

Coffs Harbour Writers' Group



Established September 1986

Affiliated with the Northern Rivers Writers Centre

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NEWSLETTER

August 2013

Announcements

Meeting Today: Thursday 1st August at the Ex-Services Club from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm.

Last Social: held at Buddha's Cafe in Toormina on Thursday 18th July. A good roll up of 13 members and one visitor. As usual, great readings and commentaries were enjoyed in fine weather.

Next Social: will be held at Coffs Harbour Botanic Garden from 10 am to 12 noon in the meeting room.

Last Workshop: see page two for report.

Next Workshop: Ron Pike will present his workshop on poetry on Thursday 5th September commencing at 1.30 am 3.30 pm at Coffs Harbour Ex-services Club, Vernon Street, Coffs Harbour. Members \$5; non-members \$10. Please see page 2 for more information about Ron's workshop.

Note

There will be a return presentation by Leonie Henschke of her workshop 'Learn how to develop character and dialogue' on Tuesday 3rd September from 5:30 pm for 6:00 pm start (finishing at 8:00 pm) at Coffs Harbour Library. Light refreshments will be provided. \$5 for CHWG members and \$10 for non-members. Bookings: limited spaces (20) so book early to avoid disappointment. Contact CHWG Social/Publicity Officer, Karolyn Gibson, on 6658 4981.

If you wish to submit a short story or poem, please do it and send it to the editor at his email address for consideration as soon as possible: marke@skymesh.com.au

Please note the group's two website links: http://coffsharbourwriters.wordpress.com/members_stories
<http://coffsharbourwriters.wordpress.com/newsletter/>

Developing Your Character and Dialogue Writers' Workshop

An excellent opportunity occurred recently for 30 members and guests to attend the workshop of one of our members, Leonie Henschke, facilitating an amazing '*Developing Your Character and Dialogue Workshop*' on Thursday 4th July, 2013 at the Coffs Harbour Ex-Services Club.

The response for this event had to be limited with a priority list established for a future event to be held (refer below).

Leonie's examples on how to develop your character in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd person certainly changed the learning format from listening to actively participating in a hands-on approach where participants developed their character and dialogue skills by portraying people with real life feelings and emotions.

At the end of the two-hour informative workshop members and guests had gained worthwhile and informative techniques to practice, including excellent take-away handouts to put into practice at home.

Thanks Leonie for helping our members and guests improve their writing skills.

An additional workshop will be held on 3rd September at Coffs Harbour Library from 5.30pm for start at 6pm to 8pm. Contact Karolyn Gibson to RSVP 6657 4981. — Lorraine Mouafi.



From Behind The Curtain — Mum's the Word

It's the 5 minute call and I've already shared that '*moment of nerves meeting*' in the Green Room bathroom, more than is seen as natural or comfortable... "Beginners on stage please" trilled through the intercom.

We all disappear into the darkness of side stage left or right. Quiet chatter from some of the actors continues during the overture. Determined silence from me as I zone in on the stage, soaking up the party noises and excited muffled sounds from the audience. My little angel on my shoulder speaks: "Last chance to safely plant your lines. Okay – good – shake it out and just roll with it ... you know you can do this." Lights ... Action and there's no turning back and loving it.

"Wow! How good is this audience!" (this was the most repeated line on our breaks not once but every show). We know we are extremely fortunate to have a wonderful responsive audience. We really feel the love and so come alive. We rant and rave, cry tears of joy and sadness, we feel every part of the pain and glory of motherhood and know there are people sitting in front of us who remember similar feelings too.

From new born to toddler to primary school age we watch them grow, watch them fall, pick the little gems up and follow their footsteps once again and it is real. We include our girlfriends and partners in the comic and drama of life. No one is spared. We sing and dance and lose our pan ... patience.

We take a deep breath and pick up our bundle and cheer on our special guest artists or group and join the celebration of being '*part of the club*' until we meet again to do it all over again and we know we will sleep well. This is where we are meant to be. — *Karolyn Gibson*.

Ron Pike's Poetry Workshop

1. Why write in verse and not just prose?
2. Why does poetry make both an immediate and a more lasting impact?
3. What is our aim when we set out to write a poem?
4. What should we write about? What topic should I choose?
5. How to begin and how to succeed.
6. The different types of poetry.

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The following is what Ron has written: Ron Pike, known as "Pikey" to most, also refers to himself as the "*Bushy from the back of Barellan*".

It was on those dry plains of the Riverina that Ron's grand parents settled in the early 1900s and some of Ron's earliest memories are of listening to poetry around the fireplace in a humble corrugated iron farmhouse in what was then dry desolate country described by both Stuart and Cunningham as "*a dry treeless plain unsuitable for human habitation*."

However, with the advent of irrigation and management, this area was transformed into a fertile productive farming region, now known as the food bowl of Australia. It was also during this time of development that the Riverina was for a time the home of John O'Brien, Henry Lawson, Jim Graham and other poets whose works were eagerly read and performed, often in small country halls.

A recurring theme through many of these poems and writings is an understanding of originally harsh environment and the role that man can and has played in its enhancement and productivity.

Now retired Ron has more time for writing both poetry and comment often related to the environment in which he grew up and worked for most of his life.

Ron has been involved in public speaking, debating, adjudicating, poetry writing and performing most of his life.

Satire

By Leon Stokes

Sitting in solitude. Trying to think of a story. A writer sits in his room and tries to find inspiration for his page. Where do the thoughts come from? Experience or study and research, maybe. Or perhaps the thoughts are waiting to be taken from the cosmos and are there for everyone who makes a search. He once got told that the Bible has many movies in it. An old man had said that years ago.

He wondered whether he should have entered courtship back then when a girl's father had advised him she was free to marry. She must have had the desire to be wedded. He liked being lonely and decided against making any sort of proposal. There had been a bad feeling in the family, although, they didn't allow the wound to fester. He wasn't going to spill the beans at all as he believed he would get the help he needed in life.

There had been a girl, another one. She was very graceful like that of a gazelle. She had a goal to stay single and lead a life of devotion to God. He didn't have the sort of pitch he needed to sway her at all and he believed she acted wisely. There was some seepage of feeling toward her on his part. However, it was mainly reticence that took him in that situation. Old Satan was probably waiting for them on the heath near where she lived.

Writing Competition

FAW NSW Marjorie Barnard Award 2013. This award is for Short Stories up to 3000 words. **Prize: \$500.** The winner will be invited to the 2013 Annual Luncheon to be held in Sydney in November for the Award Announcement and to receive the Award. **Entry Fee: \$10.00.** An Entry Form containing Full Conditions of Entry may be downloaded from www.fawnsnsw.org.au/competitions.html or by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: The Convenor, FAW Marjorie Barnard Award, C/- 5/15 Bogan Road, Booker Bay, NSW 2257. Results will be published in the *Writers Voice* and on the FAW Website. For more information: compconvenor@fawnsnsw.org.au or phone 02 4341 1138 (ah only). Closing date 21 September 2013.

FreeXpresSion

Opportunity

FreeXpresSion is seeking submissions of poetry together with suitable graphics as features for future covers and centre pages.

To improve readability length for articles, feature submissions is limited to a maximum of 650 words

for a full page, and 320 words for single column.

Contact: P.O.Box 4, West Hoxton, N.S.W. 2171 Email: editor@freexpression.com.au

More opportunities — Submissions of poems needed for Krazy Korner. Send contributions to: Jill, 11/18 George Street, Mudgee N.S.W. 2850 or Email j.baggett@bigpond.com

Education

Connected classroom: technology is helpful but can also hinder clarity of expression

Some teachers said texting and other digital writing serve as "building blocks" for students to start expressing ideas. English teachers were more positive about digital tools for writing – nearly two-thirds said it made teaching easier – than colleagues teaching math, science and social studies.

The findings reflect the experiences of some Los Angeles teachers. Lisa Alva Wood, a Roosevelt High School English teacher who has used iPads in her classroom this past year as part of a test program, says the devices are a hit with students. She says they promote a deeper interest in writing because students can see their works published in online forums.

"The kids were fascinated and excited about all the ways they could published online and see their work and the work of others," Alva says. She says digital tools, such as Google Docs, foster collaboration among students and teachers.

However, technology is not the most crucial element in promoting good student writing, Alva says.

"Technology is neither here nor there; its still in the hands of the teacher," she says.

Scott Mandel, who teaches English and history at Pecoinma Middle School, says digital technology is "awesome" for finding teaching material. He uses tools such as Dropbox and enriches learning through online field trips to such places as the British Museum in London.

But he said the difficulties most school students have typing significantly detracts from the quality of their compositions, producing shorter sentences and less critical thinking. As a result, he said, he requires students to write first drafts by hand.

"Sometimes, good old-fashioned pen and paper are the best way," Mandel says.

What the survey found:

- 96 percent of teachers agree that digital technologies "allow students to share work with a wider and more varied audience."
- 78 percent agree that digital technologies "encourage student creativity and personal expression".
- 68 percent say that digital tools make students "more likely to take shortcuts and not put effort into writing".
- 40 per cent say today's digital technologies make students less likely to "use poor spelling and grammar" while another 38 per cent say they make students less likely to do this.

Source: Pew Research Centre's Internet & American Life Project. Reprinted from *Los Angeles Times* and written by Teresa Watanabe.

Quote

It is better to spend our whole life and write just a piece of verse that will be read and appreciated for generations, than it is to write a whole book of poetry that no one wants to read or recommend to others. But it is likely we will have to doggedly produce the latter to gain the skills to achieve the former.

— *Pikey*