

The Write Stuff

Monthly Newsletter of the Helensvale Writers Group – June 2025

This month's main speaker: Kellie Cox

Kellie is a qualified psychologist, but in addition to her professional engagements, she is a published author, writing about the human condition and the vulnerability of the psyche.

A therapist, clinical trainer and creative coach, her subject will be **'Techniques on developing real characters'** to star in our novels and stories. Kellie, who is also a registered member of our group, has presented at one of our meetings before (November 2023) and has also submitted her stories to our group's internal competitions.

Wanting to see a change in the narrative of gender roles in storytelling, Kellie has created her publishing and production enterprise, Strong Female Protagonists and encourages others to write and produce work that challenges our preconceived ideas of societal values.



'Under the Spotlight': Anna Crichton – Scrivener



Anna will return after a few months' absence, after she has had her wrist badly broken and needed some serious medical attention. She'll present a brief outline of **'Scrivener'** a software package specifically designed for writers. Any writers: novelists, script writers, non-fiction, short stories, academic papers, journalists,... in other words: **YOU**.

Last month: CJ Barnes – Script writing

So, you have written that modern version of Game of Thrones, and you want to see it on the big screen, or converted into the next unmissable TV series on Netflix? Think again. For every minute of the movie, you get just one page of script. CJ quoted famous screen script writer [Nicolas Myer](#) (Star Trek, Time after Time, The Day After etc): *"The screen play is NOT the finished product"*. It is a blue print for a movie. There are five major differences:

1. It is 'Out of Mind': You can't narrate, Directors, actors all have their own feelings.
2. You are seen, not heard
3. Time is of the essence: some 50 pages of your novel need to be compressed into about 2 minutes. **50 pages in two minutes??** So, next time you read a novel, then watch the movie, try to correlate the two!
4. Less is always more: Every character, every place, every word must serve to enrich the story.
5. It takes a village – after writing the script, there is a huge team of people to make it all come together. And don't forget: In a screen play, every character, every place, every word serves to INCREASE THE BUDGET.

Ah, some subjects are easier to describe than script writing. And therein lies the very concept: How can I compress a professional's one-hour presentation into a 200 word newsletter article that is still informational? Sorry peeps, you should have been there!



From left: CJ Barnes, Kathy Shanks, competition winner Rolando Rizzo, Grahame Moore

Last month's Spotlight speaker: Kathy Shanks

"Authors want to make money. I teach them how to make it." Well, here is a business slogan if ever I heard one! (And let me assure you, during some 40-odd years in business, I've seen a few...).

Kathy, herself an author with over 12 published titles, mentors around 100 clients to help them to make the best from their labour. Her company, Turtle Publishing <https://turtlepublishing.com.au/> offers a wide variety of services dealing with all aspects of becoming a successful author.

Kathy's presentation dealt with just one segment: **Self Publishing**. She offers a detailed, step-by-step program '**Publish with Purpose**' to follow, comprising of five principal steps. Her presentation also dealt with five principal steps:

1. Create quality book
2. Optimize everything – not just about the metadata
3. Book launch strategy
4. Social proof – reviews
5. Improve with advertising keywords, SEO, find searchable keywords etc

You can get a detailed guide 'There is a cornucopia of really good stuff on the [Turtle Publishing website](#). Check it out! Kathy is also the organiser of the annual [Logan Bookfest](#). This is not just for book lovers, **this is for authors!**

What else happened / will happen?

Our convenor **Grahame Moore** invested in a new Karaoke machine. **Karaoke?** No, any rumours that we'll stage a singing competition is completely unfounded (yet). Grahame

bought it to ensure some of our members who suffer from hearing difficulties (me included) can enjoy our meetings as much as everyone else. Thank you, Grahame! Oh, by the way, Grahame also has (again!) completed a new 86,000 word novel in just 4 weeks! Wow!

We had discussions in relation to whether the group should be incorporated. **The principal issue is public liability:** Under the terms of the meeting room rental from the Gold Coast City Council, it is clearly stated that “The Hirer” (e.g. us) is liable, except where negligence of the council can be asserted. Grahame Moore is doing more research on this topic.

Megan Norris and Lily Arthur elaborated on Lily’s recent exposure on Channel 9’s ‘60 Minutes’ program. And Megan is planning another new podcast ‘Somebody’s Daughter’.

‘An Accidental Meeting’ competition winner: Rolando Rizzo

Congratulations, Rolando! We had a total of 11 entries that were judged independently. If you are a registered member of our group, you will have received **a copy of Rolando’s story together with this newsletter via email**. Please keep in mind that copyright for all our competitions remain with the authors; please do not forward it without permission. All the submissions will feature in our Christmas compilation, handed out at our annual Christmas luncheon.

New HWG Challenge:

Hot on the heels of the group-internal competition (see separate article above), the topic for the next competition has been determined: **"Under Stormy Skies"**. Usual conditions: Fiction, 1000 words maximum, deadline is 30th September 2025. and no late entries accepted. All entries will feature in our Christmas compilation book (but copyright remains with the author).



Upcoming Writers Competitions

- a) So, you want to write real sexy stories? The **[‘Not Quite Write Prize for Flesh Fiction’](#)** (the title alone wins an award! ☺) Max 1500 words, theme: ***‘Making the Unsexy Irresistible’***. Closes on 24th August 2025.
- b) Here is a long term project: Deadline is 26th February 2026. **[Next Generation Short Story Awards](#)**. **What? You’re not ‘Next Generation’?** Look closer. They have categories for ‘Seniors 60 – 69 years’ and ‘Seniors 70 years and above’. Some our group’s members qualify for these...
- c) There are another 280 (last time I looked) competitions on **[reedsy.com](https://www.reedsy.com)** – There must be one or two that suit you!

When did you last look at our very own website?

Our member Stacey King maintains our website, featuring dozens of links covering just about all aspects to assist you in writing and publishing your work. Check out this link:

<https://www.helensvalewritersgroup.org/writers-resources>

It’s not only about writing and publishing. There are also sites that deal with Text-to-Voice conversion, how to make a podcast and how to distribute it, even legal stuff of what you must do when you publish your work electronically. And, if you go to the home page, you’ll find

details about our members' published titles, even their bios. Oh, by the way, we also have a **Facebook page**. Just search for Helensvale Writers Group.

Can you improve on that?

Today, at some point, she had stopped watching the play and instead watched the audience. She saw gasps of surprise when an actor revealed himself to be a villain, the laughter when the clown strutted onto the stage to break the tension. She heard shouts of warning when the crowd was so invested in the players that they didn't want harm to befall them. She listened to the muffled weeping when, in the last act, the most virtuous character died. A playwright had taken a fresh, blank sheet of paper and from it, had made three thousand strangers feel.

Jodi Picoult – 'By any other Name'

[Incidentally, are you interested in the controversy about whether Shakespeare really is the author of all the works he is credited with? This book's underlying subject deals with it in an excellent way. Pure fiction, isn't it. Or is it? Ed.]

Got anything to brag about?

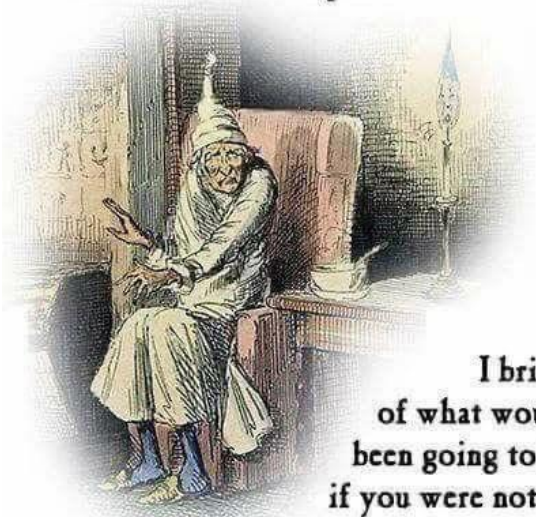
Well, let's hear it! Don't be shy if you have won an award, or even if your story got published! Your fellow members would like to know about it. Send me an email.

This month's meeting is on the usual day, time and place: **third Thursday of the month, 17th July 2025, 10:00 am**, ground floor meeting room of the Helensvale Library. **Please be a little bit early** so we can start right on time – we need to be out by 12:15.

Best wishes,
Franz Huber
Helensvale Writers Group
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**People who can't
distinguish between
etymology and entomology
bug me in ways I cannot put
into words.**

**I am the Ghost of Christmas Future Imperfect
Conditional, said the Spirit.**



**I bring news
of what would have
been going to happen,
if you were not to have
been going to change your ways.**