

Coffs Harbour Writers' Group



Established September 1986

Affiliated with the Northern Rivers Writers Centre

August 2015 Newsletter No 283

PO Box 1953, Coffs Harbour 2450 www.coffsharbourwriters.com



This project received support through the C.ex Group's ClubGRANTS scheme.

Committee Members

President:	Lorraine Penn (formerly Mouafi) 6653 3256 Improject@bigpond.com
Vice-President:	Roger Harris rogerch@tpg.com.au
Secretary:	Rosalie Skinner 6652 2919 roseiswriting@gmail.com
Treasurer/Membership Secretary:	Suzanne Tainsh 6658 8859 jstainsh@bigpond.com
Social Secretaries:	Janice Terry alistair.terry@bigpond.com / Yvonne Kachel Yvonne.kachel@bigpond.com
Newsletter Editor and Publicity:	Leonie Henschke 0412668315 leonie@henschke.net.au

Greetings

It's been a great month in our community with fabulous plays and films at the Jetty Theatre, concerts and exhibitions at the Art Gallery and visiting writers at the library. All great food for thought for authors. We are very blessed. The first weekend in August was the 5 Writers Road Show (on their way to the Byron Bay Festival) of events which we have well publicised. Saturday morning featured a Panel at the Library of experienced writers, Mark Dapin, Lian Hearn, Ellen van Neeren and Chris Flynn interviewed by Iluka author, Zacharey Jane. It was a friendly insight into the writing and publishing journey. In the afternoon a number of our members enjoyed a workshop with Lian Hearn at the fledgling Coffs Coast Writers Centre in Toormina. We wrote and thought, and wrote some more, and chattered about getting published and thoroughly appreciated the time and skills Lian shared with us.

It was a change of pace in the evening with the writers sharing their stories at busy Coffs restaurant, CreAsian, in Harbour Drive. Fun, friendly and feisty!

Members of the Group have also been active working with the Toormina High School Year 8 Class on a writing project and with the Year 12 Extension English students. It is great to work with the students sharing our knowledge and experience as individuals but also show what the Writers Group can contribute to the community.

Lorraine has been leading a small committee to ensure our 30 Year Anniversary Anthology (due for publishing in September 2016) is the very best writing and production that we can achieve. It's looking exciting. Start thinking of some ideas now and write up lots of pieces and then you can pick the best. Don't forget the theme is the 'beach' but that word only has to appear in the work. The word limit is 750 words.

Enjoy the beautiful weather. Spring isn't far away. Celebrate. *Leonie*

What's on in August?

Wednesday 5 August, 10.30 am – 12.30 pm Monthly Meeting Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Coffs Harbour Ex Services Club. Guest speaker Stephanie Ney, Arts Mid North Coast

Wednesday 5 August, 1.30 pm – 3.30 pm Coffs Writers' Group Workshop with Yvonne Kachel on presentation skills, 'Presenting Your Story'. Coffs Harbour Ex Services Club

Thursday, 20 August, 10.00 pm – 12 noon Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Social Morning, Marion Atherton's home, Toormina. Contact Social Secretaries for address details.

President's Report

Visiting Guest Speaker for South West Rocks Writers' Group

An invitation has been extended to me from South West Rocks Writers Group to attend their meeting on Monday 3 August for the purpose of chairing their informal writers' group meeting. Their members are keen to find out how we conduct our monthly meetings, what positions are filled to form the committee and how we decide on suitable guest speakers and workshop events.

Events Calendar for 2015/2016

Since establishing our website over three years ago, I haven't been happy with the 'events' section of our site via Wordpress. Through the assistance of their technical people I have now prepared a site calendar, currently at the bottom of the current format. Over the coming weeks the 2016 version will be updated with the events/workshops/guest speakers/social mornings etc.

As mentioned last month, I am currently trying to establish suitable guest speakers and skills learning workshops for next year.

At this stage there are three workshops that are in the pipeline and will be confirmed over the next few months. They are: Memoir Writing by Bringing Characters to Life, Show Don't Tell Storyline, How to Create a Fictional World.

We are always on the lookout for suitable guest speakers who are prepared to share their experiences with our members.

To Incorporate or Not to Incorporate?

As mentioned during the June meeting, we need to consider incorporating our writers group by having an open discussion about the benefits and disadvantages of being incorporated. We are no longer a couple of writers sitting around a table talking about writing; next year is our 30th year of formation.

It is intended to have this discussion at our September meeting. *Lorraine*

Members write...

Margaret Penhall-Jones

A 21st Century Popular Publisher responds to Leo Tolstoy's MS, *Anna Karenina*

(NB: Spoiler Alert!)

Dear Mr Tolstoy,

Thank you for the opportunity to read your MS *Anna Karenina*. While your work has some merit, we will not be publishing it at this time.

Here are some tips to keep in mind for your next writing project:

1. Be sure to keep to a single character's point of view for each scene. In particular, do not change point of view in conversations;
2. Be sure you have a strong emotional arc for the main characters and keep the focus on them;
3. While we love your hero, Vronsky, we find that Anna is off-putting with her shrewish jealousy;
4. It would be a far more uplifting ending if Vronsky could arrive at the train station before Anna throws herself under the goods-train. Remember, your readers are reading for escape and want that "happy ever after" ending;
5. Once the climax has occurred, finish quickly and tie up all the loose ends within a few pages;
6. We found your writing to be very "telly". We advise you to brush up on your writing technique and be sure you "show don't tell". In particular, you sometimes intrude as an "omniscient author".
7. We found Levin's internal soliloquies and the discussions on political economy, revolution and war tedious to say the least. We advise you to cut these completely so as not to bore your readers to death.
8. Similarly with the entirely unnecessary legal complexities surrounding Karenina's and Anna's divorce. They are boring.
9. We became confused with the "cast of thousands" which made the plot impossible to follow. Be sure to limit the space taken up by secondary characters. If you must have

secondary characters, make sure their names are not confusing;ie don't have two characters whose names begin with the same letter.

10. We found your writing to be quite parochial. Be aware that you are writing for an international audience, who will be unfamiliar with and not care about Russian customs, history or political situations.

We wish you well in your writing journey,

A Popular Publisher

© Margaret Penhall-Jones

Travels with Lisa Reily and Ion Corcos: An Excerpt from Ion's Newsletter

On Writing

I have just finished my seven-week online course, [How Writers Write Poetry](#). Overall, I found the course a little too long. It was difficult to navigate the site and get the benefits that I have usually experienced in a small online group. However, I ended up writing a few new poems, all of which stretched me, which I am currently editing.

Even though I didn't participate as I expected, I listened to most of the lectures and read the assigned poetry and some discussions in the forums. I will listen to the rest of the lectures over the next month or so. I will still consider a course like this in the future.

This week we are moving to Loutro, on the southern side of Crete, just a couple of hours and a short boat ride away. I will be doing a week-long course taken by poet Helen Mort, the subject being nature. Being my first face-to-face poetry course, I am excited about what I will learn and write. We will be in Loutro for ten days, so I will have time after the course to edit and reflect.

On Travelling

On May Day (May 1), Lisa and I were sitting in our apartment, when I heard live Greek music nearby. Unable to tell where it was coming from, I walked down to our neighbourhood park, by the bay, and found a Greek band with a few people dancing together.

May Day is a public holiday in Greece, so there were people with barbeques all over the park. They were selling souvlaki, drinks, and had tables set up for everyone. It was a wonderful and unexpected experience. Living in Chania is really like living in a big village – except, for now, we don't have any gossip!

Early in the month, we went for a slow walk with an expat group. The 5km walk began nearby and progressed along the coast to the town of Chania. I got to see wild capers for the first time, as well as the usual fig, lemon, orange and, of course, olive trees. There were a lot of other trees, too – pine, tamarisk and eucalypts. Pigeons cooed above us in the branches, blackbirds and sparrows flew around us, as well as the usual seagulls.

After the walk, we had a group lunch (there were about 20 of us). The lunch was mostly plates of meze (entrées). The food included tzatziki (cucumber, garlic and yoghurt dip);

skordalia (garlic dip); tiganites patates (hand-cut fried chips); marithes (picarel - small fish covered in flour, fried whole, eaten with plenty of lemon juice); and gavros (anchovies - fried).

There was also plenty of Greek salad and horiatiko (Greek country bread). We finished off the meal with some dry white wine served in small tumblers. A very typical Greek meal, especially by the sea. We don't eat like this all the time; this was more like a feast, but it was really enjoyable!

Otherwise, we have both been busy writing and planning for future parts of our travel.

[Ion and Lisa, what have been your personal experiences of the Greek financial crisis? Ed.]

Writing Prompt (Homework!)

You've just read member, Ion Corcos' account of a memorable meal with Lisa in Greece. What is your most memorable meal? Write a couple of paragraphs describing the food, the aromas, the taste, the setting, the company. Why was it special? Bring your piece along to the next meeting.

Writing and Competition Deadlines *(From Margaret Penhall-Jones)*

29 August: Peter Cowan Writers' Centre 20th Anniversary competition

The Peter Cowan Writers Centre (PCWC) has launched a new, one-off multi genre competition (poetry and prose), centred on the Australian landscape, to celebrate PCWC's 20th Anniversary. The Centre is offering a range of prizes: Rhyming Poetry award and a Novice award as well as a Youth award in addition to 1st place, 2nd place and 3rd, which will all receive cash prizes. Details <http://pcwc.org.au/>

1-14 September: The Ampersand Prize

Writers of YA and middle-grade fiction are invited to enter the Ampersand Prize. Writers who have not previously published books for a YA or middle-grade fiction audience are invited to submit their manuscripts. Successful entrants will receive a contract with publishing company, Hardie Grant Egmont, an advance, and serious editorial development to bring their book to market. For more information visit their [website](http://theampersandproject.tumblr.com/about). <http://theampersandproject.tumblr.com/about>

1 September 2015: Adrien Abbott Prize

Submissions are now open for the Adrien Abbott Prize for poetry. The theme is inspired by the opening line of a poem by John Keats: "Welcome Joy and Welcome Sorrow". Poems of a maximum of 25 lines will be accepted. The 1st prize receives a \$500 cash prize or a tutorial with poet and judge of the prize Mark Tredinnick. For more information visit their [facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/AdrienAbbottPrize). <https://www.facebook.com/AdrienAbbottPrize>

30 September 2015: FAWQ Poetry Competition

Entries are open for the Fellowship of Australian Writers Queensland Poetry Competition. The competition is open themed with the only specification being that poems have a maximum length of 40 lines. Inspired by Guillaume Apollinaire the poems are encouraged to "bring us to the edge, invoke our passions, inspire and encourage us with words. We want to hear and feel the cadences and lyricism of your poems." Cash prizes are awarded for first and second places. For more information visit <http://www.fawq.net/>

30 September: The Margot Manchester Memorial Short Story Award and Robyn Mathison Poetry Prize. Entries are open for the Margot Manchester short story award and the Robyn Mathison poetry prize, presented by The Society of Women Writers Tasmania. Short Stories with a word count of 1200- 1500 words are accepted. For the poetry prize, open poetry of a maximum length of 40 lines will be accepted. Cash prizes are awarded for first and second place in both prizes. Entries are open-themed. For more information: SWWT www.swwtas.org

16 October Lambing Flat (Young NSW) Branch of Regional Fellowship of Australian Writers (NSW) 2015 Writing Competition. Open, Primary and Secondary School. Cash prizes. Short stories up to 1,500 words and poetry up to 50 lines will be accepted. Winning entries may be read at a Cherry Festival function. For more information, email lambingflatbranchfaw@hotmail.com or call Ted 0459707728

2016 Bellingen Readers & Writers Festival

The Bellingen Readers & Writers Festival has appointed **IRINA DUNN** as Program Director of next year's festival to be held on the long weekend of 11-13 June 2016. Irina is the Director of the Australian Writers' Network and previously, she was NSW Writers' Centre Executive Director for 15 years, Manager of the Australian Writers' Guild Authorship Collecting Society and Booktopia Managing Editor, and represented NSW as an independent Senator in the late 1980s.

In consultation with the volunteer committee, Irina has decided on the theme of "**Page, Stage and Screen**" for next year's festival, and plans to invite well-known and emerging names in these fields to discuss their art and craft.

She also intends to expand the youth section of the festival by introducing new forms of writing such as graphic novels and internet writing, and increase the involvement of locals in public events.

Individuals and organisations interested in participating in the 2016 festival have been asked to contact Irina Dunn by email irinadid@ozemail.com.au or mobile 0403 486 363, or through her website www.irinadunn.com.au.

That's all for now. Don't forget, contributions please. Your own stories, book or film reviews, writing exercises...whatever takes your fancy. Leonie