

# Coffs Harbour Writers' Group



*Established September 1986*

**Affiliated with the Northern Rivers Writers Centre**

## **February 2016 Newsletter** No 287

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

### **Committee Members**

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### **Greetings**

Welcome back to all our members and a special hello to new members coming along to a meeting for the first time. We will make you welcome, want to hear a little about your background and why you like writing (and what) and encourage you in whatever direction you want to take. Writing can be a solitary pursuit, eagerly putting pen to paper to sketch out those characters, unravel a complex plot and just get that very desired beginning middle and end. And then you will want to share it. We are here to share your writing, at every step along the way, be it a paragraph or whole chapter.

So everybody, keep the writing coming...If you haven't already written up a short, short story (about 750 words) for our collected work being published this year (our Anthology) come along to an informal workshop after our February meeting and we'll have some prompts –example first lines, some ideas, some group thinking – all to get you started. And we'll also write our personal profiles for the book. A good chance to get the muse working...

Also coming up is the 2016 Grassroots Writers' Weekend, this time hosted by Nambucca Valley Writers' Group. Those who came to ours in 2015 in Coffs Harbour will know what a fantastic weekend this is of practical hands-on workshops and a chance to mingle and network with other writers from across the state. Costing just \$30 this year for the weekend of workshops at Valla Beach Resort plus Friday night barbecue and Saturday night dinner. Accommodation is available at the Valla Park. *Regards Leonie*

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## **What's on in February/March?**

**Wednesday 3 February, 10.00 am – 12.00 pm Monthly Meeting Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Cavanbah Centre, 191 Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour. Followed by lunch in the Chill Out Café in the Community Village and members only workshop (back in Cavanbah Centre at 1.00 pm – 3.00 pm to draft out some stories suitable for the upcoming anthology.**

**Thursday, 18 February, 10.00 pm – 12 noon Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Social Morning, venue to be confirmed.**

**Wednesday 2 March, 10.00 am – 12.00 pm Monthly Meeting Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Cavanbah Centre, 191 Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour followed by lunch in the Chill Out Café in the Community Village next door.**

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## **President's Report**

### **What's Happening in 2016?**

Happy New Year! I trust that you and your family had a wonderful relaxing Christmas break and that you are now refreshed and ready for another exciting year ahead.

Members of the committee met on 21 January to discuss what needs to occur to get our writers' group incorporated as an association. We have agreed that we should use the NSW Fair Trading's 'model constitution' with the inclusion of a 'purpose' and modification to the fees and subscription section of the department's constitution, as this would be the best way to go with acquiring incorporation of our group.

The document will be tabled at the 3<sup>rd</sup> February meeting by Roger Harris; for the purpose of adopting this by special resolution of the members. Unfortunately, I will be an apology at our next meeting due to business commitments.

The Grassroots Writers Weekend 1 to 3 April, hosted by Nambucca Valley Writers Group is currently underway with the program available early February. If you are intending to stay the two nights at the venue, Valla Beach Tourist Park, I suggest you book your cabins NOW, they are basic but well-priced.

## **New Social Secretary**

During our committee meeting positions on the committee were discussed and one of the positions relating to Social Secretary, which includes the planning and coordinating of social mornings and workshops. It was suggested and was accepted by Yvonne Kachel to take on this position.

I would like to thank Janice Terry for her efforts over the past year or two for taking over the position on a temporary basis from Karolyn Gibson until a more permanent person volunteered.

Due to the above Grassroots Writers Weekend of workshops/guest speakers in April, our group's bi-monthly workshops will commence around June/July. For additional information contact Yvonne.

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## **Grassroots Writers' Weekend Friday 1, Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 April, Valla Beach Tourist Park, 1 Regatta Drive, Valla. Presented by Nambucca Valley Writers' Group**

Follow Grassroots Writers Weekend 2016 on Facebook to see the program which is looking great. Registrations will be available on line shortly. A separate email has been sent to all members with the program attached.

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## **Fiction and Memoir Writing at U3A Coffs Harbour**

This course for beginning and aspiring writers covers the essentials of writing fiction and memoirs. Topics cover: structuring plots, developing characters, resources for research and enhancing writing skills. There is plenty of opportunity to critique your work in a supportive group.

Enrolment in U3A costs \$60 for unlimited courses for the year. Enrolment is online at <http://coffs.u3anet.org.au/>

Meetings: at The Community Centre, Coffs Harbour, beginning 10 February 2016 every second Wednesday at 10.30 am for two hours. The course runs for four semesters.

For more information, contact Margaret Penhall-Jones at [penhalljones@gmail.com](mailto:penhalljones@gmail.com)

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## Members write...

### Leonie Henschke

*As our public art Gallery has been in the news lately relating to Council cutbacks, I've taken the liberty of putting a piece of my own in the Newsletter...inspired by the Gallery.*

### Front Desk at the Art Gallery

"Good afternoon, hope you enjoy the exhibition." Smile warmly, but professionally, the Induction Manual said.

The roster is 1 00 – 4 00 pm. My fellow volunteer is a 60-something blonde woman. She's talkative and tells me she's an artist – realist but trying to be impressionist.

The first visitor strides in confidently. Tall, thick set, could have been a lawyer or accountant but for the woven bag over his shoulder and loose hemp-look shirt. Definitely Bellingham. He does the rounds of the paintings – children's artwork always gets them in – they like to 'understand' what they're looking at – not feel too challenged.

He approaches the desk, on the way out.

"You two artists, are you?" he asks.

"Oh, no," I say. "Norma is," indicating my colleague.

"What are you, then, a manager?"

"Well, actually, I used to be."

"What happened?" He said.

"I retired."

"Can I have a look at your hand? See how long your middle finger is, so much longer than the others. That shows you're manager material."

"Oh, really!!!"

"And are you B blood group?"

"Oooh, I don't know."

"All good managers are B blood group. In Japan they only choose managers that are B group and have fingers like yours. And Hitler killed off all the B group – the Jews are all B group, you know."

"Well, that's very interesting...thank you for visiting the gallery." Still smile sweetly, if a little strained.

A glance to my colleague across the desk, "Jesus!"

A quiet American was next – breezed around the walls. I asked him his favourite painting.

“The cat,” he said. “Looks ferocious. I like them ferocious.” Mmmm...

A few giggling, untidy schoolgirls sauntered in.

Then a rush and a bustle of bleached blond, frizzy hair, tight pink T-shirt and cropped jeans – sheets of paper in her hand. She did the rounds more slowly, and then made her way to the desk.

“Did you like the exhibition?” I dutifully asked.

“Yes,” she drawled uncertainly, “but can you come over and let me talk to you about the paintings.”

“Well,” she spurted out, rushing headlong into her appraisal, “there’s lots of crap here, but I like some of them. See there, that one on the back wall, I like that. Not that one, though, just like a cracked tile.”

“What about the children’s art?” I tentatively interrupted.

“Oh, I like this one,” she conceded.

We both peered more closely at a bike silhouetted above a graffitied skateboard ramp – brilliant oranges and reds. “That’s a photo shopped photograph,” I said. “Brilliant, isn’t it?”

“Oh, only a photograph,” she replied, disappointedly, and moved on.

After a little more conversation, I saw she was raising her papers to bring them to my attention.

“Can I show you this?” she said. “It’s my grandson; he was Dux of his school. He’s going to university, I’m not sure where.”

I read the Press article she’d photocopied. Coffs Harbour Advocate: ‘Top Coffs student shines on international stage’.

“I haven’t actually read it,” she apologised, “but he’s very clever.”

I glanced through the text and told her the grandson’s plans – Economics, International Studies, Paris and Geneva.

“I can’t read,” she softly confided, “but I just wanted to talk to someone about it, so I came in here to show it off. You’ve been wonderful. Thank you.” Then she contentedly rushed out the door.

“My God,” I said, as 4 00 pm ticked over. “Is this really just an art gallery?”

The Director came out: “How did you enjoy your first stint on the desk? Bit quiet today, wasn’t it?”

“No,” I said, “It was fascinating. I can’t wait to see who comes in next!”

## **Writing and Competition Deadlines** *(From Margaret Penhall-Jones)*

### **16 February: Mulga Bill Writing Award**

This award accepts short stories up to 2000 words, bush verse of up to 52 lines, poems up to 25 lines - all must include the word 'Eaglehawk'. \$5 per entry with prizes ranging from \$200 to \$600 for each category. <http://www.eaglehawkfestival.org.au/programs-and-forms/index.html>

### **4 March: Text Prize**

The Text Prize aims to discover incredible new books for young adults and children by Australian and New Zealand writers. Published and unpublished writers of all ages are eligible to enter with works of fiction or non-fiction. The winner receives a publishing contract with Text and a \$10,000 advance against royalties.

<https://www.textpublishing.com.au/text-prize>

### **19 March: Bundaberg Writers Club Biennial Short Story Competition**

First prize \$300. Entry Fee \$5. Open Theme. 2500 word limit.

<http://bundywriters.com/short-story-competition-2016/>

### **31 March: Alan Marshall Short Story Award**

Australian writers are invited to enter the 31st Alan Marshall Short Story Award. Winning entries will be included in an anthology of Literary Nillumbik writing. Stories have a word limit of 2500, and prizes include \$2000 for first place plus travel and accommodation to attend a two-day writer's retreat. <http://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Living-in/Arts-and-culture/Alan-Marshall-Short-Story-Award>

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*That's all for now. A light issue this month but bigger and better than ever next month with lots of writing submissions. Yes?? Don't forget, contributions please. Your own stories, book or film reviews, writing exercises...whatever takes your fancy. Leonie*