

Coffs Harbour Writers' Group



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Affiliated with the Northern Rivers Writers Centre

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



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Greetings

A busy month, as you will see from the Newsletter, and a lot of opportunities for writers to hone their craft and advance their writing projects. Read on and join in...*Leonie*

What's on in July/August?

**Wednesday, 1 July, 10.30 am - 12.30 pm Monthly Meeting Coffs Harbour Writers' Group
Coffs Harbour Ex Services Club**

Thursday, 16 July, 10 am to 12 noon Social Coffee Morning, Coffs Harbour Botanical Gardens

Byron Bay Writers Festival events in Coffs Harbour area - Five Writers Road Trip:

Saturday 1 August – 11 am - 12 noon Author Panel with Mark Dapin, Chris Flynn, Lian Hearn, Zohab Zee Khan, Ellen Van Neervan at Coffs Harbour Library

Saturday 1 August 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm Workshops at the Coffs Coast Writers Centre, Toormina Road, Toormina with Lian H.earn and a workshop with Ellen Van Neerven for Indigenous writers.

Saturday 1 August 7.00 pm - 8.30 pm Author event at venue to be confirmed.

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

President's Report

A membership card has been established as a form of identifying financial status of each member with a renewal date of 1st July each year. The membership card will give you entitlements to discounted workshops, events and relevant business establishments. Please see Suzanne Tainsh regarding renewing your membership and acquiring one of the new membership cards.

30th Year Anthology

As mentioned during last month's meeting the key word '**beach**' must be included in your anthology story and/or poems. This could relate to a beach in and around Coffs Harbour or some other location, as long as you include the word 'beach' and maybe reference it to a beach somewhere throughout your story. Or for those crime, fantasy or science fiction writing enthusiast members amongst us, it could be the entire integrated intense drama of the short story. Deadline and further details will be announced shortly.

Maximum number of words for your short story is 750 words. Those members who submit poems can submit several poems to a maximum of 750 words.

Launch of Coffs Coast Writer's Centre

The launch of the Coffs Coast Writer's Centre in Toormina was well attended mainly with individuals who were also attending the Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival in the days following the Centre's launch.

The Centre is a hidden gem for those of us living south of Coffs CBD and should be a source to benefit all writers' groups in the region. More details to follow regarding these benefits.

Highlight for the evening for me was listening to readings and the Q&A via Irina Dunn interviewing the highly acclaimed author Robert Drewe about his successful career initially as a journalist for the *Bulletin* magazine.

His readings chosen from some of his works, especially one of his memoir books 'Montebello' took the audience with him on his journey throughout his life's travels. He convinced me sufficiently enough to purchase this book, which I am thoroughly enjoying in my rare quiet moments.

Skills Learning Workshops for the Rest of the Year

The committee members met early in June to discuss possible ideas for holding relevant workshops for the rest of the year.

The new critiquing group being facilitated by Robyn Veugen commenced on the 23rd June during the evening at the CeX Club. It will be held at this venue for 14 and 28th July only. After these dates we will need to source another cost effective location.

Yvonne Kachel will hold the next daytime workshop on 5th August entitled 'Presenting Your Story'. Then on 7th October, we will have 'Planning Your Plot' by Rosalie Skinner.

Currently I am preparing the '2016 calendar of events' document for uploading onto our website. If you have any suggestions for guest speakers, workshops or events please contact me.

Visit our Website

One of our methods of communicating to a wider audience is through our CHWG website. This was initially developed to raise the profile of our group and I believe this has certainly attributed to the success for communicating some of the activities and objectives of our membership, including profiling some of our members and their written works.

If you haven't visited the website for a while it is important that you do as it has a wealth of information, for example relevant links, newsletters, events, projects and resources, community partners and, of course, member profiles.

Writing Prompt (Homework!)

Can you find inspiration in this quote from Graham Swift's *The Sweet-Shop Owner*: ***The needle in the barometer pointed to 'Change'***.

Will you use it to write a piece of fiction, poetry, non-fiction, an article, a blog post, a song or perhaps something else? You may like to bring your work to the August meeting to share with the group.

Critique Group *(From Robyn Veugen)*

You may remember from last month's newsletter that a few of us have decided to start a critique group. It was agreed to meet together on the second and fourth Tuesday evening of each month to critique each other's' work in progress (WIP) with the aim of improving our writing. We held our first meeting on Tuesday 23 June and although the group was small with only four of us able to attend, we achieved quite a lot for our first meeting. We discussed the purpose of the group, how it will work and the reasons each of us wanted to attend. We also agreed to some guidelines about how the group will operate and we critiqued each other's writing. If you would like to join the group for our next meeting, the details are below.

WHO IS THIS CRITIQUE GROUP FOR?

Members of Coffs Harbour Writers Group who are:

1. serious about improving their writing;
2. prepared to have their writing critiqued by other writers;
3. prepared to offer constructive feedback to other members of the group on their writing.

WHY JOIN A CRITIQUE GROUP?

One of the best ways of improving your writing is to have it read by other people. Our families and friends often aren't the best people to do this because they may tend to give either uncritical praise or may be overly critical without understanding the finer points of the writing process. Neither of these extremes is helpful to a writer who is seriously wishing to improve their writing. This is why sharing your writing with a group of other writers who can offer constructive feedback can be so valuable. Meeting regularly with such a group and receiving their critiques can help you improving the quality of your writing enormously.

WHEN WILL THE GROUP MEET?

- Tuesday 14 July @ 7.00 – 9.00 pm (2nd Tuesday)
- Tuesday 28 July @ 7.00 – 9.00 pm (4th Tuesday)

And then each 2nd and 4th Tuesday evening of the month

WHERE WILL THE GROUP MEET?

- Coffs Harbour C.Ex Club (check at the desk or on the screens for room details).
- From August we will be meeting at a new venue. We will discuss this at our July meetings.

WHAT HAPPENS AT CRITIQUE GROUP MEETINGS?

- Read and critique each other's WIPs and offer constructive feedback
- Discuss how to offer constructive feedback and how to get the most out of the group
- Agree on the guidelines for how the group will operate

WHAT SHOULD I BRING TO THE CRITIQUE GROUP MEETING?

- a piece of writing you have been working on (better known as your **Work In Progress** or WIP). This may be fiction, poetry, non-fiction, memoir - whatever you want feedback on. It should not be a first draft but rather a work that you have already edited and are preparing

for publishing or submitting, or a piece that you are having some difficulty with and that you would appreciate ideas on how to improve it.

- the WIP you bring should be no more than 2-3 pages (approximately 500-1000 words) in length. It can be a shorter piece if you want. This means that everyone's WIP will have a fair share of the group's attention. Longer works may need to be critiqued over several sessions.
- 8-10 copies of this WIP to share with the group for written feedback
- paper and pen for writing notes
- a positive attitude and a desire to improve your writing.

Email Robyn at <robyn.veugen@gmail.com> for more information.

HAVE YOU HEARD OF CAMP NANOWRIMO? *(From Robyn Veugen)*

You may remember that in 2014 some of our members participated in **National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) the fun, seat-of-your-pants approach to creative writing**. On November 1, participants begin working towards the goal of writing a 50,000-word novel by 11:59 PM on November 30. Some of our members reached that goal (yay Rosalie!) and some didn't, but the important thing is that all us who participated in NaNoWriMo (<http://nanowrimo.org/>) last November had more words on the page at the end of November than we did at the start of the month. One of the other projects run annually by the NaNoWriMo organisation is **Camp NaNoWriMo** (https://campnanowrimo.org/sign_in), which is held each April and July. It is a virtual writing retreat, designed to provide the community, resources, and tools needed to complete any writing project, whether it's a novel or not. For Camp NaNoWriMo you set your own word count goal, but the principal is the same - to kick start your writing project. See what the organisers have to say about Camp Nanowrimo at <http://campnanowrimo.org/news/track-your-muse-with-camp-nanowrimo-this-july>.

Robyn, Rosalie and Leonie have created a (virtual online) cabin for Camp NaNoWriMo. If you are keen to break the back of a creative writing project for the month of July and you want to avail yourself of the support of fellow CHWG members, come and join us. Once you have registered for Camp NaNoWriMo and you have created your writing project on the site, just email Robyn at robyn.veugen@gmail.com to be sent an invitation to join our (virtual) cabin. But be quick! We only have room for 9 more fellow campers in our 'cabin' and we have also invited members of the Grassroots Writers Facebook page. And at the end of the first weekend in July, if the cabin isn't full yet, we will open the cabin up to admit other Camp NaNo-ers from the rest of the world. Of course, you can also start your own cabin if you want to do so.

Members write...

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

On Writing

Last month I began an online course, called *How Writers Write Poetry*, which is a part of *The University of Iowa's International Writing Program*. It's a seven-week course and it's free. So far, I have found the assignments to be helpful and have consequently written two new poems. I have not engaged with other students as much as I would have liked, as the site is too big.

With over 6000 people subscribed, it is difficult to navigate peer discussion and critique. Still, I have found the course to be worthwhile. I have also recently enrolled in a week-long course in June. Organised by [Espirita](#), there will be a maximum of 8 students in my class. The subject of the course is

nature. The course will be held in Loutro, Crete, which can only be accessed by boat. There are no cars or bikes in this village. This will be my first non-online poetry course ever!

On Travelling

Lisa and I are still in Chania. We have been in a studio for a month and will soon move to an apartment in the same building. We will be here till the end of May. In June, we will visit Loutro for my course. After that, we will see more of Crete, then fly to the island of Kos (Greece). From there, we will ferry to Turkey in August. Last week, we hired a car for two days. On the first day, we went back to the town of Kissamos, which is about 35km west of Chania. It was a great drive, passing mountains, cypress trees and wild goats.

From Kissamos, we drove to the village of [Vouves](#) where one of the oldest trees in the world grows. It is, of course, an olive tree, and it is estimated at over 3000 years old! Located in a village of only three families and only five kilometres from the sea, it was a beautiful experience.

The next day we drove through mountains to the south of the island, using the village of Paleochora (literally 'Old Village') as our destination. We love driving through the mountains, especially as there are very few cars around. On the way back we took a different route. Not used to the petrol gauge, we almost ran out of petrol!

It ended up being very positive, as we took a different route again back home, through the town of Omalos. Omalos, at 1050 metres above sea level, is at the entrance to the Samaritan Gorge, one of the longest gorges in Europe (13km). We had a mountain tea overlooking the White Mountains, where there was still some snow on the slopes. Lots of goats along the way, too.

Overall, things are going very well, even though we have faced many challenges. We would still say that we are very happy here. Happy and writing!

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

15 July Peter Blazey Fellowship 2016 Applications are open for the Peter Blazey Fellowship 2016. The award of \$15,000 (approx.) and a one-month writer-in-residency at the Australian Centre is for writers in the non-fiction fields of biography, autobiography and life writing and is intended to further a work in progress. <http://arts.unimelb.edu.au/award/australian-centre-peter-blazey-fellowship>

15 July: Dinny O'Hearn Fellowship 2016 The award of \$5,000 (approx.) and a residency at the Australian Centre is awarded to emergent Australian writers (25 years and under) of fiction, poetry or drama. australian-centre.unimelb.edu.au/prizes/ohearn

20 July: Grace Wilson Emerging Writers Competition Entries of short-fiction or creative non-fiction are invited for the Grace Marion Wilson Emerging Writers Competition. Two writers will win a \$1000 cash prize. Two runners up will also receive prizes of \$250 each thanks to the support of the Grace Marion Wilson Trust. writersvictoria.org.au/.../grace-marion-wilson-emerging-writers-competition

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