

Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Inc.



Established September 1986

Affiliated with the Byron Bay Writers' Festival (Northern Rivers Writers' Centre)

March 2017 Newsletter No 298

PO Box 1953, Coffs Harbour 2450 www.coffsharbourwriters.com

**Monthly calendar, book reviews, competitions and
How to Publish Workshop...**

Committee Members

President (Acting):	Yvonne Kachel Yvonne.kachel@bigpond.com
Secretary:	Kim Shepherd akimbomakes@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Suzanne Tainsh polyart42@gmail.com
Assistant to Treasurer:	Rhonda Rand rhonda2450@hotmail.com
Membership Secretary:	Estelle Russell earusse21@gmail.com
Social Secretary/	Yvonne Kachel Yvonne.kachel@bigpond.com and
Newsletter Editor and Publicity:	Leonie Henschke leonie@henschke.net.au

Greetings

Last month we were complaining about the heat; today, down at the shops, people shivered, dodging the drops from the verandas and the rain poured down... Well that's life: hot and cold, good and bad, happy and sad. Rather like Charles Dickens' very famous opening line of *'Tale of Two Cities'*:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. It was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair...

We aim to gain contrast in our writings, capturing emotions as they really are, not the Pollyanna-ish story where everything is rosy but *real* life.

I often think writing is so like art where the artist/writer selects what they want to capture from a scene; not the whole scene or even the entire face but what is the *essence* of the subject. The artist then introduces light and shade to bring out what is important to them and what should be left in the background, lurking. Keep this in mind in your writing.

As a short exercise look out the window, at home, on the bus or across the beach or cafe and describe the scene bringing good and bad, light and dark, positive and negative vibes into play. And if you think it works, share your piece at a writers' meeting!

Happy writing Leonie

What's on in March/April?

10.00 am - 12.30 pm Wednesday 1 March 2017 Cavanbah Centre. Coffs's Harbour Writers' Group Monthly meeting followed by lunch (see below). Guest speaker: Patricia Degens

12.30 pm – 1.30 pm Wednesday 1 March 2017 Writers' Group Lunch in Chill Out café, Community Village (next to Cavanbah Centre).

1.30 pm – 3.30 pm Wednesday 1 March 2017 Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Workshop Publishing with Margaret Penhall-Jones. Cavanbah Centre. Bookings on 0412668315. More details later in the Newsletter.

10.00 am – 12.30 pm Thursday 16 March Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Social Morning Hidden Link Café, Hogbin Drive, Toormina (next to Toormina/Sawtell Fire Station at former nursery)

24 – 26 March Grassroots Writers' Weekend hosted by Port Writers Inc at the Panthers Club, Port Macquarie.

President's Report

President: Yvonne Kachel

Well, thank goodness that March is here and the weather may become more moderate. March is a busy month with Margaret Penhall-Jones presenting her workshop on self-publishing after our business meeting. There has been a lot of interest generated from non-members keen to come to the workshop, and even people asking if the workshop could run in the evening. Great for Margaret and great for our group. Don't forget our social morning at the Hidden Link on March 16th, and then some of us are off to the Grass Roots Writers' Weekend at Port Macquarie where our Rosalie will be presenting a workshop and our Lorraine chairing a Panel (and Leonie on the Panel). Never fear, Rosalie has agreed to conduct a workshop in the next few months so we won't miss out.

Our social meeting in February was really chatty and lots of ideas about writing were explored. So, be prepared to try some of these new ideas as well as exchanging views on our writing. After all, we are all writers, and we want our voice to be heard through our writing.

The morning tea also seemed to get the thumbs up, as it gave members a chance to meet guests and chat, as well of course of having a nibble and a cuppa so, see you all on the 1st March. Till then, happy writing! *Yvonne*

Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Workshop

Publish! Industry or Indie?

Presented by Margaret Penhall-Jones

Wednesday 1 March 1.30 pm – 3.30 pm Cavanbah Centre

Bookings: 0412 668 315

It's never too early or late for aspiring writers to consider how to get their work out there. This workshop will explore the promise and perils of different publishing pathways; traditional publishing, vanity press and self-publishing or "indie publishing".

We'll answer such questions as:

- Who are the major publishers and are they interested in me?
- What is an Agent and do I need one?
- How do I present my manuscript?
- I've got my advance; I'm going on a cruise. Right?
- Is 'vanity press' always the villain?
- Self-publishing an e-book: how hard can it be?
- Self-publishing a paperback: how costly will it be?
- I'm published: can I quit the day job?

The presenter, Margaret Penhall-Jones, is a local writer and editor. She has self-published two romance novels and has a manuscript under consideration with a traditional publisher. She moved to Coffs Harbour two years ago and has been a member of Coffs Harbour Writers Group (CHWG) since then. She conducts a course on Novel and Memoir Writing for the Coffs Harbour U3A, co-ordinates a critique group for the CHWG and the Arts Council, regularly contributes book reviews to the CHWG Newsletter and has presented writing and creativity workshops for the CHWG, the Grassroots Writers Festival 2016 and the local Mental Health Professionals Network. She is a member of Romance Writers of America and Romance Writers of Australia and is a competition judge for Romance Writers of Australia. Apart from being an avid reader all her life, Margaret also has considerable experience in the retail book trade.

Members' write

Margaret Penhall-Jones Review *The Light Between Oceans* by M L Steadman

This absorbing novel by Australian author M L Steadman is an inspiration to aspiring authors. It began as a short story. Ms Steadman sent it to an agent who encouraged her to make it into a full-length novel. Publishers fought over it and as we know, it is now a best-selling novel and a film.

Set in the 1920's in the harsh and isolated environment of Western Australia, the story explores the emotional and moral effects of heartache and isolation. The light is the lighthouse at the point where the Indian and Southern Oceans meet and these great oceans perhaps symbolise the depths of the individual human spirit in the lighthouse keeper and his wife. When, after two miscarriages a boat carrying a dead man and a baby is washed up on the lighthouse rock, they decide to keep the baby and raise her as their own. It is years before they become aware that the baby's real mother is alive and grieving.

Ms Steadman reports she writes intuitively, without a plot, playing with ideas until the story takes shape. Her intuition is tamed by a style which entangles you, the reader emotionally, then like a gale at sea, pulls you first one direction then another. It is impossible not to sympathise with every character while the ethical questions remain grey.

The harsh lines and strong colours of Western Australia formed an integral part of the story for me when I read the novel. I believe that the decision to film in the softer-toned climate of New Zealand and Tasmania was a mistake. The film was beautiful, emotionally engaging and romantic, but the vitality of the book was diluted.

Read or watch, either way it's an emotional journey worth taking.

© Margaret Penhall-Jones

Competitions (from Margaret Penhall-Jones)

(Click on the Competition title to follow link)

[3 March: Neil Gunn Writing Competition](#)

An international prize for poetry and short stories with categories for adults and children. Short story: maximum 2500 words. Poetry: up to 40 lines. First prize for adult submissions: £500. Entry fee for adults: £8. Different rules and prizes apply for entries of school children.

[7 March: Byron Bay International Film Festival Screenplay Contest](#)

Open to feature-length screenplays between 80 and 120 pages in length and from all genres. First prize: \$2500 USD and screenwriting software. Entry fee: \$45 USD, or more after 7 March.

[10 March: Australian Book Review RAFT fellowship](#)

The Religious Advancement Foundation Trust are offering a fellowship to support a writer in their creation of an article 6000-8000 words on any aspect of the role and significance of religion in society and culture. Winner receives \$7500, airfares to Melbourne and will work closely with the ABR editor.

[10 March: ABR Eucalypt Fellowship](#)

Eucalypt Australia are offering a fellowship to support a writer in their creation of an article of 6000-8000 words on any aspect of the Australian Eucalypt. Winner receives \$7500, airfares to Melbourne and will work closely with the ABR editor.

[10 March: Jugiong short story competition](#)

Short story prizes in categories for both adults and children. Maximum 1000 words. First prize: \$50. Entry fee: \$5 per entry.

[20 March: Subbed in Manuscript Callout](#)

Sydney-based DIY literary organisation **subbed in** is looking to publish poetry, fiction, non-fiction and hybrid manuscripts (approx 10,000-17,500 words) by NSW-based authors.

[23 March: The Sheila Malady Short Story Competition](#)

This competition is open to short stories of 2000 words with the theme Light/Dark. First prize: \$300. Entry fee: \$5.

[31 March: The Caterpillar Poetry prize](#)

This competition is accepting poems on any subject of any length from anyone over 18. The winning poem will be featured in the summer 2017 issue of *The Caterpillar*. Entry fee: €12.

[31 March: Henry Lawson Verse and Short Story Competition](#)

Open to poems and short stories in 8 different categories. Poems: maximum 48 lines, first prize for Australian theme traditional verse: \$450. Short stories: maximum 2000 words, first prize for open class: \$500. Entry fee for adults: \$15. Different fees and prizes apply for different categories.

[31 March: National Young Writers Festival Call Out](#)

Open to writing in all its forms and accepting applications from people 18-35 years old. Participants will take part in four days of inclusivity, craft honing, heaps good chats and so much more.

[31 March: Eucalypt Submissions Call Out](#)

Open to original and unpublished works of tanka poetry for publication in the 22nd issue of *Eucalypt*.

[13 April: Adelaide Plains Poets Poetry Competition](#)

This competition is accepting poems with the theme 'Freedom'. Maximum length: 60 lines, cash prizes. Entry fee: \$10.

[30 April: The Arch and Bruce Brown Foundation Playwriting Competition](#)

Open to full-length works (dramas, comedies, musicals, screenplays) focusing on LGBTQ history. First prize: \$3000.

[30 April: Outback Writers' Festival Short Story Competition](#)

Short stories up to 3000 words with the theme 'Australian Outback'. Winning stories will be published in an anthology.

[3 May: Bristol Short Story Prize](#)

Open to writers worldwide. Stories may be on any theme or subject. Maximum length: 4000 words. First prize: £1000. Entry fee: £8.

[May 12: Bruce Dawe National Poetry Prize](#)

Open to poems up to 50 lines. Prize pool for winner and 2 runners-up: \$2500. Entry fee: \$6.

*That's all for now. Don't forget, contributions please. Margaret Penhall-Jones is a great contributor to the Newsletter but we also we need to hear from all members. We are a **writing group** – we meet to improve our writing and practise! Send your own stories, book or film reviews, writing exercises, please, to the Newsletter Editor. Don't wait to be asked! Leonie*