

# Coffs Harbour Writers' Group



*Established September 1986*

Affiliated with the Northern Rivers Writers Centre

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**Website: [www.coffsharbourwriters.wordpress.com](http://www.coffsharbourwriters.wordpress.com)**

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**NEWSLETTER**

**June 2013**

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## Announcements

**Meeting Today:** Thursday 6th June at the Ex-Services Club from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm. After the business meeting, we'll get down to readings.

**Last Social:** fourteen members and visitors came to Ron and Danielle's social meeting at their home on Thursday 16th May. There were four apologies. Everyone present read interesting pieces and commented mainly about books and authors. We also had the pleasure of the company of Rena Briand and her friend Kath.

**Next Social:** this will be held at the Coffs Harbour Botanic Garden in the meeting room from 10 am to 12 noon on Thursday 20th June. Tea, coffee and cakes are available. See you there.

**Last Workshop:** Thank you Rosalie for the very interesting workshop, 'Structuring World', held on Thursday 2nd May. Your relaxed presentation and the subject matters were intriguingly put and stimulating.

**Guest speaker:** Vincent Butcher, Senior Lawyer of Slater & Gordon, gave an interesting talk on copyright in relation to members works posted on the group's website in the morning of 2nd May. Lorraine sent a transcript of Vincent's talk to members who attended.

**Workshop: 'Making characters real — setting the characters world and developing realistic and engaging dialogue'.** Developing characters can be challenging but it is not impossible if you understand the basics of character development and characterisation. Learn how to create a compelling narrative and discover the skills necessary to create dynamic characters. Bring your characters to life, keep your readers interested, and master the art of character development. This workshop will be presented by Leonie Henschke from 1.30 am to 3.30 am on Thursday 4th July 2013 at the Ex-Services Club. This will be an interesting workshop, so remember to mark it in your diary.

## **CHATS First Short Story Slam Event** (President Lorraine Mouafi reports)

Coffs Harbour Writers' Group members took out the 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes at the Coffs Harbour Amateur Theatrical Society (CHATS) First Short Story Slam Event held on 4th May at the Mud Hut, Coffs Harbour.

What an amazing inaugural Short Story Slam Event that members of CHATS held in the Mud Hut to an audience of approximately eighteen. Nine of these were CHWG members, four of them read out stories with such enthusiasm as they had to give each reader a score based on their 'Voice, Body Language, Dialogue and Audience Attention' as the basis for judging them.

The Short Story Readers read out their personal, some funny and fictional stories. It was their ability to project their voices, while using interesting body language techniques, their dialogue used and of course how they managed to capture the audience attention that would win out in the end.

What a fantastic result for our winning members, they were: Estelle Russell won the first prize; Karolyn Gibson as the runner-up, and Rhonda Rand as the best story.

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### ***The Rubber Man** by Lorraine Mouafi*

The Rubber Man is incredibly different to anyone you have ever known, he has unbelievable ability to be thin at any time when he wishes; he can slip underneath any closed door and also bounce his way up and down any tall buildings, along the streets and over bridges.

His capacity for movement is amazing, and most of all he has mind-boggling attraction to women for his muscular power.

Men find him irritating due to his ability to do anything most men can't or even attempt; and more importantly they envy his ability to attract women with his faultless personality and his skill to be a hero for everyone, he is Mr. Perfection.

One example of perfection is his ability to be thin one minute, and then change to enormously tall and more solid, which is a great advantage, especially when he is faced with any type of threat.

Being a rubber man, it is impossible for anyone to hurt him, or even hide or run away from him, you can't hit and win, or shoot bullets to kill him or even use solid weapons against him as they just bounce off, bullets do not penetrate into his rubber skin, he is unbreakable and will not wear out.

Long lives the Rubber Man!

*[Lorraine writes: my husband Mon, was instrumental with assisting me to create this fictional story.]*

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### ***Byron Bay Writers' Festival 2013 makes a political point***

Indications are that 2013 will be the first year the Byron Bay Writers Festival sells its entire quota of Early Bird discounted 3 Day Passes! ... the Festival office is bursting at the seams with the big ideas and compelling topics it contains. We couldn't ignore the forthcoming election and there is a plethora of books on what ails the Labor party and what future might hold in this lucky country. Kerry O'Brien will interview Maxine McKew. Other subjects up for discussion are: What the hell happened? Labor's descent into the badlands. Smashing China: Australia's Asian century when legendary Indian journalist and political commentator MJ Akbar adds his perspective to that of heavyweight Australian analyst including George Megalogenis and *The Insiders'* Karen Middleton. It's the feisty debate for which the Byron Bay Writers' Festival is renowned. If interested and would like more details about the festival's full program and costs, ring 02 6685 5115 or contact: email [info@nrwc.org.au](mailto:info@nrwc.org.au) or [www.nrwc.org.au](http://www.nrwc.org.au) The Coffs Harbour Writers' Group is affiliated with the NRWC.

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We have a number of members short stories and poetry on the group's website and are looking for some more. Go to: <http://coffsharbourwriters.wordpress.com/members-stories> Contact Lorraine on 6653 3256.

## Book review and Coober Pedy launch

by Danielle Babb

*White man in a hole* by Rena Briand. First published in 1971, and again later in the same year. It was reprinted in 2012 with additional chapter and more coloured photographs. An introduction by the late Australian author Alan Marshall. Non-fiction paperback, 154 pages. Available at The Alternatives Bookshop, Bellingen and Warehouse bookshops, Toormina and Coffs Harbour.

All profits of this reprint will be shared between the RFDS (Royal Flying Doctor Service), WIRES (Wildlife Rescue) and the Aboriginal Account of the late eye surgeon Dr Fred Hollows.

It's a factual documentary on Coober Pedy opal fields in the Stuart Ranges of South Australia. The author Rena Briand captures the atmosphere of the town in the early 1960s, observing the unusual lives of its inhabitants, its fascinating characters, the opal fever, the hardships, and the dust, the flies and extreme temperatures. Rena fires people's imagination, writing with enthusiasm about the opal and its attraction, covering all aspects of prospecting and mining with expert observations. She creates a valuable textbook for those interested in the search for opals whilst telling amusing anecdotes about the lives of the people involved in this unique outback town. It is a very enjoyable and colourful book. A great read.

Coober Pedy was once the muddy floor of an icy inland sea inhabited by marine reptiles, distantly related to the dinosaurs, and it was very fitting that the book launch took place on Sunday 21 April 2013 at 4 pm at the Umoona Opal Mine and Museum's giant reptiles section. The management of the museum organised a wonderful reception, catered locally in her honour, opened by the deputy mayor and attended, I think, by most people in town.

There was *The Regional Times*, the ladies from the local historical society, the president of the RSL, business people, opal buyers, miners who knew the author when she lived there 45 years ago, and others who came after she left but knew of her and the book that was instrumental in putting Coober Pedy and the Breakaways on the tourist trail. After the initial signing of Rena's books, it was time for renewing old acquaintances, in this incredible atmosphere. It was a family affair, the children Rena knew in the 1960s, now middle age, brought their own children to the launch to meet the lady who wrote about their town, and their way of life, frankly and honestly, with sympathy. There was a feeling of gratitude for the author for recording part of their history and that of the town. They also brought first edition books for signing. New connections also were made. The author was on a mission, she was donating mementoes to the town that had given her the inspiration to write *White man in a hole* – her original manuscript, a painting by Eileen Crombie, a wooden carving of a Chinaman face that she'd found in the desert, a hard copy of her first book *No tears to flow – A woman at war*, various artefacts from Vietnam and elsewhere, just to name a few. Reminiscing and story-telling contributed to a very enjoyable evening, an evening to remember.

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### **Mona Brand Award Short Story Competition 2013 (Central Coast FAW)**

First prize \$200; Second prize \$100; Third prize \$50. Maximum 2000 words, open theme. No entry form, \$7 entry fee. **CONDITIONS OF ENTRY:** *Normal Competition conditions* apply. Title of entry and page number to appear on each page of manuscript. No names or addresses to appear on manuscripts. A separate cover sheet must be attached listing the title of the entry, author's name, address, telephone number, e-mail address and word count. Entries will not be returned. Cheques or money orders to be made payable to the Fellowship of Australian Writers (do not abbreviate). No other form of payment will be accepted. If you would like an *individual judge's appraisal* send an extra \$10 with your entry and a stamped self-addressed envelope. Send entries to: The Convenor, Mona Brand Competition, 1/7 Bowcock Place, Kincumber, NSW 2251. Enquiries: Helen Luidens 4363 2627 or luidens@hotkey.net.au **Closing date 31 August 2013.**

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## *Endgame*

There is not much for me to say  
There isn't much for me to do  
There is a well worn path. The weeds  
Make it obscure and yet my needs  
Are great, whilst those who help are few  
I live my life just day by day  
I need what strength I still retain  
To take charge of my life again

I wish that life was free of stress.  
The years the decades have rolled by.  
I thought there would be less to loose,  
And yet so much which I must choose.  
I seek tranquillity, so why  
Has my life turned out such a mess?  
Problems arise and I must make  
Decisions free of a mistake.

I face the fabled four score years.  
Reasons of strength the Bible says.  
My life is shattered and I know  
There really is no place to go.  
I have to find alternate ways,  
Pretending strength and hiding tears.  
It's just no use, I cannot hide  
I have so little left inside

I know that I am not alone.  
It is part of the life we share.  
As our life spans increase in length,  
Supplies diminish, as does strength.  
There are so few who really care.  
We have to cope, just on our own.  
We all can see, we're well aware  
Fragility may strip us bare.

□ *Bob Strum*

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### **Quote**

Concentration of economic power is all-embracing corporations ... represents private enterprise become a kind of private government which is a power unto itself—a regimentation of other people's money and other people's lives.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT: Acceptance speech, Democratic National Convention, June 27 1936