

Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Inc. *Established September 1986*

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

May 2017 Newsletter No 300

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

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Greetings

An early and brief newsletter this month as I am off to Indonesia on Wednesday to spend time with my daughter and her family. I will be in Jakarta for a few days and then we go to Rote Island (about 1200 sq km in area) off the coast of West Timor. Renowned for its white sand beaches and spectacular surfing breaks, Rote is one of the 15000 islands of our nearest neighbour. All Indonesia's islands have different characteristics and languages – Rote is predominantly Christian and very dry, similar to the north of Australia. In fact, Rote is only 500 km off the coast of Australia. Rote consists of rolling hills, terraced plantations, acacia palm, savannah and some forests.

The Rotinese depend on the lontar palm for basic survival but also as a supplement to their income from fishing (particularly seaweed gathering for export to Japan for sushi) and jewellery making.



Beautiful white sand beaches, craggy outcrops and village markets on Rote Island off Timor.

I love travelling to other countries to experience new cultures but also to keep returning to the familiar ones. We have been travelling to Indonesia since the early 90s and we always like to visit a different island as well as the main island of Java with the very busy capital, Jakarta. My daughter is a journalist and Chief of the BBC Bureau in Indonesia and fluent in Bahasa Indonesian so a great guide to what's on where.

Seeing or reading about other cultures is valuable source material for the writer – whether it is the setting for a romance, an historical novel or travel writing. A new exotic milieu, outside the experience of the reader, excites and engages.

We have a number of people away in the Group at present, including our Acting President Yvonne Kachel so no President's Report this month. We extend our sympathy to Yvonne as she copes with the terminal illness of her brother and the need to support other members of the family at this sorrowful time. It is very important for all in a group of like-minded people such as our writers' group to support and encourage all in their private and public activities.

Peace and harmony to all. Leonie

What's on in May?

10.00 am - 12.30 pm Wednesday 3 May 2017 Cavanbah Centre. Coffs's Harbour Writers' Group Monthly meeting followed by lunch (see below).

12.30 pm – 1.30 pm Wednesday 3 May 2017 Writers' Group Lunch in Chill Out café, Community Village (next to Cavanbah Centre).

1.30 pm – 3.30 pm Wednesday 3 May 2017 Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Workshop at Cavanbah Centre with Rosalie Skinner, 'Turning Pasture into Lawn' – smartening up your writing by eliminating repetition and unnecessary words and introducing variety and engaging sentences. Suitable for all levels. Members \$7.50. Non-members \$15.

10.00 am – 12.30 pm Thursday 18 May Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Social Morning Shearwater Restaurant, Promenade shops, Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour

And some activities a little further afield...

Poetry Workshop with Australian poet Judy Johnson at Port Macquarie Library on 5 May from 10 am to 3 pm. Cost \$60. Bookings essential. Enquiries 65823815 and bookings on 0411271814 or Alina (one of our members) on alinaloneck53@gmail.com Alina is also organising a car pool to travel to Port Macquarie.

9 June 2017 Bellingen Readers' and Writers' Festival Poetry Slam More details bellingenwritersfestival.com.au

4 – 6 August 2017 Byron Writers Festival. More details at byronwritersfestival.com/festival-2017/

Writing tips

Here's this month's tip from the Australian Writers' Centre:

Suffixes

Most suffixes are attached to words without a hyphen.

Example:

Sizeable, manageable, pinkish

However *-fold* and *-odd* are preceded by a hyphen.

Example:

He increased revenue *three-fold*.

There were *100-odd* guests at the wedding.

Members review... Margaret Penhall-Jones

Dangerous Liaisons *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*.

by Pierre-Ambroise Choderlos de Laclos, Helen Constantine (Translator) Penguin Classics.

Published in 1782, just eight years before the French Revolution, *Dangerous Liaisons (Les Liaisons Dangereuses)* is a multi-layered epistolary novel which takes us inside the exquisitely evil minds of the seducer the Comte de Valmont, his accomplice the Marquise de Merteuil and their not-so-innocent victims. Valmont and Merteuil are on a quest for revenge and their object is seduction.

If you saw the 1988 film, rest assured that even the cynical wickedness projected by John Malkovich's 'Valmont' pales compared to the breath-taking malevolence of the original.

This book is about evil; not the cheap-thrills horror-film type of evil. It portrays the evil which resides in the human soul and plots another's downfall for no good reason but because it *can*.

Still, we the reader may ask: could they have succeeded if their intended victims did not themselves have the spark of evil in them? If their victims had not been already seduced by unrealistic notions, a toxic mixture of romantic love and cloistered religion? If they were not prepared themselves to deceive mothers or husbands? Or if the husbands were not away from their wives, fighting or maintaining the fruits of unjustifiable wars? Could any of this have occurred without the decadence of French society of the *ancien regime*? That is, a society which created a class of individuals with too much time, money and ego but neither compassion nor conscience.

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Competitions from Margaret Penhall-Jones (*Click on the Competition title to follow link*)

[26 May: Poetry d'Amour Love Poetry Contest](#)

WA Poets Inc. is offering a prize for poems up to 40 lines with the theme of love. First prize: \$500. Entry fee: \$10 per entry, discounted fee for three or more entries. [Information here:](#)

[9 June: Grieve Writing Competition](#)

In honour of Grieve Awareness Month, the Hunter Writers' Centre are awarding over \$7000 in prizes for short stories of 500 words or poems up to 36 lines. First prize: \$1500. Entry fee: \$16.50. [Information here:](#)

[30 June: Ros Spencer Poetry Prize](#)

A poetry contest from WA Poets Inc. for original and unpublished poems of up to 60 lines with an open theme. First prize: \$701. Entry fee: \$10 per entry, with a discounted fee for three or more entries. [Information here:](#)

[3 July: ACU Prize for Poetry](#)

Maybe a member of the family would be interested in this one. The Australian Catholic University Prize for Poetry is open to students at Australian universities and will be awarded for outstanding poetry with the theme 'joy'. First prize: \$10,000. Entry fee: \$25. [Information here:](#)

Closing soon (click on the competition to go to the webpage):

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

[15 May: ATYP Foundation Commission](#)

[27 May: Shoalhaven Literary Award](#)

*That's all for now. Don't forget, contributions please. 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*