Cornelis Jacobus Langenhoven (1873–1932) was better known as Sagmoedige Neelsie (Gentle Neelsie) or Kerneels. He played a formidable role in Afrikaans literature and cultural history and was the young language’s foremost promoter.

Langenhoven was born at Hoeko, Ladismith and later moved to Oudtshoorn. In 1897 he married Lenie van Velden. They had one child, a daughter named Engela, who was born in 1901. In 1914 he became a Member of Parliament where he struggled to have Afrikaans recognized as an official language. He was also a founder member of a new Afrikaans newspaper Die Burger and a Freemason.

His most famous work is the anthem Die Stem which he wrote in 1918. Parts of the anthem were incorporated into the new anthem after the abolition of apartheid. His career spanned most writing genres, from poetry to ghost and alien stories. Langenhoven also translated several works into Afrikaans, including the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. He created Afrikaans proverbs and even wrote a love poem (albeit in nonsense verse) to his dog. One of the most versatile Afrikaans writers, he was a master of the short form of prose and is best remembered for his humorous and satirical works. Langenhoven was known for his sharp wit and gentle manner. Once, while a member of parliament, he yelled out in frustration: "Half of this parliament are donkeys!" The Speaker immediately demanded he retract his angry statement, so Langenhoven complied: "All right, Mister Speaker. Half of this parliament are not donkeys."

He owned an imaginary elephant named Herrie that appeared in many of his stories. He even carved its name on a boulder next to the N12 highway near Meiringspoort in 1929. This boulder, which is known as Herrie’s Stone (Herrie se Klip), is now a National Monument. In addition:

- The Student Center at Stellenbosch University is affectionately known as "Die Neelsie".
- Filmmaker Manie van Rensburg made a light-hearted television series titled Sagmoedige Neelsie based on his work in 1983.
- Langenhoven is one of the most prolific and most versatile Afrikaans writers. His Collected Works comprise 16 volumes. He is also fondly remembered for his quirky personality.
- The house (Arbeidsgenot) where he lived from 1901-1950 has been converted into a museum. Email museum@arbeitsgenot.co.za . Web address: www.cjlangenhoven.co.za
Langenhoven was instrumental in the acceptance of Afrikaans as a language and as a first language in schools. This culminated in it being recognized in parliament in 1925 and by 1927 it was recognized as an official language. To celebrate the centenary of his birth, the South African Post Office issued a four-cent C.J. Langenhoven stamp in 1973. RSACJL

Oudtshoorn is on the N12 north-west of George where the N12 intersects the N2.

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