

# Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Inc.

*Established September 1986*



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

*June 2017 Newsletter No 301*

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

## Committee Members

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<b>Acting President:</b>	Annette Arthur <a href="mailto:annettearthur53@gmail.com">annettearthur53@gmail.com</a>
<b>Secretary:</b>	Kim Shepherd <a href="mailto:akimbomakes@gmail.com">akimbomakes@gmail.com</a>
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*Please note: A new committee will be elected at the AGM in July so some positions are acting because of changes.*

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## Greetings

Welcome to winter. The nights are colder but the days are wonderful and the humpback whales are on the move north to have their babies in warmer water. They were active off Sawtell headland last weekend so keep your eyes peeled over the long weekend. It is a magnificent spectacle to experience these gigantic animals breaching and blowing.

We would like to extend our condolences to Yvonne Kachel on the passing of her brother. This has been a stressful time for Yvonne with her brother's illness and need for helping his family. I know you will all want to send your thoughts and prayers to her at this time. As Roger Harris wrote in a previous newsletter, the Writers' Group has always been a wonderfully supportive club so show your compassion for Yvonne and help her in her grief.

We have had some changes on the committee in the last few months and the AGM at the July meeting will give us all the chance to get new permanent positions in place.

Please nominate yourself or someone else for a position (with their approval, of course). Don't be shy. Clubs need people to do the organising and it doesn't take a lot of time. If you have ideas act on them and help your fellow members.

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## What's on in June?

**10.00 am - 12.30 pm Wednesday 7 June 2017 Cavanbah Centre. Coffs's Harbour Writers' Group Monthly meeting followed by lunch (see below).**

**12.30 pm – 1.30 pm Wednesday 7 June 2017 Writers' Group Lunch in Chill Out café, Community Village (next to Cavanbah Centre).**

**10.00 am – 12.30 pm Thursday 22 June Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Social Morning Danielle and Ron's home, Bellingen. More details from any of the committee numbers.**

*And more...*

**9 June 2017 Bellingen Readers' and Writers' Festival Poetry Slam More details [bellingenwritersfestival.com.au](http://bellingenwritersfestival.com.au)**

**4 – 6 August 2017 Byron Writers Festival. More details at [byronwritersfestival.com/festival-2017/](http://byronwritersfestival.com/festival-2017/)**

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## 10 Writing tips

*"Writing is easy. All you have to do is cross out the wrong words."* **Mark Twain**

From [writersdigest.com](http://writersdigest.com)

By: [Chuck Sambuchino](#)

**1. Don't write linearly:** Don't set out to write something from beginning to end. A story is meant to be read from front to back, but not necessarily created that way. If you have an idea for writing the sixth chapter first, then start there. The epilogue can even be the first thing you put down on paper, then work your way back. Scattered chapters will eventually be filled in, and it will force you to look at the story from different angles, which may present different ideas or new approaches. You'd be surprised how well this works when a whole book starts coming together. It's also great for getting around writer's block.

**2. Have two or more projects on the go:** Speaking of writer's block, having more than one project on the go is never a bad idea. Although focus and dedication are paramount to completing a work, sometimes you inevitably get stuck. It's good to be able to move on to something else instead of feeling frustrated and stagnant. You don't have to have a few big projects happening either ... maybe you're penning a novel, but also some short stories and an article or two.

**3. Be your own editor:** There are days where you may have difficulty writing altogether, so switch to editing your stories rather than trying to create them. Never assume it is someone else's job to fix your mistakes or do writing and editing at the same time. Find all the errors first, and deal with them yourself. The more polished and refined your work is, the more favourably it will be received when you're finally ready to present it.

**4. Ask for (and take lots of) punishment:** It is well worth finding yourself a professional writer or editor and asking/paying them to look at your work. Tell them to give you highly critical feedback with no sugarcoating. Let them go so far as to be cruel too, just so you really get the point. There is a lot of rejection and criticism involved in the publishing industry. Getting accustomed to it sooner than later is advantageous. If you want to be serious about your writing, then you'll need to know everything wrong with your writing. Accepting and understanding the harsh realities of your shortcomings is a most important step to getting better.

**5. Disconnect:** Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pintrest, the Internet in general ... we know how invasive social media and technology is in our lives these days. We also know that it can be good for promotion, building a brand, and having an online presence. But you know what else social media and technology is really good for? Procrastination, distraction, and countless wasted hours. Being able to unplug for long periods of time is more important than you may think. All those tweets you've posted might have added up the word-count of half a novel by now...

**6. Learn what good writing is:** Honestly, there's so much terrific writing out there, but there is also considerably more garbage as well. I'm constantly surprised by how many people don't know the difference between the good and the bad. Art is subjective, true, but it isn't *that* subjective when you remove ignorance and replace it with education. Duke Ellington said it best: "There are two kinds of music. Good music, and the other kind". The same applies to writing.

**7. Have your own workspace:** It's trendy nowadays to take your laptop to coffee shop or bar and write in public. I even advocate a change of environment/atmosphere when writing feels stifled. But I believe it's more important to have and maintain your own private workspace, a spot you can call your own with a desk and preferably a door you can close when you need to shut out the world in order to create your own.

**8. Dedicate to the craft:** Serious writing is not something you merely do if or when you can find the time. It's not just for Sunday afternoons, or the occasional evening, or a few hours a week when you can give it some attention. *Make* the time, and make lots of it. Tackle the craft daily and dedicate a generous portion of your existence to honing your skills. You're only going to get out of it what you put into it, and serious writing requires a lot of investment.

**9. Time management:** When it comes to the hours or days you've reserved for writing, make sure you stick to your guns. Consider it sacred. To most other people, your 'writing time' is merely 'flexible time'. They will invariably think that you can cancel, minimize or postpone working when it suits you (or them).

Tell these people that your personal work time is not negotiable; much like theirs isn't at their day jobs. You don't need a regimented schedule, but you do need to clock in the hours.

**10. Remember the Three "P's":** Patience, Perseverance, and maintaining your sense of Purpose.

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## **Competitions from Margaret Penhall-Jones**

*(Click on the Competition title to follow link)*

### **12 June: Peter Blazey Fellowship**

The Fellowship is awarded annually to writers in the non-fiction fields of biography, autobiography and life writing and is intended to further a work in progress. First prize: \$15,000 and a one-month writer-in-residency at The Australia Centre. [Information here:](#)

### **30 June: Newcastle Poetry Prize**

Accepting unpublished poetry with an open theme and maximum 200 lines. First prize: \$15,000. Entry fee: \$34. [Information here:](#)

### **30 June: StylusLit submissions callout**

Biannual online literary journal, StylusLit, are calling for submissions, including previously unpublished poetry, short stories, novel excerpts, creative non-fiction, interviews and reviews. [Information here:](#)

### **31 July: Children's Peace Literature Award**

Open for nominations of children's books related to peaceful means of resolving conflict and promoting peace at the global, local and interpersonal level. Australian Psychologists Association. First prize: \$1000. [Information here:](#)

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*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*