

The Write Stuff

Monthly Newsletter of the Helensvale Writers Group – April 2025

This month's main speaker: Josh Hale

Josh, who spoke at our group before, is an author, director and film maker. He called our convenor Grahame Moore to invite our members to his latest film called "Beyond Blue", which will be making a splash in the Gold Coast Cinemas during the month of May. He will be happy to talk about the movie making business, and script writing on that day. Josh is a veritable stream of ideas and knowledge on the secrets of how to make small budget movies (e.g. NOT \$300 Million)!



'Under the Spotlight' speaker this month



Jack Kregas

In a follow-on from last month (see details below), at this month's meeting Jack will teach us on **How to make an Audiobook on Amazon— also free of charge!** As always, you'll need an effective cover for your book. Jack previously has presented on this subject as well.

Jack is an accomplished author of numerous books of short stories and gripping fiction. His latest book, 'Shattered Innocence' deals with the horrifying statistics of thousands of teenage children disappearing every year, never to be seen again. [Click on the link](#) to visit his website!

Last month's guest speaker: Bill Edgar – The Coffin Confessor

Bill became a close friend of our 'Living Information Centre' member **Stacey King** (photo on right), after he was able to sort out a serious business issue for her (in his capacity as a professional private investigator).

For those who hadn't been present at his previous visit in 2024: Bill "crashes" funerals. In essence, he gives a voice to the deceased, where the "dearly departed" wants to settle an outstanding issue or two with his/her family, business partner or where he was fully aware of serious foul play, infidelity etc. Read all about it on his website <https://www.billedgar.com.au/>



Bill has published two books so far, with a third one on the way. "I wrote the first book just for myself, in 2013" he said. Then he received *that* phone call from the US: "I understand you

crash funerals” the voice said. He was offered \$60,000, plus a ghost writer (for formatting). “But the catch is that, if it doesn’t sell, you have to pay it back!”

Bill outlined some of the serious traps in that business: Once you have signed with those companies, “they own you”, with other words, ALL the rights relating to the book. “They make millions from the merchandising, promotion, advertising. And there is NOTHING in your book that they can’t change!”

Once he wrote his second book (Afterlife Confessional), the offer came in at \$250,000. But instead, he opted for a deal that was based on a percentage of the film’s budget. The official budget of \$20 Million is more like \$140 Million in reality. In essence, we are talking “telephone numbers” of dollars. Ultimately, he engaged an agent to handle it all... Fascinating stuff – sorry, you should have been there!

Last month’s Spotlight speakers

Jack Kregas: How to generate an Audio Book – Free of Charge.

And it works! Where? How? Jack found a company, Draft2Digital.com. (the same company also runs Books2Read – the login is the same). You need to register (easiest if you use a Gmail or Hotmail account). You can upload your story, both to generate an e-Book as well as an Audio Book. Before you start, you should also generate a book cover (see Jack’s presentation on this subject in the March newsletter) – the dimensions must comply with those posted on their website. You can have an English or American accent, male, female, voice for various genres, e.g. romance, thriller, etc. Jack indicated that two days after publishing, the book available on Apple - \$9.99 (minimum sale price \$4.99)

So what's the catch? There isn’t one – plain vanilla commission sale: They take 10% commission on any sale you make. Payment can be received via a number of methods, including PayPal. Note, if you don’t complete the US taxation form (see their website), they’ll deduct 30% for US taxation.. Looks very fair to me.

Grahame Moore: Doing a Critique - softly

Our convenor **Grahame Moore** briefly elaborated on doing a critique of a book (or for that matter anything) - softly. He selected a book from one of our new members, [CA RIN](#), as an example. By the way: do yourself a favour: Click on the link, click on any of her books, which will open the Amazon website, where you can read a sample before you buy. Read the first couple of paragraphs and you will find a sterling example of using the precisely correct word.

What else happened / will happen?

In-between the speakers, we had our usual “problems and bragging” session. Anthony Shelley, Ronaldo Rizzo, Aldas Klonas and Hamid Mirfenderesk are all working on a novel – Hamid expecting his to be completed by June. John Griffith extolled on the benefits of Microsoft’s Co-Pilot... Grahame Moore has completed some 42 Chapters of his latest novel, and Stacey King (who lives on a boat) was “in Cyclone Mode”...

If you are fond of bush stories and poetry: **The Winton Outback Writers Festival** will be held from the 24th – 27th June 2025. (That’s provided they are no longer flooded out, one assumes). [Click on this link](#) for details. And of course, if you want to enter the contest in their annual Outback Anthology competition (Max 3000 words), it’s **due no later than Anzac Day, 25th April**. The winners will be announced at the Festival in June. There are also categories for Primary and Secondary School students. Our group has a respectable record: we have two of our members who won it.

Can you improve on that?

He saw the flick of her skirt as her nimble heels flew up the three steps of the kitchen port, and he wondered why she was glad that he was not religious, and why she had gone away like that, so fast. The pigs were clamouring, shriller, louder. It was no hour for a youth who had not yet wetted his feet in manhood's stream to stand looking after a pair of heels and try to figure out a thing like that... George W Ogden - *The Bond Boy*

'An Outback Yarn' Challenge is now closed

A credible 11 members submitted their Outback Yarns for the first competition of 2025. They were sent off (author's names removed) to be judged by **Peter Frazer**, the bush poet and author who, together with Mick Martin, was speaking at our group in February (see last month's newsletter). All going according to plan, Grahame will have received the results by the time we have our April meeting on the 17th.

Upcoming Writers Competitions

- [Furphy Literary Award](#) – Not much time left: max 5000 words, 1st prize \$15,000 and a LaTrobe University residency (subject to availability), 2nd prize \$3,000, 3rd prize \$2,000. Open now – **closing 30th April 2025**. Theme: Australian Life in All its Diversity. To give you an idea of the level of sophistication, you can read last year's winner – [click here](#).
- Want to move into the “big time”: consider submitting your work to ['Publishable'](#), the annual competition of the Queensland Writers Centre. In essence: They select 25 long-listed applicants to take part in a manuscript development program. Click on the above link for the details. **Closing 20th May 2025**
- Are you a Martial Arts expert?** [Here is a competition](#) with a difference: 1000 words, them of Martial Arts. Fiction or Non-Fiction. **Closing 31st May 2025**
- There are another 280 (last time I looked) competitions on [reedsy.com](#) – There must be one or two that suit you!

Looking forward to seeing you all at our next meeting, usual day, time and place: **third Thursday of the month, 17th April 2025, 10:00 am**, ground floor meeting room of the Helensvale Library. Yes, we know it'll be Good Friday the next day, but we'll hold the meeting anyway! **Please be a little bit early** so we can start right on time. We've been told by the library that we need to be out by 12:15, not just start getting up, as there is another group booked to start at 12:30.

Best wishes,
Franz Huber
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Bangxiety

Noun

When you are 65% into a romance and the main characters haven't had sex yet and you start to worry that you might be reading a “clean” romance.

