

# Coffs Harbour Writers' Group



*Established September 1986*

**Affiliated with the Northern Rivers Writers Centre**

## **March 2016 Newsletter No 288**

PO Box 1953, Coffs Harbour 2450 [www.coffsharbourwriters.com](http://www.coffsharbourwriters.com)

### **Committee Members**

<b>President:</b>	Lorraine Penn 6653 3256 <a href="mailto:lmproject@bigpond.com">lmproject@bigpond.com</a>
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Roger Harris <a href="mailto:rogerch@tpg.com.au">rogerch@tpg.com.au</a>
<b>Secretary:</b>	Rosalie Skinner 6652 2919 <a href="mailto:roseiswriting@gmail.com">roseiswriting@gmail.com</a>
<b>Treasurer/Membership Secretary:</b>	Suzanne Tainsh 6658 8859 <a href="mailto:jstainsh@bigpond.com">jstainsh@bigpond.com</a>
<b>Social Secretaries:</b>	Yvonne Kachel <a href="mailto:Yvonne.kachel@bigpond.com">Yvonne.kachel@bigpond.com</a>
<b>Newsletter Editor and Publicity:</b>	Leonie Henschke 0412668315 <a href="mailto:leonie@henschke.net.au">leonie@henschke.net.au</a>

### **Greetings**

March already but the days are long, hot and clear so perfect to sit out in the garden or on the beach and put pen to paper or finger to keyboard and create evocative words which then join up to be alluring sentences, catchy paragraphs, and finally a fabulous story for our Anthology! Deadline is the end of this month so get writing!

The year's meetings started with a rush with a number of guests at our February meeting in the new location of the Cavanbah Centre in Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour. A large space but we can settle in and use the space to advantage with break out groups for writing and try out some different layouts. And there is the lovely Chill Out Café next door for very reasonably priced coffees and lunches.

Our March meeting includes the Annual General Meeting of our group so please come along with nominations for positions, yourself or others, and don't forget all positions are available to financial members for occupying and voting. This is also a chance to thank the

office holders for the work (often unseen) they do behind and in front of the scenes for your club.

This month has also seen the publishing by Imprint Press of *Girl on the Edge* by one of our locals, Kim Hodges. This is a wonderful achievement by Kim of gaining a commercial publisher and major marketing and distribution networks. She is a sociologist from Southern Cross University and has written a sensitive, evocative and very soul searching memoir of her adolescent journey in a small NSW country town. Kim's private local launch was held at the Sawtell Surf Club with about 120 people and launched by the Mayor, Councillor Denise Knight. It was a fabulous evening of speeches (even from one of her teenage sons), music from some of the local lads, and much support and goodwill for Kim's accomplished writing. She has done a tour of the north coast libraries, including Bellingen, Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Grafton and Lismore and will do more in Queensland later this month. The book, *Girl on the Edge* by Kim Hodges, is available from the Book Warehouse in Coffs Harbour and other good book stores around Australia.

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## What's on in March/April?

**Wednesday 2 March, 10.00 am – 12.00 pm Monthly Meeting Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Cavanbah Centre, 191 Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Coffs Harbour Writers' Group will be followed by the general business meeting and then lunch in the Chill Out Café in the Community Village and get together in the cafe to work on stories suitable for the upcoming anthology. *Email the Newsletter Editor with apologies for meetings this month. Social Secretary other months. Please consider nominations for positions on the committee and bring these to the meeting. All positions are available.***

**Thursday, 17 March, 10.00 pm – 12 noon Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Social Morning, Hidden Link Café, Hogbin Drive, Toormina in former nursery (near Sawtell Fire Station)**

**Friday, 1 April – Sunday 3 April Grassroots Writers' Weekend hosted by the Nambucca Valley Writers' Group, held at Valla Beach Tourist Park. More information and enrolment at <http://www.nambuccawriters.info/grassroots-writers-weekend-2016.html>**

**Wednesday 6 April, 10.00 am – 12.00 pm Monthly Meeting Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Cavanbah Centre, 191 Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour followed by lunch in the Chill Out Café in the Community Village next door. *We plan to run a session after this meeting on feedback from the Grassroots Writers Weekend and ideas for more in-house workshops.***

**Thursday, 21 April, 10.00 pm – 12 noon Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Social Morning, private home, details by contacting the Social Secretary.**

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## **President's Report**

### **Bon Voyage to Jean Reid**

It is with sadness and happiness we lose one of our long running members Jean Reid who will leave this wonderful sub-tropical Coffs Harbour location on the 1<sup>st</sup> March for our nation's capital Canberra. I wish Jean all the very best for the future, stay safe and well.

### **Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

At our March meeting we will include our AGM with all positions becoming available for nomination. Consider nominating for one of the positions on the committee, participating on the committee is voluntary and rewarding as you will be part of assisting our group develop even further than it has over the years.

When we are incorporated the AGM meeting will be more formal.

### **Incorporating our group**

We are progressing now to stage two of registration of our group as an incorporated association; we have applied and paid for the Application for Reservation of Name 'Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Incorporated'.

When we receive formal acknowledgement of our 'reservation number' we can proceed with the next stage Registration of an Incorporated Association.

### **Write, Promote, Publish Workshop at South West Rocks**

At the invitation of South West Rocks Writers' Group some of our members, including myself, attended this informative workshop held in partnership with Kempsey Library.

Some interesting facts came out of the author talk on print on demand (POD) by John Dunstan, local author. Namely; *Fifty Shades of Grey*, was the first print on demand book and sold over 60 million copies.

An average sales figure for POD books is 100 books. The website [lulu.com](http://lulu.com) came up as being the best out of 59 publishing companies who do print on demand. They charge \$8 for an up to 174 page book and advice is to always get a proof copy before you settle on the final copy for printing.

The section relating to **Using Digital Media to Build Your Profile** was definitely impressive, especially if you want to become known in the writing community. ETC Small Biz Connect Business Advisor from Kempsey presented this session. I have been in contact with the Coffs office regarding the possibility of scheduling this session for our group. Our Social Secretary, Yvonne Kachel, will follow through and arrange a suitable time for a workshop.

### **Future Workshops**

As detailed in last month's report, due to the Grassroots Writers' Weekend being held early April, scheduling of our bi-monthly workshops won't occur until June/July. Yvonne Kachel will report on this at our March meeting.

## Fiction and Memoir Writing at U3A Coffs Harbour

Places are still available in this course for beginning and aspiring writers, covering the essentials of writing fiction and memoirs. Topics cover: structuring plots, developing characters, resources for research and enhancing writing skills. There is plenty of opportunity to critique your work in a supportive group.

Enrolment in U3A costs \$60 for unlimited courses for the year. Enrolment is online at <http://coffs.u3anet.org.au/>

Meetings are held at The Community Village, Coffs Harbour. The term started on 10 February 2016 and now every second Wednesday at 10.30 am for two hours. The course runs for four semesters.

For more information, contact Margaret Penhall-Jones at [penhalljones@gmail.com](mailto:penhalljones@gmail.com)

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## Competitions

### 31 March: 2016 Ned Kelly Awards

Current members of the Australian Crime Writers Association are welcome to submit works published in the past year to this prestigious award, in the following categories: Best Fiction, Best First Fiction and Best True Crime. Entry fee of \$35 per submission applies. <http://www.austcrimewriters.com/content/2016-ned-kelly-awards-guidelines>

### 31 March: Henry Lawson Festival of Arts Competition

Accepting entries of verse (48 lines maximum) and short story (2000 words maximum). There are multiple classes for various ages and abilities. Winning entries receive prize money and publication in the anthology. <http://www.henrylawsonfestival.com.au/events-and-entertainment/exhibitions/verse-short-story>

### 31 March: National Industry Scholarship Grant Initiative

Offering leadership grants to support the development of female leaders across the media and PR sectors. There are two levels available: Senior Management and Executive-level Women Leaders can apply for \$12,000 Individual Grants to undertake the Advanced Leadership Program; and Women Managers can apply for \$5000 Individual Grants to undertake the Accelerated Leadership Performance Program. <http://www.wla.com.au/scholarships.html>

### 30 April: Best of Times Short Story Competition

Accepting humorous short stories (any theme) up to 2500 words. First prize: \$300-\$500 (depending on number of entries), second prize: \$100. <http://wildthoughts.com.au/bot.html>

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## Members write...

*In a previous newsletter two members travelling in Greece, Ion Corcos and Lisa Reily, described a beautiful meal they had eaten in Crete so readers were asked for a similar response and memory. Janice Terry replied...here is her story...*

## Janice Terry

### **My most memorable meal was in Christchurch, New Zealand...**

I was on my honeymoon in the south island of New Zealand staying in Christchurch. It was a safe city in those days in 1995. I walked into the main town square and looked in awe at Christchurch Cathedral with its beautiful stained glass windows. Sadly this cathedral was damaged by an earthquake that ravaged the beautiful Christchurch city and other areas in the South Island of New Zealand in 2011.

Hiring a taxi we ambitiously set off for a revolving restaurant on the outskirts of town. The taxi arrived at our destination. What a surprise! In order to dine in this beautiful location, we had to step on a chairlift to reach the top of the mountain. Nervous fear overcame me.

“You can do it, just close your eyes,” said my husband, Al.

“I’m scared; I don’t think I can sit in that chair.”

After more persuasion, we finally were on our way on the chairlift to the mountain summit. I breathed a sigh of relief! We entered the revolving restaurant and were shown to our table. It was a pleasant timber chalet theme, busy and welcoming with a warm ambience.

As we gradually revolved, the views of Lyttelton Harbour were spectacular. Mist was wafting over the valley and yellow bushes were dotted on the landscape as dusk settled in for the night.

A memorable meal!

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### **And another lovely memory...**

#### **Past President, Ninette Van Zyl...**

##### **REDHILL SHEEP FARM JOHANNESBURG South Africa. About 1944/5**

I would have been about five or six years old. Not sure whether they were real ‘uncles’ or ‘aunts’ on the farm but they were always known to me as Aunty Green and Uncle Green. There was an attachment to the house – a tin shed with wooden bunks and cross beams holding up the corrugated iron walls. It was on the wooden cross beam that this candle holder with burning candle was placed to give light. To make sure of no fire my parents came to see when I was asleep and then the candle was blown out. I don’t ever recall my sister being with me and I think she stayed with my grandparents in *Joburg* on these occasions.

My father was the eldest in his family, and with his mother having married four times after my dad’s father died he had many half sisters and brothers. Aunty Green’s table was a feast of food and she did all the cooking. She was a plump lady always in a long black dress that came down to her ankles with her feet tucked into black lace up shoes with a small Cuban heel. There were many people around the table – about ten or twelve – and as a child of that day I was seen but not to be heard. I always saw Aunty Green stand beside the table a little

distance away watching as people ate. The food was piled high on your plate and if you didn't finish it all it was considered an insult to her cooking. This my mother explained to me later when I asked why Aunty Green never sat with us or said a word – she just watched and waited with her arms folded in a comfortable way.

After eating I was hurried outside to play. I absolutely loved the spaciousness of the outside. There was a long large trellis with a grape vine that grew the biggest blackest muscatel grapes ever with a flavour that still lingers with me today. There was a large chicken coop that I went in to explore only to come out crawling with lice in my hair. My mother deeply shocked as the only way to get rid of the lice in that day was to have your head shaved. Uncle Green saved me from becoming bald by washing my hair with lye soap and kerosene. Not an experience I would wish to go through again.

On another occasion after lunch I was told to go play ball with three big boys. Simply throwing the ball to each other, as I was very good at this, they didn't mind me playing with them, but then one of the boys called out to the boy opposite me: "*Jou voelgel vliegt uit' Maakt het toe.*" Translation – your fly is open and showing your bird, do it up. I kept a straight face as they didn't know I could speak Afrikaans. I was amazed at what Aunty Green showed me she did with bottle tops. She made baskets and mats for the men to wipe their muddy boots on, and a decorative weather vane that sat on top of the water windmill. I would listen to it at night when the wind blew through. This windmill was not far from the tin shed where I slept at nights.

One other time I was allowed to accompany my father and Uncle Green on the open veld when they went shooting for partridges. I was kept on the opposite side to where they were shooting. Here I came across a little stream running across the flat ground; all open country with no trees. A man could jump across the stream as it was not wide at all. It held a fascination for me as it held many catfish-like eels. It was great fun trying to catch one with my hands. Dad always kept his eye on me and hastily came to see what I was so absorbed in doing. He was horrified and pulled me away explaining that these catfish had poisonous sharp barbs. I thought they were whiskers and tried to hold one by it. So I had turned my attention elsewhere. Sure enough I came across a wounded bird. I tried to catch it but it just always kept its distance. Later that night I heard my dad retelling how he and Uncle Green watched me trying to get that bird and how they laughed as that bird tricked me to get me away from its ground nest. I was glad they didn't see me for I felt somewhat humiliated.

We never stayed more than three or four nights at the farm but they were very memorable days for me indeed. I was eight years old at my last visit to that farm.

Just thought you might like a little story of me and the candle holder. Why my dad brought it to Australia I have no idea, unless it was for sentimental reasons. Hope you enjoy the tale of how Grandma Nina grew up in South Africa.

