

# Coffs Harbour Writers' Group



*Established September 1986*

**Affiliated with the Northern Rivers Writers Centre**

## **May 2014 Newsletter No 270**

PO Box 1953, Coffs Harbour 2450 [www.coffsharbourwriters.com](http://www.coffsharbourwriters.com)



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### **Greetings**

A group of CHWG members, including myself, is still on a high from attending the inaugural **Grassroots Writers Weekend, Dorrigo High School, 25 – 27 April, 2014**. We gained new writing skills, talked to other writers about writing and writers' groups, wrote, listened, exchanged ideas, had wonderful dinners with like-minded new friends and stayed in the most beautiful stone house looking out on the rolling emerald green hills of Dorrigo. What more could a writer want! (Oh, and there was a log fire!). There were very strong take home messages in all the sessions and extensive opportunities to let your pen flow and create! Congratulations to the small, but very effective, Dorrigo Writers' Group team.

We'll be discussing options for continuing the gathering in our region at the next meeting and in the newsletter so stay tuned. *Leonie*

## What's on in May?

**1 May 2014** 10.30 am - 12.30 pm Writers' Group monthly meeting Coffs Ex Services Club. Guest speaker Liz Keen from ABC Open, 11 am, on Social Media and Blogging. Now's the time to find out just what is a Tweet, a Blog, a Post or whatever! Get your questions ready.

**15 May 2014** 10.00 am – 12 noon Writers Group Social meeting, Sawtell Nursery JJs Café, Hogbin Drive near the Sawtell Fire Station

**31 May – 1 June 2014** Yamba Writers' Festival ([yambawritersfestival.com.au](http://yambawritersfestival.com.au))

*And coming up soon...*

**7 – 9 June 2014** Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival

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## From the President...

Our members and guests experienced two excellent speakers this month, Suzanne Gay Smoothy, author of *'Aussie Words of Wisdom'* and Rosalie Skinner, e-publishing author of *'The Chronicles of Caleath'* who facilitated our evening workshop at the Coffs Library on eBook Publishing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. I also have news of our members, Lisa and Ion, currently in the United States at a Writers Conference and preparing for a Pitch to Agents for Lisa's play. Also, our February guest speaker, Jenn J McLeod, launched her second book *'Simmering Seasons'*.

### **Suzanne Gaye Smoothy, *'Aussie Words of Wisdom'***

Our April guest speaker, Suzanne Gaye Smoothy, gave a wonderful example of her personal achievements despite having experienced anxiety for many years. She found that by maximising positive thoughts she could overcome her problems. Suzanne shared her personal story on why and how she lunged into self-publishing her first book, *'Aussie Words of Wisdom'* without any real experience, only the desire to overcome her anxiety, help others with similar health issues and see her book in print. Her experience is a good lesson to show we need to do our research first, and be clear what we want to achieve. Don't rush into the process was the message.

Thanks again, Suzanne. *'Aussie Words of Wisdom'* can be purchased via [sunshinesuzie@outlook.com](mailto:sunshinesuzie@outlook.com) @ \$13 which includes postage and handling.

### **Jenn J McLeod's *'Simmering Seasons'* book launch**

With a few other CHWG members, I attended local author, Jenn J McLeod's second book launch *'Simmering Seasons'* at Book Warehouse in Toormina on 2 April. The book was launched by Coffs Harbour Mayor, Denise Knight, giving an outline of the story, with a response from Jenn, thanking everyone involved with finalising her second publication, including her father and sister who had flown up from Sydney.

This book is part of a series following on from her first successful book *'House For All Seasons'*. She is now in the top five best-selling authors in Australia.

### **E-Publishing your works for the 21<sup>st</sup> century reader with Rosalie Skinner**

This was great presentation and hands-on session about getting started, including the pitfalls, with eBook Publishing.

After an information-packed PowerPoint presentation we had an interactive 'hands on' navigating session browsing e-book publishers, including, Lulu, Amazon and Smashworks. These were set up on the homepage of Rosalie's blog <http://www.rosalieskinner.blogspot.com.au>. All participants, either using the Library's computers or their own laptops or iPads, were able to experience what each company offered in the way of e-publishing, including the areas covered in the workshop; copyright, covers, editing, formatting, distribution and marketing. This was an excellent way of demonstrating how to get started, including the necessary research required before authors take the next step into publishing their own works using today's 'digital age tools' of e-publishing.

Thanks, Rosalie, for sharing your knowledge and experience.

### **Lisa and Ion's United States travels and sales pitch**

Our members, Lisa and Ion, have been away for more than a month and have had a great time! So far, they have travelled from Los Angeles (LA) to Las Vegas (which included visiting the Grand Canyon). They then continued on to Chicago and Madison. They have been to two writing events and thought you may like to hear about them. The first event was the Screenwriters' Summit in LA. This was a two day event, which Lisa attended (and Ion later attended in part for free!). The presenters were four of the biggest names in screenwriting books/film consultancy. Lisa has read some of their books and was elated to meet them in person. Here is a link to the event: <http://www.screenwriterssummit.com>.

The second event was the Writers' Institute, held in Madison (Wisconsin). This was over three-days, run by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. It was a general writers' conference, with a focus on fiction and novel writing. Lisa and Ion were keen to attend, as they have both studied online with this university. Ion has studied poetry and Lisa, screenwriting. They met their lecturers in person and talked to other writers, some professional and others with the dream to publish.

The Writers' Institute provided workshops and discussion groups, as well as critique sessions. Topics included journal writing, memoir writing, how to start a novel, e-publishing and self-publishing. Novelists also had the opportunity to pitch their work to agents. Lisa and Ion left the event inspired and with new directions. For more see: <http://continuingstudies.wisc.edu/conferences/writers-institute/index.html>.

Ion, having recently published in two American journals, is also listed on the University website as one of their 'Success Stories'.

<http://continuingstudies.wisc.edu/writing/success-stories.html>

Lisa and Ion now head off for Montreal, then back to the US for a few days, before heading off to Turkey for seven weeks. They will return again to the US, where Lisa will be pitching her screenplay.

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## Members write...

**Roger Harris**

### HIT THE CHEF

He was still wearing that stupid chef's hat when he came into view. It was a damp, drizzly, dark night, and rear entrance of the studio was devoid of any TV glamour. I had him in my sights as he opened the rear door of his chauffeur driven Bentley; it was a good night for affirmative action.

This guy seemed to have four cooking shows a night on four different TV channels, and those that weren't running him were running re-runs.

I had a civic duty to perform, as I gently squeezed the trigger. Oops, might have over done it a bit with the ammo, it was a lousy colour to paint a Bentley anyway, metallic lime green, I ask you, the man had no taste. For a moment his body remained in its crouched position as if he was about to enter the car, but just above his shoulders it was as though a water melon had exploded, puréed one might say.

The green Bentley was the perfect backdrop, it was like salad dressing, and as the white chef's hat came fluttering down it was like a dollop of cream on top, poetry, sheer poetry. I'm an artist with an M85.

Well, that's a few less cooking shows we have to endure, off to channel 9 now, the footy show is about to finish up. I've got a Kalashnikov for them. It's a dirty job I know, but be grateful there are those of us out there prepared to do our civic duty.

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## Information round-up

**Newcastle Poetry Prize:** <http://www.hunterwriterscentre.org/newcastle-poetry-prize.html>. Now in its 33rd year, this is the country's most prestigious poetry award. The competition is judged anonymously and you can enter as many times as you wish. Prizes are awarded from a prize pool of over \$20 000 and the shortlisted poems will be published in the annual anthology. Entries close Friday 20th June.

**Bookvetter Literary community** <http://www.bookvetter.com/index.html>  
<http://youtu.be/o3C53lnKKg>. Online writers' group offering feedback for books and manuscripts.

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***That's all for now. Don't forget, contributions please. Your own stories, book or film reviews, writing exercises...whatever takes your fancy. Leonie***