

# Coffs Harbour Writers' Group



*Established September 1986*

Affiliated with the Northern Rivers Writers Centre

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**NEWSLETTER**

**September 2013**

## Announcements

**Meetings: Thursday 5th September ordinary meeting at the Coffs Harbour Ex-Services Club from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm.** Ron Pike will present his workshop on **Poetry from 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm.** See page 2 in August newsletter for details. Charge: members \$5; non-members \$10.

**Last Social:** At Karolyn Gibson's home on Thursday 15th August. There was a good roll-up of 14 members and one visitor. As usual, great readings and commentaries were enjoyed in fine weather. Thank you, Karolyn for a lovely warm reception, and the readings and discussions were just great.

**Next Social:** Will be held at Buddha's Cafe in the grounds of Plant Nursery in Hogbin Drive, Toormina from Thursday 19th September from 10 am till noon

**Next Workshop:** See above under Meetings.

**New Members:** Welcome Dr Mhoira Laura-Patterson, Janice Thomas, Jane Thompsonpowter, Cory Trevor Parker, Lee Davitt, and Ralph Waddax. We hope you will enjoy our company and experience some creative writing.

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## Note

Hi everyone, as discussed and agreed some months ago, I have finally registered the domain name '[coffsharbourwriters.com](http://coffsharbourwriters.com)' for our blog via [Wordpress.com](http://Wordpress.com). The fee is \$21 annually. This means our URL address is [coffsharbourwriters.com](http://coffsharbourwriters.com) only, no need to include the [wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com) – Lorraine Mouafi, President.

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**Constitution:** CHWG constitution is available to any member on request. It is available from the editor either by mail or online.

## ***Two Reports on Byron Bay Writers Festival***

***By Karolyn Gibson***

DAY ONE: Only yesterday they were just names on a page to me with barely a face to relate too. Yes, they were already famous or at least well known. They were heroes, legends, celebrities and talented and trained professionals, but I lived in a different bubble.

Then came my tomorrow, a new day, a new way and the great white marquee, in fact there were five. all strategically placed in attainable positions around the grounds. I was standing in the middle of the amazing Byron Bay Writers' Festival.



What a sight! Oh well, this *IS* Byron ... I was home and feeling it.

The atmosphere, the weather and when I got brave enough even the food gave me purpose. My mission was to discover, uncover, reveal the missing link ... Hmmm.

Setting out across the boggy fields (the only reminder of the opened cloudy skies just days before) I placed my sights on the SCU marquee, waved my mates good day as they confidently proceeded to their preferred panel and cautiously entered the sea of colour and vibe ... It was quiet and still quite empty? As usual I was about half an hour too early. Feeling a little awkward I tried desperately to place myself in position unnoticed. I chose the seat smack bang in the centre front of the stage ... Well I have a problem hearing and my sight isn't all that great either, especially if there's a possibility of bobbing heads and hats all around.

Time moved fast and the seats quickly filled with, you guessed it, hats and bobbing heads. The hum of the coffee machines echoed all around as the mikes squealed into action. The damp grassy floor beneath my feet warned me clearly to steal the chair beside me for my belongings – coat, bag, water bottle, programme, notepad, pen, camera and voice recorder. Leaving the kitchen sink behind was a great idea, a smart move on my part.

The stage was set. Smiling and concentrated faces extended out over the crowd below them and one empty chair stood proudly in place.

The Byron Bay Writers' Festival is very supportive of PEN, the organisation that looks after and publicises the interest of writers of many different genres all over the world who are incarcerated, injured or killed simply because they chose to write the truth.

The moment had come and I was ready, willing and prepared to take my fill and pocket plenty to spill forward to my friends and fellow writers back home.

Well anything *worth its weight* is worth waiting for ... (my fingers are on the pulse and the keys are pumping, just not fast enough).

*Two Little Birds* guide my way, encouraging my thoughts and words to have form. Come with me as I fly with them on their delicate wings.

***By Rosalie Skinner***

Not knowing what lay ahead on this adventure the festival proved to be both more and less than I envisaged.

As a published author looking for ideas on marketing and promotion, as well as inspiration and guidance on how to continue writing in my genre the festival was not as helpful as hoped.

On the other hand, putting aside those specific expectations, being among writers and readers, listening to successful authors, celebrities and persons of interest, the festival surpassed all expectation.

First off the realisation all the tents were established close together and distance would not be a problem banished any Splendour in the Grass memories of slogging through muddy fields between tents. Second thrill was seeing so many interested attendees, sunshine and perfect weather.

When discovering how entertaining listening to a group of Crime writers could be, the weekend began to deliver! Talks among well-established authors with multiple books to their credit, did not only focus on promoting their books. They discussed their lives, careers, subject matter for their books and

what inspired them, how they went about research, problems they faced, achievements, all the nitty gritty of writing.

There were no workshops. No 'how to' lectures, though one session did boast that title. Excited by the idea of being able to learn the secret to M J Hyland's success I settled in. Soon I discovered *This is How* was the name of her newest book. Even so her talk was fascinating. For some people the world delivers amazing success stories. She walked out of one job in Rome, to find a letter offering a professorship in creative writing in Manchester. She also said she had walked away from earning \$300k a year, to pursue her writing.

Once I realised these illustrious authors were not sharing secrets on HOW to achieve publication, snare an agent, or maintain viable sales, I found many of their talks extremely interesting.

Some were inspiring. For a few moments in time I even considered writing crime stories. Others made me want to give up writing and return to reading. After the festival my list of "to read" books will keep me busy until next year.

The accommodation and spending the weekend with Leonie and Karolyn was great. We enjoyed a wonderful time exchanging ideas, inspiration, and our personal reactions to each session.

Now the pressure is on. How can we best share our experience with the writers' group? Being sponsored by the group was fantastic. One word to describe the weekend: Fabulous.

Would I go again next year or recommend it to others? Definitely, yes. Book now!

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### *Film Review By Janice Terry*

***The Great Gatsby*** By F. Scott Fitzgerald. Leonard De Capricio stars as Jay Gatsby, together with Tobey Macguire as Nick Carraway. The Australian actor Joel Edgerton has a major role as Tom Buchanan, the husband of Daisy. Carey Mulligan is in the female lead role of Daisy.

This story is set in New York during the prohibition era of the 1920s when bootlegging of illegal liquor and shady business connections combined to make Jay Gatsby a self-made millionaire.

The interesting story narrative is told and acted by Nick Carraway, an aspiring writer. He has heard of Jay Gatsby, who was believed to be a war hero. After the First World War, Gatsby studied at Oxford. Nick is the cousin of Daisy Buchanan and becomes a close confidante of Jay Gatsby.

Throughout the story Nancy is the elusive romantic interest of Gatsby. All the trappings of wealth and power in this era belong to Jay Gatsby. Throughout the movie there is the occasional phone call that suggests organised crime.

Buz Luhrmann produced this movie and his wife designed the lavish costumes. As most of this movie was shot in Australia, with some computer graphics, some of the autumn scenery had an Australian country feel. A particular scene with a muted grey Sydney Harbour Bridge scene was slowly visible, with an old red rattler suburban train passing by, likened to a scene in the United States.

A glitz and glamour movie with a popular cast in the starring roles.

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### **Writing Competition**

**Odyssey House Victoria Third Annual Short Story Competition.** This competition is open to writers of all ages and experience. Each submission must be no more than 1,500 words and follow the theme "**From a Distance**". It will need to make a reference to alcohol and/or drugs. There is a limit of three entries per person, and the entry fee is \$10 per story. First prize is \$700 and a year's membership to Writers Victoria; 2nd prize is \$200 and 3rd prize is \$50. **The competition closes on Friday 1st November.** For more information or to download an entry form, go to [www.odyssey.org.au](http://www.odyssey.org.au)

The money raised from this competition will go towards the work that Odyssey House Victoria does. Odyssey House Victoria was established thirty-two years ago. Since its inception, it has provided support for people and their families affected by problems associated with drugs, including alcohol. One unique aspect of Odyssey House Victoria is that of providing services to families and children of people affected by substance abuse. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me directly on 03 4920 7611 or by email to [lgasper@odyssey.org.au](mailto:lgasper@odyssey.org.au) Thanks, Lynnette.

**The Best of Times Short Story Competition No.16.** For humorous short stories (any theme) up to 2,500 words. First prize: \$500; second prize: \$100. **Close 31 October 2013.** No entry form is required. Include a cover sheet with your name and address, story title and a word count, and where you heard about the competition. Entry fee is \$10 per story. Send a cheque or money order made out to Chris Broadribb or use Paypal to pay [cabbook-16@yahoo.com.au](mailto:cabbook-16@yahoo.com.au) Post your entry to PO Box 55, Blaxland, NSW 2142 (including a large SSAE for results) or email it to [cabbook-16@yahoo.com.au](mailto:cabbook-16@yahoo.com.au) Competition website: [http://spiky\\_one.tripod.com/comp16.html](http://spiky_one.tripod.com/comp16.html)

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## NIGHT MAIL

From the ghost of whispered sleep  
like a nodding clock  
framed in shadow lands  
of moon lit cavalcaded stars.

I sat through  
the phantom of the night  
that joins the badge of day  
and seeks communion  
with the night

It was the South West Mail  
from the quiet of night  
to the opening doors of day.

— James Hall

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## *Library News & Events*

Author Talk – Nicole Alexander. Monday 9 September, 5.30 pm for 6 pm start at Coffs Harbour Library.

Join us at the library as Australian author Nicole Alexander talks about her latest novel *Sunset Ridge*. To secure your place at this event contact the library on 6648 4900 or email [coffs.library@chcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:coffs.library@chcc.nsw.gov.au) Visit the [library website](#) for more information.

Coming Soon – Upcoming Library Events: History Week 7-15 September. Author Talk – Claire Scobie on Wednesday 25 September, 5.30 pm at Coffs Harbour Library. Information on [Library Website](#).

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## Quote

In all the circumstances of his life, the writer can recapture the feeling of a living community that will justify him. But only if he accepts as completely as possible the two trusts that constitute the nobility of his calling: the service of truth and the service of freedom.

ALBERT CAMUS: Speech, accepting Nobel Prize, New York Times Book Review, December 10, 1957

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