

The Write Stuff

Monthly Newsletter of the Helensvale Writers Group – June 2024

This month's speakers: Josh Hale and Jack Kregas



Yes, he is back again: Last time “our” film maker **Josh Hale** presented at our July 2022 meeting - see [August 2022 newsletter](#)).

Amazing that Grahame managed to track him down - he now spends more time in the US than here. He has just finished shooting his latest movie and has a lot to tell us. Josh will be on immediately after the coffee break.

Before that, under the “**Under the**

Spotlight” segment, our member **Jack Kregas** will talk about the difference between being a writer and a storyteller, and why. Well, if you have read anything Jack has written, you’ll know the difference. Now, the trick is, how to do it? Well, come and listen.

He will take the floor, after our (much briefer) “bragging” session, sharing his knowledge and experience of having written several books.



Last month's meeting: all “homegrown”!

We still had the traditional “what’ve you been up to?” bragging session, but in addition we had a new major segment ‘**Under the Spotlight**’, when one of our members briefly introduces himself and presents on a subject of his choice. Last month, **Ralph Mayn** has been put on the spot, speaking about ‘**The hook**’, referring to the blurb at the back of the book, and why it is so important, because that is why somebody might decide to buy it, rather than putting it back on the shelf. Ralph referred to several examples, points of his own research with book clubs, libraries, top 100. And the prominent display of the author’s name. Take Anne Cleaves as one example: if an author had one successful publication, people will indeed look for any others. *(Sorry, peeps, I forgot to take a photo, so Ralph’s face remains a mystery to anyone who hasn’t been to one of our recent meetings. 😊)*

‘**Styling and Manuscript Layout**’ workshop: So you have spent months, nay, years, writing, rewriting, editing, revising... And then your publication looks... well, ordinary at best?

Stacey King presented a training session on this important aspect. Those of us who brought our computers along could replicate her instructions (well, try anyway... 😊). But even if your fingers somewhat lagged behind, some very important points to keep in mind:



MS Word (as well as Google Docs) has some excellent (automatic) formatting features. Learn them and use them! If your formatting is amateurish, your book will go back on the shelf. For example, you can pre-set stuff like 'Normal', 'Title', 'Subtitle' etc. By selecting these pre-set formats, you will have consistency across your work, and of course it is much faster. If you decide to change the font size, line spacing etc - you can do this in one fell swoop. No full stop in the title. No double spaces after a full stop (yes, I know, some of us were brought up learning to type on a typewriter. Simply resist it). New chapters start on the right hand page. If you have photographs or tables, you need two versions of your publication - one for print and one for e-book. First paragraph always goes to hard left, i.e. not indexed. Mirror page layouts. Thoughts and journals in italics. E-PUB, NOT PDF format. As always, there was much more. You should have been there! For those who were there, Stacey has a nice present, which I'll send to you separately.

What else happened?

Lots. New member **Anna Crichton** has a major project on, writing stories based on her experiences in jail, providing psychologist services to inmates... **Megan Norris** participated in a protest on Violence against Women... Contrasting this serious subject, she decided to write "a funny book" - five chapters so far... **Ken Vernon** is re-editing his 'Everest 96' work... **Livia York** had a feel-good story: she needed a copy of her own book and found one at the Big Book Shop in West Burleigh... **Peter Loveday** made progress (finally!) on a book he started writing 10 years ago... **John Griffiths** submitted a story to Scribophile.com - well worth checking this out, click on link. And, and... with the risk of repeating myself: you should have been there!

The big Grahame Moore Challenge: "Fear"

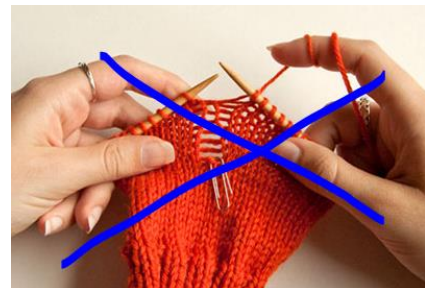
\$300 1st prize, \$200 2nd prize. Only open to registered HWG members.

"Because I am trying to educate our members to sit and write a thousand words of fiction, and dangling a proverbial \$500.00 carrot in front of them "Grahame said. **"As I have told our group, 'This is NOT a knitting club; we are all budding writers.'"**

Most competitions may have several thousands of submissions. This is only open to members of our group, you might have a good chance of picking up first or second prize. Submit up to **two stories** titled 'Fear'. You

may have a sub-title. **Up to 1000 words** each, including title). **Deadline: 30th June 2024.**

Send your submission to helensvalewriters@gmail.com, in Word, Google Doc or PDF format



Another competition is coming up, to coincide with Grahame's birthday towards the end of August. Hint: the theme will be 'Was it a Ghost?' More details at the upcoming meeting and in next month's newsletter, but start thinking about it now!

Can you improve on that?

The damp morning shrouds the path in a blanket of mist and, like a fallen angel descending into Hades, the swirling fog swallows me whole. Clare Mackintosh - 'Geneva'

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) **Helensvale Writers Group (that's us) - Grahame Moore competition 'Fear'** (see article above). He generously sponsors a writing contest for **registered HWG members only**: 1st prize \$300, 2nd prize \$200. Fiction, maximum 1000 words. Only one requirement: must have the title (and, one assumes the theme) **'Fear'**. Judging will be done by an independent professional body. The authors will retain copyright.

Where "normal" writing competitions may have thousands of entries, require you to pay an entry fee and may be judged by god knows who, in this contest, the odds are very short indeed! You are just about guaranteed to get onto the shortlist. T&C's apply. Closing date: 30th June 2024. **You have 23 days. So, start writing now!**

Following this, Grahame offers another prize for a story titled **'Ghost'**, in celebration of his birthday (towards the end of August). Submissions close on 15th August 2024. I have already received several entries.

- b) **The Best Australian Yarn** - this is "the big one": some \$80,000 of prizes in total; \$50,000 for first prize. Short story, fiction only, max 2,500 words Closes Monday 12th August 2024.. [Click here](#) for all the details.
- c) **Anthology Personal Memoirs competition**: If you are a memoir writer, this international competition is for you. [Click here for details](#). Closes 31st August 2024.
- d) There are another 280 (last time I looked) competitions on [reedsy.com](#) – There must be one or two that suit you!

See you at the Helensvale Library on the **20th of June!** Usual place, downstairs meeting room. Start at 10:00 am sharp, please try to be on time, thank you!

Franz Huber,
Helensvalewriters@gmail.com
0484 597 451

**A wizard asked
me to proof
read one of his
scrolls last
week.**

**Actually, it was
more of a spell
check.**

