

Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Inc.



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Affiliated with the Byron Bay Writers' Festival (Northern Rivers Writers' Centre)

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

**Monthly calendar, book reviews, personal stories, competitions and
How To Publish Workshop...**

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Greetings

Welcome back to the Writers' Group! We hope you had a fabulous Christmas and holiday season and rested, feasted and looked after each other. It is a time of celebration but also in Australia holiday time to refresh for the working year ahead; a time to take stock of our priorities and practices. Whether we are in full time work or slowing down and doing unpaid work it is an opportunity for us all to focus on what really matters, how we are going to fulfill our needs in 2017.

I think we all need a network, a community, friends, family, neighbours, and work colleagues to make us feel safe. We need to continually learn something new to keep our brains active and we need a project or a whole series of projects to have something to look forward to. Your writers' group can supply and contribute to so many of those necessities in life. Make it work for you! It's all there! Happy New Year! *Leonie*

What's on in February/March?

10.00 am - 12.30 pm Wednesday 1 February 2017 Cavanbah Centre. Coffs's Harbour Writers' Group Monthly meeting followed by lunch (see below).

12.30 pm – 1.30 pm Wednesday 1 February 2017 Writers' Group Lunch in Chill Out café, Community Village (next to Cavanbah Centre).

10.00 am – 12. 30 pm Thursday 16 February 2017 Social Morning Tea, Shearwater Restaurant, Promenade Shopping Village, Harbour Drive (the block before the Jetty Theatre).

10.00 am - 12.30 pm Wednesday 1 March 2017 Cavanbah Centre. Coffs's Harbour Writers' Group Monthly meeting followed by lunch (see below).

12.30 pm – 1.30 pm Wednesday 1 March 2017 Writers' Group Lunch in Chill Out café, Community Village (next to Cavanbah Centre).

1.30 pm – 3.30 pm Wednesday 1 March 2017 Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Workshop Publishing with Margaret Penhall-Jones. Cavanbah Centre. Bookings on 0412668315. More details later in the Newsletter.

President's Report

President: Yvonne Kachel

Well, 2017 has certainly arrived with a bang, what with international, national and state politics swirling around us, reminding us that we are part of this huge globe. As writers we look, watch, analyse, learn and sometimes document, not only our own lives, but those around us as well as the events that affect us. This year we have a chance to increase our writing exploits; to participate in workshops; to listen to each other and find the magic words we want to use. To allow this to happen the committee is meeting to look at ideas that have been raised: new projects; participation in writing ventures in more public domains; competitions and stopping for a well-earned cuppa during our business meetings. If you have ideas that you would like to be considered please let us know. Your committee is here to make sure that our group remains vibrant, open to new ideas and above all committed to writing.

For example, March is full of learning and participation. To begin the workshop program, Margaret Penhall- Jones will be presenting a session on the 1st March on how to self-publish: the gems and the pitfalls. The Grass Roots Writers' Weekend is up next in Port Macquarie from the 24th to the 26th March. The program is now finalised and bookings opened on the 30th January, so get cracking!

Finally, very big congratulations to our long-term member, Les Fairey and his wife, Heather, on the celebration of their 60th wedding anniversary. A rare sight in these days of transience.

Happy writing!! *Yvonne*

Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Workshop

Publish! Industry or Indie?

Presented by Margaret Penhall-Jones

Wednesday 1 March 1.30 pm – 3.30 pm Cavanbah Centre

Bookings: 0412 668 315

It's never too early or late for aspiring writers to consider how to get their work out there.

This workshop will explore the promise and perils of different publishing pathways; traditional publishing, vanity press and self-publishing or "indie publishing".

We'll answer such questions as:

- Who are the major publishers and are they interested in me?
- What is an Agent and do I need one?
- How do I present my manuscript?
- I've got my advance; I'm going on a cruise. Right?
- Is 'vanity press' always the villain?
- Self-publishing an e-book: how hard can it be?
- Self-publishing a paperback: how costly will it be?
- I'm published: can I quit the day job?

The presenter, Margaret Penhall-Jones, is a local writer and editor. She has self-published two romance novels and has a manuscript under consideration with a traditional publisher. She moved to Coffs Harbour two years ago and has been a member of Coffs Harbour Writers Group (CHWG) since then. She conducts a course on Novel and Memoir Writing for the Coffs Harbour U3A, co-ordinates a critique group for the CHWG and the Arts Council, regularly contributes book reviews to the CHWG Newsletter and has presented writing and creativity workshops for the CHWG, the Grassroots Writers Festival 2016 and the local Mental Health Professionals Network. She is a member of Romance Writers of America and Romance Writers of Australia and is a competition judge for Romance Writers of Australia. Apart from being an avid reader all her life, Margaret also has considerable experience in the retail book trade.

Members' write

Roger Harris

Guardian Angels

The last few months have been a journey. My relationship with cancer has been much like my relationships with a number of women, brief but intense!

For those of you who don't know, the pathology results are in, and that they got it all. There is no current evidence to suggest it will return.

I feel like I have my very own group of Guardian Angels, The Coffs Harbour Writers' Group, Lorraine was there almost every day, Yvonne brought me flowers from the group, no one ever bought me flowers before, I feel as though you were all there willing me through it.

I had the operation Thursday the 1st December, had my first walk the next morning. Saturday I was moved from intensive care, to the surgical wards. My first shower, always good therapy. When diagnosed and preparing for the operation I went into training, running cycling and swimming, got rid of a couple of kilos, and reduced my at rest heart rate from 48 to 45. The physiotherapists thought this was wonderful. I knew it would help my recovery.

I set myself the goal of attending our Christmas Lunch, I wasn't sure I could do it, but goals should be about stretching yourself. When I arrived and Suzanne greeted me with "I cannot believe you are here", I actually felt quite proud of what I had achieved. My apologies to Leonie for scaring her, when on the way home I asked her to drop me back at the hospital as one of the dressings had started to leak.

Suzanne has been bringing me food parcels; I have been thoroughly spoiled, and loved it of course. But here's the thing, I now have about 0.5 percent of understanding of what it might be like for a woman to lose a breast to cancer. I've only been for a walk in the park.

When I was first diagnosed I said cancer and I would rumble, and we would see who got tired first. I thought it would be me, but cancer couldn't take the heat, so I won.

So next? Well it's back to normal, finish the kitchen, a holiday in Cambodia, and 11, 12 March 2017 marks my return to motor sport.

I cannot begin to explain, what your support has meant to me, many of you know some of my background and childhood from my book, 'My Sisters and Other Witches'. At 66 it's been a first to feel that others care about Roger Harris, and it feels good.

So...Thank you

Margaret Penhall-Jones

Summer Reads: Book Reviews

If, like me, your Christmas and New Year were hectic and you had little time for summer reading, why not enjoy the remainder of the warm weather indulging in emotional reads by two local authors?

Jenn J McLeod: *The Other Side of the Season*

Set right here in Coffs Harbour and surrounds, this novel relates the intertwining stories of three generations; their loves, their struggles to survive both physically and emotionally and their quest for resolution. The narrative moves between 1979 and the present, which will keep you turning the page to piece the story together. Jenn creates a strong sense of place and memorable characters in this engaging, emotional novel.

For me, a *Seasons* book by Jenn J McLeod is a holiday treat which I allow myself each year and this year's 'treat' was the best yet!

Annie Seaton: *Kakadu Sunset*

Annie Seaton set this romantic-suspense novel in the Northern Territory's fascinating Kakadu area and surrounds. Annie Seaton's writing voice is as always clear as a bell and a pleasure to read. Her main characters, helicopter-flying Ellie and wounded veteran Kane are loveable, sympathetic characters and we are cheering for them all the way as they face disturbing events, long-hidden secrets and the emotional barriers that keep them apart.

Annie's next book *Daintree* has recently been released and is already on my 'to read' list!

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Competitions (from Margaret Penhall-Jones)

(You'll have to be quick off the mark for the next two!) Click on the links for the websites and more information.

[3 February: Text Prize](#)

This prize aims to discover new books for young adults and children by Australian and New Zealand writers. It will be awarded to the best manuscript written for young readers. Maximum length: 120,000 words, first prize: \$10,000 and a publishing contract, entry fee: \$25.

[3 February: Birdcatcher Books Stories for Children Competition](#) Stories for children

[6 February: Newcastle Short Story Award](#) Conducted by the Hunter Writers Centre

[13 February: Tasmanian Writers' Prize](#) Short stories up to 3,000 words on an island theme

[17 February: Bondooma Station Anzac Stories in Poetry](#) Poetry addressing Queensland ANZAC centenary themes

[28 February: Helen Anne Bell Poetry Bequest Award](#) Biennial poetry award at University of Sydney

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