

# Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Inc.



*Established September 1986*

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

***August 2017 Newsletter No 303***

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

## **Committee Members**

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<b>Acting President:</b>	Annette Arthur <a href="mailto:annettearthur53@gmail.com">annettearthur53@gmail.com</a>
<b>Secretary:</b>	Kim Shepherd <a href="mailto:akimbomakes@gmail.com">akimbomakes@gmail.com</a>
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*Please note: A new committee will be elected at the AGM in August so some positions are acting because of changes.*

## **Greetings**

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It's been a friendly, sociable month for our writing group with a very expressive July meeting (the one-off new room must have been invigorating) and a warm farewell for our long time member, past President and friend, Ninette van Zyl, who is moving to Queensland to be close to family. We thank Lorraine for hosting the morning tea where the wondrous table of goodies could have fed another 20 people (or even 30). All the members seemed to be competing as to who could make the most scrumptious and eye-catching cake (obviously a story in that – the great cake bake-off). We would also like to thank Dr Lisa Milner for a well-attended and stimulating evening workshop at the Library on Effective Characterisation. We have had great reports from that one from all attendees, fiction and non-fiction writers alike.

It's that time of year, Annual General Meeting, when we all need to stand up and take some leadership in our group and share out the responsibilities which are very minimal. The next

meeting is on Wednesday 2 August which will include the AGM so be ready to nominate yourself or someone else or offer some support in a particular area. Like any training course or club, the more you put into it the more you get out of it.

This is my last Newsletter as I will be stepping down from the position of Publicity Officer and Newsletter Editor. I am sure in a group of writers there will be many who are itching to take on the role. I have enjoyed pulling information together and communicating with the group but I am always disappointed by the lack of contributions. I will be concentrating on my own writing, running some public writing workshops with a friend, doing a community radio program and spending more time with my family (that sounds like a politician –at least we don't have to worry about dual citizenship when standing for positions.)

There are some fascinating public events coming up in the Coffs area so take advantage of the wonderful weather to get out and about and be inspired and write more (and submit to the newsletter)! *Regards Leonie*

## **What's on in August?**

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**10.00 am – 12.30 pm Wednesday 2 August 2017 Cavanbah Centre. Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Monthly meeting and 2017 Annual General Meeting (AGM) followed by lunch (see below)**

**12.30 pm – 1.30 pm Wednesday 2 August Writers' Group Lunch in Chill Out café, Community Village (next to Cavanbah Centre).**

**10.00 am – 12.30 pm Thursday 17 August Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Social Morning, Shearwater Café at the Promenade, Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour.**

*And more out in the community...*

**4 – 6 August Byron Writers' Festival. More details at [byronwritersfestival.com/festival-2017/](http://byronwritersfestival.com/festival-2017/) Our membership number is 26921154 for members wishing to gain a discount.**

**Tuesday 6.00 pm 8 August Sydney Conservatorium of Music students Northern Tour concert Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery**

**Sunday 12 noon – 4 pm 13 August Arts in the Garden An Afternoon of History, Music, Poetry and Art, Coffs Harbour Regional Museum, Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour**

**From 12 pm Saturday 19 August Fed BluesFest, Federal Hotel, Bellingen. Child friendly till 7 pm.**

**6.00 pm - 8 pm Thursday 24 August Coffs Harbour heat of the 2017 Australian Poetry Slam Harry Bailey Memorial Library Coffs Harbour. Registrations from 5.30 pm**

**23 – 27 August Vive La France French Film Festival Jetty Theatre**

**21 – 24 September Bellingen Fine Music Festival. A World of Classical Music**

## Members Write

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### Margaret Penhall-Jones reviews...

#### **Snow Falling on Cedars by David Guterson (1994)**

This movie aired on television this year as winter commenced. Co-incidentally, I had just finished re-reading the book, a find from the Rotary Book Fair. In the nearly quarter century since its first publication, it has deservedly become a classic. Be prepared for cold, though!

Set on a remote island off North-West USA, where the main industry is strawberry growing, the story follows the fates of families of islanders; especially those who were of Japanese descent in World War 2. The island's inhabitants are participants in a war they did not start, but which sees the community split as the Japanese descendants are sent to internment camps. The war provides a pretext to act out underlying tensions and long-standing resentments. Also a victim of the war is the relationship between school friends Ishmael Chambers and Hatsue Imada.

Ten years later, newspaper owner Ishmael is following the trial of Hatsue's husband Kabuo Miyamoto for murder.

Through his poetic writing style and rich imagery, Guterson creates unforgettable impressions for the reader; the dimly-lit courtroom, the fear of a blizzard on a vulnerable island, the bone-freezing cold, the horrors of war and the tenderness of adolescent love. Beneath the narrative of the courtroom drama, the novel delves into issues of justice, personal responsibility and the effects of war. The movie so nearly re-creates the experience of the reader that it is not disappointing. Yet, reading the prose is the more immediate experience. It is a study in style for aspiring writers!

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## Writing tips

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I like these fun writing tips from Roddy Clarke (Irish author of *The Commitments* and *Paddy Clarke Ha Haha* and many more)

### **Roddy Doyle**

**1** Do not place a photograph of your favourite author on your desk, especially if the author is one of the famous ones who committed suicide.

**2** Do be kind to yourself. Fill pages as quickly as possible; double space, or write on every second line. Regard every new page as a small triumph –

**3** Until you get to Page 50. Then calm down, and start worrying about the quality. Do feel anxiety – it's the job.

**4** Do give the work a name as quickly as possible. Own it, and see it. Dickens knew *Bleak House* was going to be called *Bleak House* before he started writing it. The rest must have been easy.

5 Do restrict your browsing to a few websites a day. Don't go near the online bookies – unless it's research.

6 Do keep a thesaurus, but in the shed at the back of the garden or behind the fridge, somewhere that demands travel or effort. Chances are the words that come into your head will do fine, eg "horse", "ran", "said".

7 Do, occasionally, give in to temptation. Wash the kitchen floor, hang out the washing. It's research.

8 Do change your mind. Good ideas are often murdered by better ones. I was working on a novel about a band called the Partitions. Then I decided to call them the Commitments.

9 Do not search amazon.co.uk for the book you haven't written yet.

10 Do spend a few minutes a day working on the cover biog – "He divides his time between Kabul and Tierra del Fuego." But then get back to work.

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### **Competitions from Margaret Penhall-Jones** *(Click on the Competition title to follow link)*

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#### [6 August: John-Hinde Award for Science Fiction](#)

Open to feature science fiction film, television, web series and interactive media scripts. First prize is \$10,000 for best produced script and professional support for best unproduced script.

#### [24 August: Elyne Mitchell Writing Award](#)

Open to fiction and nonfiction up to 2500 words referencing an Australasian rural experience.

Theme: 'Local Stories, People, Places and Events'.

First prize: \$1000. Entry fee: \$15.

#### [31 August: Words of Wyndham Writing Competition](#)

Open to four categories including unpublished short stories, graphic short stories, poetry and flash fiction. Prizes range from \$80 to \$400.

#### [18 September: The Horne Prize](#)

The *Saturday Paper* and *Aesop* will award \$15,000 to best original essay of up to 3000 words. Theme: Australian life.

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*That's all for now. Don't forget, contributions please. We are a **writing group** – we meet to improve our writing and practise! Send your own stories, book or film reviews, writing exercises, please, to the Newsletter Editor. Don't wait to be asked! Leonie*