

# Coffs Harbour Writers' Group



*Established September 1986*

Inc.

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

*November 2016 Newsletter No 296*

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

**Book reviews, poems, personal stories, Anthology launch,  
competitions and a Travel Workshop...**

## Committee Members

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| <b>President (Acting):</b>                                    | Yvonne Kachel <a href="mailto:Yvonne.kachel@bigpond.com">Yvonne.kachel@bigpond.com</a>   |
| <b>Secretary:</b>   | (Vacancy - position to be filled at next meeting)  |
| <b>Treasurer:</b>   | Suzanne Tainsh <a href="mailto:polyart42@gmail.com">polyart42@gmail.com</a>  |
| <b>Assistant to Treasurer:</b>                                | Rhonda Rand <a href="mailto:rhonda2450@hotmail.com">rhonda2450@hotmail.com</a>   |
| <b>Membership Secretary:</b>                                  | Estelle Russell <a href="mailto:earusse21@gmail.com">earusse21@gmail.com</a>   |
| <b>Social Secretary/<br/>Newsletter Editor and Publicity:</b> | Yvonne Kachel <a href="mailto:Yvonne.kachel@bigpond.com">Yvonne.kachel@bigpond.com</a> and<br>Leonie Henschke <a href="mailto:leonie@henschke.net.au">leonie@henschke.net.au</a> |

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## Greetings

Some good news and bad news in our Writers' Group as we band together to support writing and our members, in all their needs. Contributions this month include book reviews, poems and personal stories. Our much-loved member, Roger Harris, has contributed a sensitive piece about being diagnosed with a major illness and his insight into the stages of grief. It is a very brave story. Also some changes to the line-up in the Committee members above. With Roger Harris' resignation from the position of President, Yvonne Kachel has stepped up as Acting President leaving the Secretary position vacant. Nominations for this position are called for the next meeting. We have a new date for the Anthology Launch; it will be Friday 18 November from 3.00 pm – 5.00 pm in the Coffs Harbour Library. Light refreshments will be served. Invite your friends!

Our next meeting on Wednesday 2 November at 10.00 am (day after Melbourne Cup!) promises to get your feet itching and the wanderlust happening. It's all about Travel. One of our new members, Annette Arthur (with foot in plaster), will be guest speaker talking about her visit to the wild Scottish Isles (and, no, she didn't break the ankle scaling a Scottish peak) and the afternoon workshop (1.30 pm – 3.30 pm) will be on Travel Writing with me, Leonie Henschke. So pull out those memories!

*Leonie*

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## What's on in November/December?

10.00 am - 12.30 pm **Wednesday 2 November** Cavanbah Centre. Coffs's Harbour Writers' Group Monthly meeting followed by lunch (see below).

12.30 pm – 1.30 pm **Wednesday 2 November Writers' Group Lunch** in Chill Out café, Community Village (next to Cavanbah Centre).

1.30pm – 3.30 pm **Wednesday 2 November Travel Writing Workshop with Leonie Henschke** Cavanbah Centre

10.00 am – 12.30 pm **Thursday 17 November Social Morning Tea**, Shearwater Restaurant, Promenade Shopping Village, Harbour Drive (the block before the Jetty Theatre).

3 pm – 5 pm **Friday 18 November Anthology Launch** Coffs Harbour Library

**December: Christmas party!!!**

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## Members' write

### Sally Ross

#### **My Chair is Still There**

*Tribute poem to our members by Sally Ross*

My chair is still there but where am I  
It's been four months since I said goodbye  
I've missed the meetings and morning teas  
The poems, the stories the camaraderie

Gentle James, artistic Suzanne.  
Enquiring Janices, Estelle with a plan  
Roger's stories on the seat of his pants, of his sisters the witches,  
And car races in ditches.

Ron with his interesting editorial quotes,  
Danielle with her snip-its and off the wall jokes  
Les with his school days a teacher to boot  
Yvonne with a laugh, our meetings a hoot.

Rhonda had stories about a small fish  
Lorraine is the President she always look swish  
Leonie writes newsletters, our editor in chief  
Rosalie writes her books, which feature Caleath

There are more in our group it grows everyday  
And where am I? I'm home but away!

## Margaret Penhall-Jones

### ***The Girl on the Train* by Paula Hawkins**

Read the book, see the movie: be prepared for a fast-paced psychological thriller.

I read the book first; compulsively. From page one I found myself entangled in the fate of three very flawed housewives, a murder and a middle-class suburban block. The pace never slows. The story unfolds through rapid changes of point-of-view and flashbacks. The information is all there for the reader to piece together, fed to us in delicious morsels, at deliberate intervals, through the tales of Rachel, Megan and Anna.

Rachel suffers alcoholic blackouts. It is through her untrustworthy perceptions that we are led into the story. She is the epitome of the “unreliable narrator”; a time-honoured story-telling device in mystery or horror stories. Are all three women unreliable narrators? Maybe. In any case readers must navigate the flawed perceptions of an alcoholic, a deceiver and a suspicious mind.

*The Girl on the Train* touches on social issues; unemployment, the marginalised and alcoholism. For those of us who remember the heady days and aims of the New Feminism, circa 1960s -1980s, the stultifying suburban situation of these women will make you wonder why we bothered. Their ideal “lifestyle” is a throw-back to Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*, re-booted with microwaves and Pilates classes. The quiet desperation of current day suburban women is reflected in Megan, Rachel and Anna. Each is unstable, unlikeable and sympathetic at once.

The movie transfers the action from a middle-class London-fringe suburb to its counterpart in New York. The claustrophobia of suburbia in a Northern Hemisphere, mist-shrouded, manicured-lawns suburb is interchangeable. The movie loses nothing from the change, but with its sharper editing, cuts some unnecessary scenes including the book’s unforgivable defect – the mawkish epilogue.

Either book or movie or both, put aside some time and take this journey!

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## Roger Harris

### **Cancer**

Cancer, defined in the Oxford Dictionary as “ A disease caused by an uncontrolled division of abnormal cells in a part of the body”. Not very useful information really, could have been written by Microsoft, 100% accurate, and 100% useless information.

Cancer is an ugly word, with even uglier consequences. Cancer is a word that installs fear, in those that hear it, get it, or the friends, relatives and loved ones, of those who sufferer it. There are no positives about cancer; I lost my father to cancer, two of my best friends, a childhood sweetheart, and numerous others I was not so close to.

I always thought when thinking of my own death, that it would be in a race car, but I survived that, just to be almost taken out whilst stationery at an intersection, hardly seems fair somehow.

I never really contemplated getting to 66, when the Who sang *My Generation*, I thought 30 was old, but now at 66 I still haven't got there, though I admit to a concerted effort to never grow up, growing up is for old people.

So now it's my turn to face cancer, and the unknown, it took 12 years to kill Carol, and only nine months to kill lifelong friend Silly John. Not much to go on, the same cancer took two years to kill my Dad, but there have been great advances in medicine in the 45 years since he died. So who knows?

So what have you got, well you still have life of course, it's a bit like losing the key to the filler cap on the car, you can still drive it around and control it, you just know it's going to stop some time. A clue might be that I'm still observing the speed limits, so I must be expecting to be around long enough to pay the fines, hence trying to avoid them.

In truth and logic, not much changes, the only two certainties in life are death and taxes, so it's really only a revision of the time table. A reminder, not to procrastinate, race that car, go to La Scala, finish the house, attend Goodwood (the Mecca of motor sport), a trip on the Orient Express, Venice to London, the great Opera Houses of Europe. So much to do; so little time.

The great Nuvolari, in answer to a journalist's question relating to fear in a race car, said "Most people die in bed, where do you sleep"? Roger Harris, recently said, "I wasn't put on this planet to die in bed, and I have no intention of doing so". And though I suspect I will, I'm not tired enough to go to bed yet, I have too much living to do, and to enjoy.

Is it scary? Yes, but by Christmas I hope to have an accurate prognosis, then I can make plans, continue to meet life head on, and whatever challenges it presents.

*"Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside (in a Lotus) in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming "Wow! What a Ride!"*

*Quote from: Hunter S Thompson.*

*Reference to Lotus inserted by Roger Harris (author)*

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## 60-SECOND WRITING TIPS from the Australian Writers' Centre Newsletter

### Hierarchy of adjectives

There is a hierarchy when you 'stack' adjectives.

1. **Subjective judgment or evaluation** (e.g. stunning, beautiful, ugly) – evaluative adjective
2. **Measurement** (e.g. big, small, old, young, tall, short, fat) – descriptive adjective
3. **Colour** (e.g. blue, yellow, purple, red) – descriptive adjective
4. **Material/type** (e.g. helium, plastic, brick) – defining adjective

In a stack of adjectives preceding a noun, you use commas in between two adjectives of the same type.

**For example:** All these adjectives are descriptive and therefore need commas between them.

*The long, smooth, sweet-smelling, pink rose.*

**For example:** These adjectives are different types and therefore don't need a comma.

*Sleek (evaluative) new (descriptive) hybrid (defining).*

*Big fat Greek wedding.*

*Red brick house.*

## LOVE TO TRAVEL? LOVE TO WRITE?

Calling all travel junkies! Coffs Harbour Writers' Group is putting on a **Travel Writing** workshop which is sure to get your taste buds twittering, your feet itching and your fingers poised on the keyboard...and the credit card out to book that next ticket!

**When:** Wednesday 2 November 1.30 pm – 3.30 pm Cavanbah Centre, Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour

**Bookings:** 0412668315

**Fee:** Coffs Harbour Writers' Group members \$7.50; Non-Members \$15

**Presenter:** Leonie Henschke.

Everybody likes to travel - to get away from day to day routines - whether it is to exotic locations or to a B&B up in the hills. In every one of those settings there is a story. It is up to the writer to capture the sights, smells, sounds, and, most particularly, personal stories to make that special place come alive for the reader. In this relaxed session, journalist and writer (and adventure traveller), Leonie Henschke, facilitates group conversation to share, inspire, amuse and challenge other travel junkie writers! Bring along your memories! Leonie will ensure a practical, hands-on workshop with take home messages and inspiration for new scribblers and experienced writers alike!

## Competitions and 'broadcast' opportunities *(from Margaret Penhall-Jones)*

### [15 November: notJack Writers' Prize](#)

The theme of this prize is 'writing from place'. Entries may be up to 3000 words or 40 lines of poetry. First prize: \$5000, entry fee: \$20. [Information here:](#)

### [16 November: Hazel Rowley Literary Fellowship](#)

Applications are now open for this \$15,000 literary fellowship for a work of biography. [Information here:](#)

### [20 November: Judith Wright Poetry Prize](#)

This competition seeks poetry by writers who have published no more than one collection of poems under their name. First prize: \$6000, entry fee: \$12 for *Overland* subscribers, \$20 for non-subscribers. [Information here:](#)

### [20 November: Neilma Sidney Short Story Prize](#)

This prize seeks short fiction of up to 3000 words, themed around the notion of 'travel'. First prize: \$4000, entry fee: \$12 for *Overland* subscribers, \$20 for non-subscribers. [Information here:](#)

### [16 December: Hal Porter Short Story Competition](#)

Australian writers are invited to enter a short story, written in any style. First prize: \$1000, maximum length: 2500 words, entry fee: \$10. [Information here:](#)

### [19 December: Artist with Disability Fellowship](#)

This \$30,000 fellowship is to enable a professional NSW artist with disability to undertake a self-directed program of professional development. Open to artists working in any art form. [Information here:](#)

### [31 December: Magic Oxygen Literary Prize](#)

Invitation to writers aged 16 or over, of any nationality, living anywhere in the world. Short stories up to 4000 words, and poetry up to 50 lines, in any theme are accepted. Entry fee: £5, first prize: £1000. [Information here:](#)

### [31 December: Reader's Digest 100-Word Story Competition](#)

This competition asks for brilliant fiction in 100 words. First prize: US \$1000 in your local currency and publication by Reader's Digest. [Information here:](#)

### [27 January 2017: Nature Writing Prize](#)

Writers are invited to submit an essay between 3000 and 5000 words in the genre 'Writing of Place'. First prize: \$5000, entry fee: \$30. [Information here:](#)

### [25 February 2017 RHONDA JANKOVIC LITERARY AWARDS](#)

**Theme: Social Justice. Sections: (1) Poetry (2) Short Story First Prize for each section: A\$600.00**

Second Place and Third Place Certificates awarded for each section

Highly Commended and/or Commended Certificates awarded

[www.rhondajankovicliterarysociety.org](http://www.rhondajankovicliterarysociety.org)

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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. Newsletters are distributed by email and hardcopies available at the monthly meeting. Please ensure your email addresses are current. And feedback please. Comments on stories, events in the newsletter, letters to the editor. Let's get some discussion happening. If another group in which you are involved has an event coming up and it would be of interest to writers, share it here! Anything arts and cultural. Leonie*