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... a few words about more effective communications

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Land of the Long White Cloud Beckons

After much thought and a lot of soul searching I've decided to move to New Zealand.

From November 19 I'll be calling Dunedin in the South Island of the "Shaky Isles" home.

So is this the end of my career as a freelance commercial writer?

Not at all! I intend to keep offering my writing services to my existing West Australian clients while also offering my services throughout New Zealand and the east coast of Australia.

Modern communications

Modern communications, email and VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) in particular, have made this decision a lot easier for me because the way I do business, which is mainly by phone or email, can be done wherever there's a high speed internet connection.

Even if you prefer a face-to-face chat this can be done through Skype, which offers VOIP phone calls with vision if your computer is equipped with a camera.

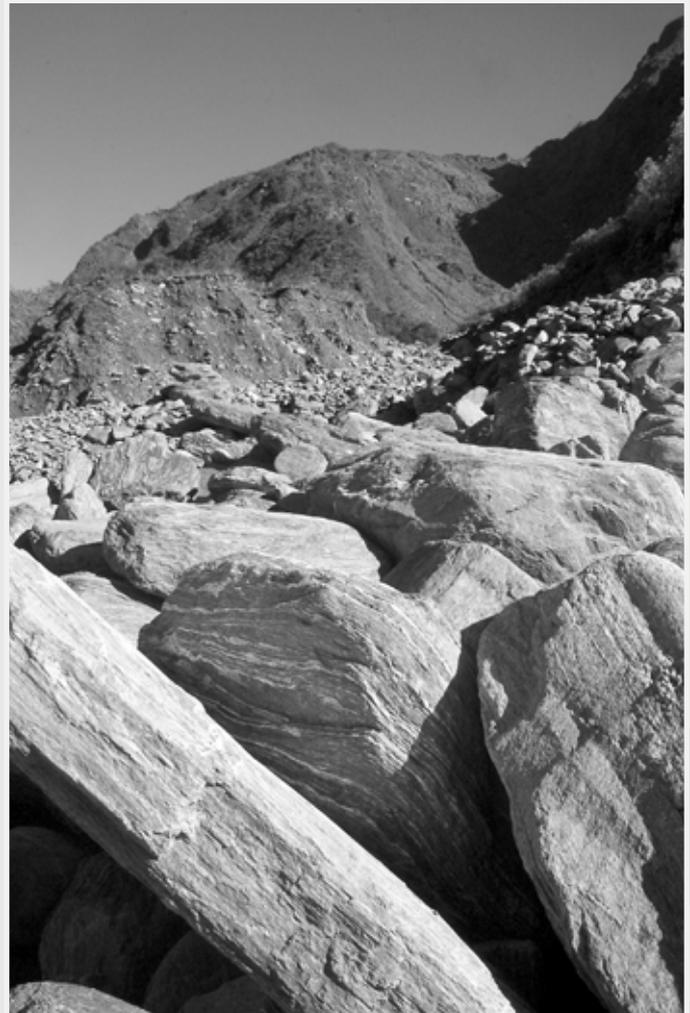
Calls between Skype users are free and it costs nothing to download the program which is readily available in Windows, Mac and Linux versions (see www.skype.com).

My Skype address is markwesternwriter.

I'll make it easy for you to contact me and you can rest assured that you'll never need to make an expensive phone call to New Zealand to speak to me.

You can email me, text me or make a quick phone call and I'll ring you back to see how I can help you - I'll be paying the phone bill!

So you can rest assured that I'll still be offering you the same comprehensive range of writing services, albeit from a lot further away.



Spectacular scenery like this rock fall I shot at the side of the Fox Glacier is just one of the things luring me across the Tasman.

Time Is On Your Side If You've Got An Urgent Job

If you have an urgent writing job that you need completed as soon as possible then why not call me, because with the big time difference between New Zealand and Western Australia I can have a first draft ready and waiting for you before you're even out of bed.

New Zealand's summer daylight saving time puts New Zealand five hours ahead of Western Australia (four hours ahead at other times of the year), allowing me to get an early start on that urgent writing project that's worrying you.

So whether it's a media release, report, pamphlet, sales letter, or anything else, if you need it in a hurry, then give me a ring or send me an email and I'll guarantee to get it to you four-to-five hours before any other copywriter in Western Australia.

China Crisis Not So Optimistic

Throughout the Global Financial Crisis you've no doubt heard that reassuring maxim that the Chinese character for "crisis" is composed of the elements signifying "danger" and "opportunity."

Along with New Age types, pop psychologists and trendy business executives I've taken this comforting thought on board and nodded approvingly at the subtle wisdom of the Chinese and their message of hope and promise in every predicament.

There's only one problem with it - it's a load of old codswallop.

Victor H Mair, Professor of Chinese language and literature at the University of Pennsylvania, dispels the myth in an online essay and attributes it to "a fundamental misunderstanding about how terms

are formed in Mandarin and other Sinitic languages."

He explains that the Mandarin word for "crisis" - wēijī - is best interpreted as "incipient moment; crucial point (when something begins or changes)."

"Thus, a wēijī is indeed a genuine crisis, a dangerous moment, a time when things start to go awry.

"A wēijī indicates a perilous situation when one should be especially wary. It is not a juncture when one goes looking for advantages and benefits. In a crisis, one wants above all to save one's skin and neck!

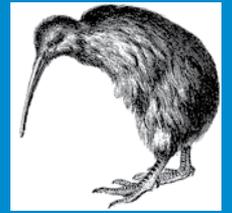
"Any would-be guru who advocates opportunism in the face of crisis should be run out of town on a rail, for his / her advice will only compound the danger of the crisis."

What a pity. It was *so* reassuringly optimistic!



Mark My Words Special Edition

After I arrive in New Zealand on November 19 you'll be able to contact me by mobile (I'll leave international roaming switched on for a few weeks) and by email at my usual email address: westernwriter@westnet.com.au.



As soon as I can I'll be setting up a landline with VOIP and will inevitably be setting up a new email address, though the old one will also remain active for some time.

I'll also be launching a new and vastly improved web page to replace my rather humble homemade job.

I'll let you know about my new contact details through a special edition of *Mark My Words* that will arrive in your email as soon as I have my new contact details sorted out.

A Beginner's Guide to Kiwi English

Just like Aussies, Kiwis have their own unique way with the English language, and while we share many words and phrases in common, there are quite a few unique to NZ.

Here are a few from the website newzealandatoz.com:

Chilly bin - Portable insulated cooler box.

Chocolate Fish - Chocolate coated marshmallow. Also frequently given (literally or figuratively) as a reward for a job well done; as in "Good on ya, mate. You deserve a chocolate fish."

Bro - Brother, term of endearment widely used by Maori.

Dairy - Small shop that sells dairy products and other incidentals.

Eh - Pronounced as you would the letter "a". Mostly used as a substitute for "what?" or "pardon?" but also used at the end of sentences like "Don't you think?" but also as

"Aren't you?" For example "You gonna go out to the pub on Friday, eh?" or "That looks better, eh?" But mostly used as a response to a question that wasn't understood or heard properly.

Electric puha - Home-grown Marijuana. Taken from the Maori, puha meaning watercress.

Godzone - New Zealand.

Jandals - Thongs (the ones you wear on your feet, that is!).

Mountain oysters - Testicles from castrated lambs.

Puckeroo - Something that is broken, bugged, rooted or otherwise dysfunctional.

Snarler - Sausage.

Tramping - Hiking (walk in the bush / great outdoors).

Captain Cooker - Wild pig, probably descended from pigs released in the Marlborough Sounds on Cook's first voyage.

Bach - (Pronounced "batch") Holiday home, originally a bachelor pad at work camps and now something of a Kiwi institution that can be anything from shack to palatial waterside residence.

Crib - South Island name for a bach.

Fizz boat - Small powerboat.

Gorse in your pocket - To be slow to pay your share.

Hollywood - A faked or exaggerated sporting injury used to gain advantage (as in any Italian World Cup football team).

Mana - Maori term indicating status, esteem, prestige or authority, and in wide use among all Kiwis.

Plunkett rooms - Childcare centre.

Rattle your dags - Hurry up.

Scroggin - Trail mix, essentially nuts and raisins.

Bun-fight - Social gathering with food.