

Coffs Harbour Writers' Group



Established September 1986

Affiliated with the Northern Rivers Writers Centre

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NEWSLETTER

July 2013

Announcements

Meeting Today: Thursday 4th July at the Ex-Services Club from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm. After the business meeting is over, we'll get down to readings. **Please note:** at 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm Leonie Henschke will present her workshop 'Making Characters Real'. Cost: members \$5; non-members \$10.

Last Social: the last social held in the meeting room at the Coffs Harbour Botanic Garden on Thursday 20th June proved to be an enjoyable event for 13 members. Over cups of tea, coffee and nice cakes they read their pieces and made interesting comments on literary and social issues.

Next Social: at Buddha's Cafe in the grounds of the plant nursery, Hogbin Drive, Toormina on Thursday 18th July from 10 am to 12 noon. This is a lovely area in which to socialise.

Tribute to Cameron John Lee (1929-2013)

by Les Fairey

As a contributing member of the Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Cameron John Lee, sometimes called Jack, also affectionately known to close friends, as "JC" would delight in attending monthly meetings, coffee morning meetings and periodic workshops of the group.

Usually, apart from cryptic comments at times and advice on verbal critiques of members' writings, John would read poems he had written or articles on nature themes or former activities in younger days – roo shooting for example.

He had a unique way with words, loved writing verses and self-published a booklet of some of his works. In recent years John hosted at least two coffee morning socials at his Sawtell home.

John also had many other interests, participating in such cultural groups as square dancing, art, U3A seminars, besides being a long-time active member of Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare, specially helping to care for Sawtell's dunal forest strips (waging war on bitou bush, mother-of-millions for example). Growing and planting pandanus, here and there, in the dunes was a favourite interest as well as seed collecting for propagation.

His varied lifestyle and careers included teaching (woodwork), whilst in recent years being a staunch member of the Greens and an equally strong devotee of his own family, including grandchildren.

John took every opportunity to visit art galleries in Sydney and Canberra, including local galleries. Also he enjoyed excursions to Bellingen and nearby markets, chatting with interest to all stallholders. He certainly lived a full and interesting life.

Members of our writers group expressed their condolences to John's son and daughter with a lovely card and beautiful flowers.

VALE

Our deepest sympathies and condolences go out to our member Estelle Russell whose husband, Tom, died recently from a long illness. The Coffs Harbour Writers' Group will donate \$50 to Parkinson's PSP Research. We do trust you will have many fond memories of Tom as the years roll by.

President's Report July 2013

We had a rather smaller group at our meeting on 6th June, with a few of our members going through a tough time with their health.

Some of our members are lucky enough to be overseas and intrastate, hope they are enjoying themselves and return soon with heaps of good stories to tell.

One of our members has been absent for a while due to his creative powers of persuasion with the opposition government about the need for building more dams to stop the water run-offs into the ocean. Good luck!

Discussion and action: I raised the notion that as a Writers Group one of our objectives is to assist our members improve their writing skills and with this in mind I suggested that we consider 2 or 3 of our members to be sponsored to attend this year's Byron Bay Writers Festival 2-4 August 2013 and to report back to the group the following month by way of a presentation on the benefits and knowledge learnt by attending this highly regarded writers festival.

The majority of members in attendance were agreeable to sponsoring 2 members only. Members who were interested in attending the Festival placed their names into a container for consideration. A visitor Jon Shuttleworth drew out Rosalie Skinner and Karolyn Gibson names.

Both Rosalie and Karolyn will work on a process where they can learn and benefit from attending the Writers Festival and present a knowledge session on the benefits learnt at the September 2013 meeting.

HANDS

Marjorie Fisher

Hands are the tools that most of us possess to carry out the practical work we need to do, and the artistic things we choose to create to make our lives more meaningful and satisfying, and to bring pleasure to others.

There are many things that simply can't be done without hands, yet humans can be extremely innovative and resourceful when backed into a corner, as they have proved by creating works of art through painting with their toes or mouth, and a few women have even managed to care for their babies using legs and feet, albeit with some help from other hands.

Some hands are used to do miraculous things such as microscopic surgery, which only the highly skilled could perform, and without which some people would die, or live useless lives.

Others build homes and cars, develop scientific wonders, grow our food, create beautiful parks and gardens to enrich our lives, write unforgettable music, teach children and adults, and care for the sick and disabled. Hands are always available; they are never mislaid or lost.

Some hands are beautifully shaped, aesthetically attractive, and have been the subject of photographs. Others are disfigured by ugly scars and spots, gnarled and misshapen with stiff and lumpy, swollen joints which may ache painfully and refuse to function effectively.

Although hands can detract from overall appearance, beauty is not their primary importance. It is their ability to perform a myriad of vital services for others and us and to maintain our independence, which makes them indispensable. Someone's hands make everything around us. What kind of life would we have without them?

Book Review

By Adrienne de Bouvier

How the World makes Love by Franz Wisner (author of New York Times Bestseller *Honeymoon with My Brother*). Hardback, 308 pages first printed in New York in 2009 by St Martin's Press. The reviewer's copy was purchased from Clouston and Hall (ACT), Booksellers.

Glancing at the title, one could be forgiven for assuming the book's contents are comprised of sleazy accounts of sexual liaisons. Instead, it takes the reader on a trip around the world to discover the ins and outs of different cultures' concepts about courtship and marriage.

The author, Franz Wisner, was literally dumped at the altar. Imagine his embarrassment, when many guests had flown great distances to attend the wedding, bought expensive gifts and he had booked the bridal suite and paid for an expensive honeymoon in advance. Rather than make it a financial disaster, Franz takes his divorced brother Kurt on his honeymoon instead and this book is a follow-up of what occurred later, after Franz had licked his wounds.

We learn about arranged marriages, which seem to work very well in India, and pickup lines that don't. Egyptians are smart when it comes to divorce settlements; the groom is required to agree to a level of support prior to the wedding. Arab divorce is simple – a husband only needs to say "I divorce you" three times and a few witness the act and Bob's your uncle.

In New Zealand, romance has gone the same as the Six O'clock Swill but the affects remain. Today, the "pickup bar" is something to use when bench-pressing in a gym, not the portal to the partner of one's dreams. Kiwis marry "long-time friends", flat-mates, fellow students and colleagues of their cousins and sometimes their cousins. In Botswana, if you tell a lady she is fat, it's a huge compliment. Men spend their time walking about in search of a lady with a large derriere and they aren't backward in having a feel of it.

There are a few lessons to be learned from the Muslim world and the explicit instructions for courting couples in the Koran. Never mind the Perfumed Garden, that fifteenth century text that matches the Kama Sutra stroke for stroke, there are no coded messages here.

The ten global threats to love are listed as Texting, Miss Universe, Cars, Dowries, and Weddings. Music from the United States, Banana Dictators, Soccer and Soap Operas, the word "Love" itself and the lack of role models.

Humorous, enlightening and highly recommended non-fiction reading.

Competition

Scribes Writers Literary Competition 2013. This year there are two categories in the competition. Open theme. Maximum word count 1000 words in both categories.

- **Category A: Fictional Short Story**
- **Category B: Memoir**

(For the purposes of this competition, a memoir is defined as an incident or related series of incidents from the writer's own life. It is not a mini autobiography.) Prizes in Category A: 1st \$200; 2nd \$100. Prizes in Category B: 1st \$100; 2nd \$50. Highly Commended and Commended certificates at the judges discretion. Entry fee: \$7 per entry, per category, cheques made payable to SCRIBES WRITERS. Stamps or coins will not be accepted. **CONDITIONS OF ENTRY:** Text, title and page numbers only appear on entry. Attach a cover sheet, stating category of entry, author's name, address, phone number and email address (if applicable), title of entry and word count. No clip art or decoration of any kind. Typed on single-sided A4 paper and double space. Submissions must be the original work of the author,

not having previously won a cash prize, been published or broadcast nor submitted concurrently elsewhere. Failure to comply with conditions of entry will result in disqualification and forfeited entry fee. Judge's decision is final and no further correspondence will be entertained. Enclose a business-size SSAE for results and judge's report. Winners will be notified within 6 weeks of the competition closing date. Send entries to: Competition Convenor, Scribes Writers Short Story Competition, South Barwon Community Centre, 33 Mt. Pleasant Road, Belmont, Victoria 3216. Website: www.scribeswriters.com

God is so wonderful and majestic
To be known by him is to be blessed,
His qualities shine in our hearts,
Keeping us from being depressed.

Spiritual light has flashed up,
and the righteous one does rejoice,
His path is made lighter,
About God's many glories he will give forth his voice.

Trials may come and one's load may increase,
Prayer and supplication are needed at this time,
He will watch over us,
And comfort all those laid low with sighing.

God has given us a name upon which to call
For at all times we may reach him doing this,
He is near to those broken at heart,
His eyes are on every faithful witness.

The cup of grand salvation I shall take up
And run the race for life with endurance,
He will catch me when lest I fall,
The gift of everlasting life is my assurance.

□ *Leon Stokes*

Note: as a member, would you be interested in writing a 200 words story or poetry or your profile posted on the group's website? If so, please contact Lorraine on 6653 3256. There are thousands who peruse our website. Also, the editor would like writings of humour, travel, memoir, history, theatre, festivals, book and film reviews or anything else you think may be of interest, please send it to the editor at the group's postal address or the editor's email address, preferably as an attachment, shown on the front page of this newsletter.

See: http://coffsharbourwriters.wordpress.com/members_stories
<http://coffsharbourwriters.wordpress.com/newsletter/>

Quote

There are three kinds of lies:
lies, damned lies, and statistics.

Benjamin Disraeli:

Attributed by Mark Twain, *Autobiography*.