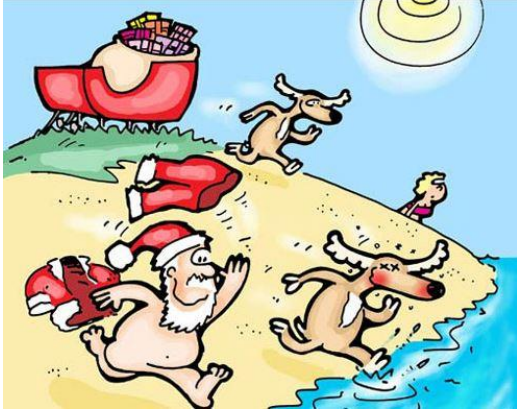


# The Write Stuff

Monthly Newsletter of the Helensvale Writers Group – December 2025

## Christmas Luncheon – Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December



Our convenor **Grahame Moore** has again booked the ‘Glass Room’ at **Club Helensvale** (where we were last year), for a buffet luncheon, commencing at 12-Midday. **For registered current members** of the Helensvale Writers Group, **the luncheon is free**, and you are welcome to bring along partners, family or guests, at a cost of just \$30.00 per person. Vegetarian options are available. Drinks can be purchased at the bar just outside the room.

**We’ll need to advise firm numbers one week before, in other words, by Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>**

**December.** Please email me your numbers, to [helensvalewriters@gmail.com](mailto:helensvalewriters@gmail.com), including any guests you will bring along, and advise if you have any special dietary requirements.

**NOTE:** You do NOT need to be a member of the Gold Coast Writers Association to come.

There will be no other meeting of our group in December. First meeting in the new year will be, as usual, on the third Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026. Watch out for the newsletter for details.

## Rochelle Miller, Gold Coast Writers Association

At last month’s meeting, Rochelle (who is the President of GCWA) visited our group, primarily to again outline the details of our association with GCWA. As mentioned before, our group will continue to meet as before. The principal reason is for our members to be covered by insurance. The Gold Coast City Council (who owns the premises where we meet) makes it very clear that, whilst inside their rooms, we are not covered by the council’s insurance. There are, of course numerous other benefits to GCWA membership: we don’t need to be concerned about doing annual returns to government bodies etc. From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026, all our members ought to also be members of GCWA. If you are not already, click on this link to register your membership: <https://www.goldcoastwriters.org/membership>. You may want to do it before the end of the year – on 1<sup>st</sup> January, their annual membership fee increases from \$45 to \$50 per annum.

## Last month’s guest speaker: Liv Lorkin

Liv explained to our group, as she outlined her methods of getting attention to market your product. OK, Liv would be unusual, in so far that she not only writes, but is also an accomplished illustrator. *“I drew the cover first, then put it up online, before I had written any story. Then I got an order for 100 copies...”* Talking about being forced to commit to writing! Her initial success was based on doing a children’s book with a story about her home town, Ballarat. Yes, you guessed it: to be marketed in Ballarat. *“You were always a writer, but you may not necessarily believe that you are a writer”*. Next came a novel, “middle graded”. Then, she produced a Christmas book, again for the local market. Result: the local council ordered 5,000 copies!





Rochelle Miller (left) and Liv Lorkin

“Think about how do YOU buy your books?” You need to find your intended audience. Many of the points Liv made are the standard Marketing 101: Collaboration, brand partnerships (did you know that ‘Barbie’ has over 100 associated brands, the ‘Wicked’ movie over 400?) A major point, if you want to introduce your work to the local book stores: Do not hawk. Instead give them a free copy and ask.

*“If you are a writer, there are going to be people out there that will want to support you” she said.*

Liv’s website has lots more goodies: click on this link <https://www.livlorkin.com/>

## “Out of the darkness” Challenge

### ... and the winners are...

For this year, a record 14 submissions have been received from our members. Some serious work in there!

This competition was judged via ‘Assessment by your Peers’, in other words, every member who submitted an entry was asked to rate the other 13 stories and rank them from 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>. Without doubt, this caused many of our entrants to spend as much time judging the entries of the other 13 submissions with great diligence. (And, in my case, demonstrated to me that some of our members are way better writers than your humble newsletter editor 😊)

A compilation of all replies resulted in

**1st place:** Stacey King  
**2<sup>nd</sup> place:** Anna Chrichton  
**2nd place:** Hamid Mirfenderesk



**Congratulations!**

## Compilation of all this year’s competition stories, overall winners

At the Christmas Luncheon (see details below), **Grahame will again present a booklet**, containing a compilation of all the stories submitted throughout the year, to each one of the authors.

The winners of various categories will be announced, and trophies will be presented.

## Upcoming Writers Competitions

- a) Deadline 26<sup>th</sup> 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... 😊

- b) [Wergle Flomp Humor Poetry Contest](#) – so you can write humorous poems? This is for you! And **entry is free**. \$2,000 first prize, plus various gift vouchers. Deadline is 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026
- c) There are another 280 (last time I looked) competitions on [reedsy.com](#) – There must be one or two that suit you!

## Positions Vacant: Convenor

A year ago, Grahame indicated that he wanted to retire... and then was overwhelmed with phone calls and emails from our members to be considered for the job. NOT. This time, he is quite serious. So, let's look at the "official" positions that need to be covered in our Helensvale Writers Group (HWG):

- **Formal requirements of incorporation**, necessary in respect of government registrations and insurance: Since we are now associated with the Gold Coast Writers Association, these are covered.

Other jobs are

- **Keeper of the cash kitty**
- **Membership database**
- **Member communications**, newsletter etc:

I'm happy to continue doing this (unless, of course, someone else would like to?)

- **Webmaster, Facebook etc:**  
Stacey King indicated she's happy to continue doing this

**Position Vacant**

So, exactly what is the job of Convenor? Here is a summary of what this job entails:

1. **You are HWG's representative with the Gold Coast City Council**, and must be indoctrinated by someone on the GGCC staff on what to do in case of fire, and where the emergency areas are around the building. This is a **one-time only** requirement.
2. **You arrange for speakers** to attend, ideally at least two months in advance. These can be authors, educators, or any person who can provide the group with useful advice, information and/or entertainment.
3. **Replenish the grocery box** (Cakes, Biscuits, Coffee, Tea, Milk), and a bottle of wine for your main speaker, and bring it along to the meeting and take them back again after the meeting. Note: at the library, we have our own small storage cupboard for non-perishables. All expenses will be paid out of our cash kitty.
4. **Place the pull-up banner and directional signs** in the appropriate areas to direct members and visitors to the location, and after the meeting take them back.
5. **Run the meetings**, e.g. you ring the bell, and offer members to talk about their projects, then invite the 'Under the Spotlight' speaker and, after the coffee break, the main speaker to the microphone. (Grahame will continue to bring his speaker/microphone along).
6. Ensure the room is cleaned up again after the meeting, and tables/chairs (if not meeting at the library) are put back. All able bodied members should help with this.
7. If possible, attend the monthly meeting of the Gold Coast Writers Association (3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month, 12:00 pm to approx. 3:00 pm). All our members ought to be also members of GCWA, to be covered by their corporate registration and insurance.

**Note: every one of these tasks can be separated**, so if any of you are prepared to take on an individual one of the above items, **let's hear it!**

## Can you improve on that?

*In May there were a few droopy buds, but now the lilacs bloom again, out of season and overnight, in a single exquisite rush, bearing flowers so fragrant the air itself turns purple*

*and sweet. Before long bees will grow dizzy. birds won't remember to continue north. For weeks people will find themselves drawn to the sidewalk in front of Sally Owens's house, pulled out of their own kitchens and dining rooms by the scent of lilacs, reminded of desire and real love and a thousand other things they'd long ago forgotten, and sometimes now wish they'd forgotten still.* Alice Hoffman – *Practical Magic* [Editor's note: the lilacs mentioned have a MUCH deeper and sinister significance than just being flowers. Read the book!]

Again, **don't forget to book for the Christmas Luncheon by next Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December.** The lunch is free for members, and only \$30.00 per person for guests. But we need to advise the caterers, so send me an email to the address below, with numbers and names. Please pay for guests on arrival (cash only).

Hope to see you there. If I don't see you before Christmas: on behalf of all our members, I wish you a joyful festive season, and for the new year, may you be blessed with lots of happiness, good fortune and contentment.

Best wishes,  
Franz Huber  
Helensvale Writers Group  
[helensvalewriters@ gmail.com](mailto:helensvalewriters@gmail.com)  
0484 597 451

***Went on a nice walk in the country, when, as I walked past a farm, I saw the sign 'Duck, Eggs'.***

***I was contemplating the use of a comma, when it hit me.***

