temps a fictional town near the city of Shreveport.

The first series of *True Blood* started on Foxtel's Showcase on 10 February 2009. I'd been waiting for this show for years, since I first read about it on Charlaine Harris's website.

In Sookie's world vampires 'came out of the coffin' all over the world following the Japanese invention of a tasty synthetic blood. Their welcome has been somewhat mixed - vampires form a contentious minority group.

Over the following weeks, I watched the adaptation of a favourite book series written in first person, into a TV series that is definitely third person. I'm now eagerly waiting the Australian premiere of the second series.

Sookie's life is disrupted when the Vampire Bill Compton, an American civil war veteran, walks into the bar and orders drink of synthetic blood. Sookie is immediately hooked on Bill: she can't hear his thoughts! Bliss.

The Books

My interest in *True Blood* stems from a love of the Southern Vampire mystery novels created by Charlaine Harris.

Ever since the *True Blood* TV Series first started in September last year, the Sookie Stackhouse books have stayed on the New York Times bestseller list. The ninth book in the series, "*Dead and Gone*", debuted at No. 1 in May this year. The first chapter is at <http://www.charlaineharris.com/>

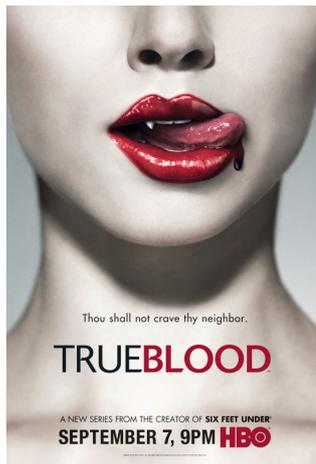
The Southern Vampire books are a charming mixture of supernatural mystery, romance and black humour. I was captivated by the character of 'crazy' Sookie Stackhouse, a small town barmaid suffering from a strange disability – she is telepathic.

"*A Touch of Dead*", a compilation of Sookie stories, will be released on the on Oct. 6, 2009. The tenth Sookie Stackhouse novel will be out in May 2010.

The intrusions of other people's thoughts have dominated her life – she could never concentrate at school and still finds it hard to date someone when they're wondering whether she's really a natural blond – everywhere.

I love the quirky cover art by Lisa Desimini – it captures Sookie's off beat charm.





TRUE BLOOD

You either love *True Blood* or you hate it. Some people think it's brilliant, others just don't get it at all.

Although *True Blood* started slow in the US ratings, it became HBO's biggest hit since *Sex in the City* and *The Sopranos*. Season 2 premiered in the US on 12 June 2009.

True Blood has been critically acclaimed and won one [Golden Globe](#), two [Satellite Awards](#) and an [American Cinema Editors](#) award for its first season. *True Blood* has been nominated for over twenty other awards, winning a third of them.

The series is created and produced by Alan Ball, who also wrote *American Beauty* and created and produced *Six Feet Under*.

Ball has described *True Blood* as "equal parts horror movie, romance novel, tongue-in-cheek thriller, love story and social commentary." The series doesn't totally follow Harris's books - there are some major changes.

However, Harris likes what Alan Ball is doing with Sookie's universe. She previously turned down offers for the screen rights, before accepting Alan Ball's bid.

True Blood stars Anna Paquin as Sookie. Anna won an Academy Award for her role in *The Piano* and starred as Rogue in *XMen*.

Vampire Bill is played by Stephen Moyer who is Anna's real life boyfriend – how's that for chemistry?



Keep an eye out for Eric Northman, a hunky vampire viking played by Swedish actor [Alexander Skarsgård](#),

Is *True Blood* hot? It's smoking. First off, it is very good drama (sometimes melodrama), well written, well acted and well directed. The sound track is great too. It's starker than the books. *True Blood* is also hilarious and has been described as popcorn for intelligent people.

Should you let the kids see it? Probably not. It's really not *Buffy*. *True Blood* is darker than Harris's books. The whimsy is subdued, sex and violence are more centre stage and the humour is definitely adult.

Information and SPOILERS are at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/True_Blood
HBO previews are at <http://www.hbo.com/trueblood/>

Conflux 6

PO Box 903,
Belconnen ACT 2616

MEMBERSHIP PRICES

	Until 30 June	Until 30 Aug	At Door
Full membership (Attendance & publications)	\$200	\$230	\$250
Student / Concession (Attendance & publications)	\$160	\$190	\$210
Supporting (publications &	\$30	\$30	(DayAttend rate is \$80)

Terms and Condition of Membership Refunds may be obtained by writing to the Treasurer at the address below by Friday 18th September 2009. To cover costs incurred in processing memberships, an administration levy of \$20 applies. This levy does not apply to those converting to supporting membership. You may also transfer your membership to another person without charge. Supporting members are able to convert to full membership at the rate current at time of initial membership. Refunds are unavailable after 18th September, but if a member is unable to attend they will receive supporting membership benefits. Applications for concession or student membership must be accompanied by evidence to confirm (for example a healthcare card) or full time student status. If you have not yet done so you may provide this information on registration at the Convention. Thank you for your support.

FIRST NAME _____ LAST NAME _____

NAME ON BADGE _____

ADDRESS FOR POSTAGE (STREET OR PO) _____

SUBURB _____ STATE _____ POSTCODE _____

TELEPHONE _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Information and Attendance

- I would like to
- Participate in programming.
 - Volunteer
 - Participate in a mass signing event (Author or Artist?).
 - Have updates emailed to me (NB they will be emailed as default choice).
 - NOT receive updates on the convention.
 - NOT have my name / state on the website or in the con book member list.

My Payment Details:

- Cash payment
- Cheque / Money Order (to be made out to Conflux)
- Pay Pal (via paypal@conflux.org.au)
- Credit Card Visa Bankcard MasterCard

Card Number _____ Expiry Date _____

Name on Card _____ Signature _____



PO Box 903,
Belconnen ACT 2616

BANQUET BOOKING FORM

“Secrets of the Bayou”

Dr Gillian Polack is planning a fascinating banquet experience this year! As always, the recipes and menu are authentic to the time periods. Pre-dinner drinks will be set in 1945 – the first Mardi Gras after the war. Cocktails set the scene! Then for the dinner we move back in time to the culinary delights of the 1880s.

You have been invited to this Mardi Gras celebration by the great hostess Severine Sallier. Severine is upholding the old ways - she knows they're going to fade. The railway has come to Lake Charles, it could soon be just another town on the line from New Orleans to Houston. Contraband Bayou's pirate past and its pre-war elegance will be forgotten. This last dinner is her fight against mediocrity.

The Bayou is full of mystery and secrets – perfect for our Convention theme. There are many excellent horror and mystery novels in this exotic setting. Creatures from the Black Lagoons, Vampires, dark family secrets, and pirates' hidden treasure all have resonance on Contraband Bayou in 1883.

The Banquet will be held on Saturday evening at the Marque Hotel Canberra,
commencing 7pm with pre-dinner drinks.
Tickets are \$52 per person (drinks extra).

Name	
Address	
Telephone	
Email	

SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

- Vegetarian?
- Gluten Free?

To check if the banquet meets particular dietary requirements email banquet@conflux.org.au

My Payment Details:

- Cash payment
- Cheque / Money Order (to be made out to Conflux)
- Pay Pal (via paypal@conflux.org.au)
- Credit Card Visa Bankcard Mastercard

Card Number _____ Expiry Date _____

Name on Card _____ Signature _____