

From the Archives:

## PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION: GARRY BENSON



*Garry Benson has been a long (long) time supporter of Textile Fibre Forum magazine, having written a regular column on Professional Presentation for several years in the 1980s and 1990s. Now he is 'retired' from a long career of photojournalism, teaching and publishing. He is shown here, a few years ago (!) preparing to hike to the Mt Everest Base Camp.. He made it.*

**Garry Benson is offering a workshop at Wrapt in Rocky in Rockhampton QLD from June 25 – July 1, 2010 on Digital Photography and DVD Production. Details from [www.wraptinrocky.com](http://www.wraptinrocky.com) or [nanette.balchin@bigpond.com](mailto:nanette.balchin@bigpond.com)**

*When Garry Benson wrote the words you find here, Digital Photography and DVDs did not exist of course (see his Wrapt in Rocky course title) and Textile Fibre Forum was about to increase to 56 pages, half in mono and half in colour. He was writing for issue #18 and the year was 1987.*

*Going to 'colour' was a very brave move for TAFTA and for the editor, Janet De Boer, for whom Garry Benson acted as a production advisor as best he could since he makes his home in South Australia, and TAFTA is based in Brisbane. To boost the print run to a viable number, the magazine had to be taken on by Gordon & Gotch for newsagency distribution. And it was.*

*The excerpts below are from issue No. 18, as noted. So counting backwards from the current issue, #97, this was 79 issues ago...*

### Launching a new magazine is very much like competing in the America's Cup.

The editorial team have all 'sailed' before, and the previous boat was seaworthy, but a little too low in the financial waters. The only chance to win the elusive Auld Mug is to take to the uncharted waters – and hope that the winged keel is firmly attached!

Once the research was undertaken, the costs assessed, and the alternatives explored, the choice was simple. Sink or swim – with a new magazine with more colour, and more copies.

**Editor Janet De Boer** continues to do a massive task, with very limited facilities and lots of energetic enthusiasm. However, the increasing demands for professionalism in the fibre arts in both Australia and New Zealand demands that we have a larger, more colourful outlet. We need to show our work, learn about other fibre workers, and add to the storehouse of knowledge and techniques that we all need access to. Janet also needs to know that she won't starve, as up until now she has never been paid any salary as editor of Textile Fibre Forum.

**Yachting has been described as standing downwind of a fifty knot storm, throwing bundles of \$100 notes into the wind.**

Producing a magazine is also expensive, but the costs of producing

Textile Fibre Forum have been very carefully estimated, pared, and then cut again, as much as possible.

You can do your bit by not loaning your copy to fibre friends – get them to subscribe. **If all our readers could get one of their friends to subscribe, most of our problems would be solved.**

**Magazine Production.** Contrary to opinion, the production of a magazine is a lengthy and time-consuming task that needs lots of skills... Finally everything is sent off to the printer. Who sends it back so you can then do the work of mailing it!

Janet De Boer has been editor, typesetter, proof reader, layout artist, paste-up person, negotiator with the printer and, with help, the arbitrator with the postal system for your copy of FIBRE FORUM. This will continue for some time, but obviously she wouldn't do all those jobs if there were money to hire others....

**There is such a rich diversity of fibre work happening in Australia and New Zealand. And so many people are now taking a more professional approach to presenting themselves and their work.**

Good quality colour and black and white photographs, well-written copy, and brochures or background information to supplement their words are examples. It was exiting to see the care and quality of the documentation of most of the work for this issue.

**For those whose work doesn't appear, or appears in fuzzy, dark, out-of-focus, or yucky backgrounded images – SHAME ON YOU!** You are not only selling yourself short, but you are inviting people to see your work under the worst possible conditions. Long after you stop working with fibre, the record of the work will still be in the archives. Don't sell yourself short – get good quality, well-lit and professional (images) of at least a couple of pieces of your latest work. I know it's expensive, but think of the resultant publicity value of appearing in a national magazine.

As a closing hint, just a few points on **writing with precision** for your fibre magazine:

- Know your audience
- Aim directly, with a specific purpose, at a central subject
- Use exact words. Look them up if you're not sure
- Use nouns and verbs that are meaningful to the senses – particularly sight and touch
- Quantify. Give exact figures when you can, not imprecise generalities
- Be as careful with punctuation as you are with words
- Check all the facts – then double check
- Avoid ambiguity
- Omit all extraneous material

**The best way to learn how to write – is it sit down and write.** Try it, and before you know it you could be a regular contributor to this new magazine, that I know will win its own Auld Mug – a wider and more discerning readership. ☐

*You can always contact Janet De Boer for GUIDELINES on how to submit text and images: [tafta@iinet.net.au](mailto:tafta@iinet.net.au)*