

The Write Stuff

Monthly Newsletter of the Helensvale Writers Group – December 2023

Christmas Luncheon Party



Instead of a regular meeting on the third Thursday, our convenor Grahame Moore has booked tables at the [Saltwater Creek Hotel](#), for our Christmas extravaganza. (Some of you may recall: we were there in 2021).

When? Friday the 15th of December 2023, from 11:30. It's a sumptuous buffet, so all tastes and dietary requirements are catered for. Most importantly: we are splurging most of what's left in our kitty from the \$10.00 contributions we each pay per meeting to pay for the rent, coffee & biscuits, gifts and other overheads. **For members and their partners: the luncheon is free!** (Unless we run out of money, in which case it is “first booked, first

served”.)

Bring a book as a Christmas Present, wrapped. Ideally, one of your own works, but alternatively, one of your favourite author's. Grahame will hand out a raffle ticket to everyone attending, so there is a good chance you'll get one back!

Please advise me whether or not you are coming.

If you haven't already done so in person at the last meeting, or replied to the email I sent shortly after, **advise whether you will attend**, and whether you'll bring your partner along. Do it now; we need to advise the venue of numbers expected **by 10th December**. [Click on this link](#).

Last month's speakers:



Last month's meeting was all about psychology, which could translate to 'the roller coaster ride of emotions'. Starting off with **Lily Arthur** presenting on her journey of taking the State of Queensland and then other governments to task for having stolen her baby. You could almost hear the crackle of static electricity in the room. A very brief recap for those members who only just met Lily: At age 17, for the “crime” of being pregnant, she was forcibly separated from her husband-to-be, essentially incarcerated in the

Magdalene Laundry in Brisbane. The child of her first love was taken away in the labour ward of the Brisbane Hospital and eventually given away to strangers...Lily elaborated on her fights with the State of Qld - which cost her \$100,000 - and lost. She kept fighting, with the result of ultimately getting a formal apology, then a Senate Enquiry. Lily not only has written a book, titled [‘Dirty Laundry’](#) - she is still today, decades later, full of fire and

flames. Hearing her speak, supported by her scrap book of numerous newspaper articles, court documents etc, is an experience in itself. I wish I had the skill to adequately describe her flashing eyes, her body language recounting an outrage committed on her by bureaucratic, sanctimonious officials of a regional government of the 1960's.

This was followed by **Kellie Cox** (picture right, with our convenor Grahame Moore) on using Psychology in your writing. Ah, more emotions. Here is an example on how to generate a specific type of emotion: [Click on this YouTube link](#), listen to the song, and tell me what emotion it stirred. Know what I mean? Kellie kindly agreed to share her PowerPoint (which I sent out with the last email - contact me if you'd like a copy). Good stories all have conflict (that's why you watch the Six O'Crock news!) Kellie presented an example: Get a couple to put together an IKEA kit of furniture (or, in the case of your editor, a kit-form multi-burner bar-be-que set with incomplete instructions). Now, THAT'S a real test of the solidity of a partnership! Kellie's highly instructional presentation cannot be summed up in a paragraph or two. Yes, you should have been there. Hopefully, she'll run a class sometimes on how to apply psychology in your writing, that goes further than what can be covered in about half an hour.



Other reasons you should have been there:

In addition to the two speakers from our own ranks, inadequately described above, there was news: **Grahame Moore** and **Jack Kregas** attended the Bookfest - not many sales, but good contacts, Our resident swimming coach **Gerry Gulliver** has published his memoir (with the kind assistance of Jack Kregas on how to wrestle Amazon), **Stacey King** came up with yet another great couple of tips: a new feature on **Amazon**: tick a box that **Artificial Intelligence has NOT been used**... and you can now **sell individual chapters** of your book instead of the entire volume, **Ingram** has a new **book cover generator**, including a bar code, and we welcomed **several new members**. You might meet some at the Christmas luncheon.

Last month's competition: Parody, Spoof, Satire:

We didn't have enough time to even think about it, so we extend the competition for another month. Think of a well known song. Any song, bush ballad, rock, pop, classical. But it must be well known, so people other than you recognise the tune and can try to sing your (twisted) lyrics. Then write it: a parody (see sample on right), a spoof or a piece of satire that can be sung to that tune. But, **please, keep politics or politically controversial subjects out of it**. We are trying to stay out of politics (or religion for that matter). See an example on the right I found on the internet. (If you were born before 1960, you'd know it. But who doesn't know Elvis Presley's "[Are you lonesome tonight?](#)") Of course, you'll retain copyright (of your spoof, not of the tune!)

Are you lonesome tonight
Is your brastrap too tight
Are your corsets just drifting apart
Have you got a big chest
Making holes in your vest
Does your spare tyre
Reach into the night
Are your stockings all laddered
Are you wearing them thin
Do you hold up your knickers
With a big safety pin
Are your false teeth all worn
Do they drop when you yawn
Well it's no wonder your lonesome
tonight..

I bet you sang it 😂😂

(I apologise in advance to anyone who is offended by the sample. It's meant to be humorous, not serious! But if the woke-rati "cancel" me, so be it... 😊 Ed.)

And Grahame is again offering a nice **bottle of red for the best entry**. [Email it to me](#) and we'll put up a separate document (accessible by members only). We will tackle it at our January meeting.

Can you improve on that?

"... where the possums of political correctness turn on their own rotisserie of rectitude..." (Greg Craven, commentator and former VC of Aust Catholic University, in *The Australian*, 27/04/2023)

I'm not necessarily suggesting that you write a better sentence yourself (if you do have one, please let me have it!) but if you come across a paragraph that you catch yourself re-reading again and again... I'm a sucker for it. Share it! Take a photo with your smartphone and **send your entry as a photo, text, email or doc to helensvalewriters@gmail.com** (or simply reply to the email with which I sent you this newsletter).

Upcoming Writers Competitions

- a) [Local Word Writing Prize](#): This is an annual competition run by the Geelong Library and Deaking University - open to all over 16 years old and residents of Australia. 3000 words - fiction. Closes 27 January 2024
- b) [Australian Book Review 'Calibre Essay Prize'](#) 2,000 - 5,000 words. Winner takes \$10,000. Closes 22nd January 2024
- c) [Story Unlikely's Annual Short Story Contest](#) - No restrictions or genre! Maximum 4,500 words, total \$750 in prizes (\$750 1st, \$500 2nd, \$250 3rd). Open now, closing 31st January 2024. Note: read and follow the submission instructions on the website.
- d) There are another 583 (last time I looked) competitions on reedsy.com – There must be one or two which suit you!

This month's meeting

There won't be a regular meeting in **December** - instead we'll have our Christmas luncheon on **Friday 15th December** - see above. The next 'normal' meeting will be on **18th January 2024**.

May you all enjoy a joyous festive season, and may the new year provide you with lots of inspiration and publishing contracts! (OK, as to yours truly, even getting a short story published would be a bonus! 😊)

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'Pre-' means before.
'Post -' means after.
To use both prefixes
together...
Would be preposterous.

[OK, I'll see myself out...]

