

The Write Stuff

Monthly Newsletter of the Helensvale Writers Group – May 2025

This month's main speaker: Hamid Mirfenderesk - 'The Physics of Writing'



By profession, Hamid is a Civil Engineer, yet his writing is so smooth, it's almost poetic. Born in Iran ("I prefer to call it Persia", he said when he introduced himself in November 2024 - see newsletter December 2024). He emigrated from his country in 1979 ("I had a dream to go to Holland, but Australia ticked all the boxes" he said).

Can the two sciences of Engineering and Literature mix? Well, you'll just have to come and hear him speak!

'Under the Spotlight' speaker: Carin Needham – 'How to plan your books'

Carin, who joined our group only recently, writes under the pseudonym C.A. RIN. She has published a whole series of books, mostly in the genre of 'Psychological Thriller'.

Here is your chance to pick the brains of a successful author!



Last month's guest speaker: Josh Hale



Hadn't I met Josh at a previous meeting, I'd say that to an old, conservative geezer like me, the first impression would be "unconventional". Perhaps even "a bit rough around the edges", though these days sporting a three-week stubble is considered to be the new normal. 😊

Well, surprise! That might be how Josh appears at first sight, but there must be some serious talent, tenacity and resilience below. Take this: "I wrote a film script, but nobody was buying it. So, I decided to make the movie myself. With a budget of

\$5,000..." Make a film on a budget of five grand? Yeah, right! Seriously? Yes, provided that you do just about all the work yourself and find some friendly actors to star in it for free. That effort brought him to the attention of somebody who was prepared to finance his next venture with a budget of \$150,000. Still a laughably small amount, compared to the hundreds of millions they spend on a major production. That film "went well" in a film festival, he said. Then COVID struck, with everyone locked inside their homes.

That didn't stop Josh from creating a master piece that will have its world premiere on the upcoming Gold Coast Film Festival, it is the closing feature. **"Blue Horizons** is about "authentic representation of people with disabilities in film." The script was written for a chap Josh met when volunteering at the Special Olympics, named Damian McCoy. The principal character in the movie, Dougie, suffers from Down Syndrome. Cut a long story short: The actor playing Dougie is played by the very same, Downs Syndrome suffering person. That's inclusivity. [Click here](#) to view the trailer for Blue Horizons.

To quote famous Australian Bush Poet C.J. Dennis: "I dips me lid.

Last month's Spotlight speaker: Jack Kregas

How to generate an Audio Book on Amazon – Free of Charge. Hot on the heels of Jack's presentation in March, he elaborated on the offer by Amazon, called [Amazon Polly](#). So far it's only available in the USA, but expected to become available here. There are a few important points to keep in mind: To be eligible, your book must be



- "live" on Amazon, and available as an e-book and the status cannot be 'Publishing'
- Your e-book must be enabled for either All Territories, or if in the US, enabled for individual territories
- Can only be generated in Audio in either English or Spanish
- No pictures, graphs etc (of course)
- Must be 'free flowing', e.g. no specific formatting

You should also consider the type of book, i.e. books on engineering and architecture are unlikely to suit. You can choose your voice (male, female) and accent, including Australian. [Yes, Henrietta, this is Artificial Intelligence!]

Just to give you some idea of the power of this method: Jack put three of his books up on Amazon in Spanish. Now there is a 'virgin' market! Globally, there are some 600 Million.

If you want to learn about Text to Audio the conventional way (yes, I mean by reading a text book), you can even purchase it – you guessed it – on Amazon.

What else happened / will happen?

Sue Groundwater has finished her Children's book... Anna Crighton wrote lots of non-fiction, and her husband does all the editing (*lucky you!*)... Peter Loveday is still recovering from trauma caused by the previous month's speaker, the Coffin Confessor... Joy Maguire has finished her memoir and has started on her next project... Lily Arthur, after her massive exposure on Women's magazines and social media, has started on a new book... Jan Tarbuck's children's books are now in all *the* schools in this region... Carin Needham was racing to meet her deadline of 1st May for her new book (*hope you made it, Carin!*)

New HWG Challenge: 'An accidental Meeting'

Yes, our Convenor Grahame Moore chose the 'Love Story' genre for the next competition. Love Story? Romance? But I like ACTION!" I hear you yell at your mobile phone. Well, t'hat's quite ok to have action in your love story – perhaps there is a rival who threatens you?

Usual conditions apply:

- Less than one thousand words, including title
- Only one entry per club member
- Fiction only
- No Artificial Intelligence (Chat GPT etc). *Not even a trace (yes, ve haff vays)*

- Genre is 'Romance' and whatever you want to throw into the mix
- The story must not have been previously published or won a prize in another competition
- Authors retain copyright
- **Deadline: 31st May 2025**, no late entries, please.

Send it in in MS Word or Google Doc format (no PDFs please) to helensvalewriters@gmail.com and I'll compile them into a 'blind' document to send to the judge(s). Winners to be announced at the June meeting.

Can you improve on that?

Depression – though that seemed a limp word for the storm of black panic and half-demented malfunction – had over the years worked itself out in Charlotte's life in a curious pattern. Its onset was often imperceptible: like an assiduous housekeeper locking up a rambling mansion, it noiselessly went about and turned off, one by one, the mind's thousand small accesses to pleasure. Sebastian Faulks – 'Charlotte Gray'

Upcoming Writers Competitions

- So you have finished your novel and 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. That's right: Submit the first 50 pages of your manuscript as well as a synopsis. The idea is to get selected to develop your manuscript into a bestseller! (Click on the above link for the details, **but do it soon: Closing 20th May 2025**)
- Are you into 'Big Issues'? Well here is the competition just for you: [The Writing Quarter – Big Issues'](#) annual fiction. 500 – 3000 words. Entry is free. Click on the link for details.
- There are another 280 (last time I looked) competitions on reedsy.com – There must be one or two that suit you!

This month's meeting is early: Usual day, time and place: **third Thursday of the month, 15th May 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
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She just texted me and said
'I can still smell your Colon on my pillow.'
And that's why spelling and editing is important.

