

east

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WRITERS' FEDERATION OF NOVA SCOTIA

word

Awards season reaps blooming books

Newfoundland writer Ken Harvey was so startled to learn his thirteenth book, *The Town that Forgot How to Breathe* (Raincoast Books), had won the \$10,000 Thomas Head Raddall Atlantic Fiction Prize that he almost had to be lured from the stage with flowers. Uncharacteristically speechless, Harvey, fresh from Atlantic Book Festival readings in Charlottetown and New Glasgow, delighted the audience with the news that "Town" is being developed as a feature film by Ladyhawke Productions ... and that "this" (the cheque) would make such a difference.

Leo McKay, also shortlisted for the Raddall Prize, won the Dartmouth Fiction Award for *Twenty-Six* (McClelland & Stewart). In presenting him the prize, Leo's second, Dan Walsh of the Dartmouth Book Awards Committee noted that "for the sake of Westray, the miners and their memory, this was a book that Leo McKay needed to get right. And he did."

The ceremony at Alderney Landing Theatre, Dartmouth, was jammed to the rafters with readers, writers, publishers, booksellers and well-wishers. Host Olga Milosevich, familiar to all CBC Radio One listeners, opened the celebration with a rousing accolade to Edith Comeau Tufts and Félix Thibodeau. Award-winning writer and translator Sally Ross helped the Atlantic Writing Awards to honour the 400th anniversary of the founding of Acadie by introducing these pioneer Acadian writers.

Félix Thibodeau, who celebrated his 95th birthday earlier this year, is the first Nova Scotian to have published an entire work written in Acadian French, thus empowering the oral traditions that date back to the early settlement at Port Royal. Edith Comeau Tufts, mother of 15 children, has worked tirelessly to raise an awareness of Acadian writing in schools and libraries throughout this region. She is the first Acadian woman to have published children's stories, making *Le Petit Acadien* and *Esprit de Noël* important landmarks.

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EDITH COMEAU TUFTS AND FÉLIX THIBODEAU



KEN HARVEY



LEO MCKAY

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NOVASCOTIA
Tourism and Culture

Distracted by the complications of moving house, David Adams Richards was unable to attend the event where, for the third time, he won the Atlantic Independent Booksellers' Choice Award for *River of the Brokenhearted* (Doubleday Canada), presented by Saint John bookseller Pat Joas.

Arriving exhilarated and exhausted after two very full days in Charlottetown schools and a morning at a Halifax school, Don Aker won his second Ann Connor Brimer Award for Children's Literature for his third YA novel, *The First Stone* (HarperCollins).

The Awards welcomed Atlantic publishers to the table this year with a new award for the Best Atlantic Published Book, sponsored by two Manitoba printing houses – Friesens and Hignell. Presenter John Channing invited three publishers and their writers to the stage: Laurie Brinklow of Acorn Press with Michael Hennessey nominated for his novel, *The Betrayer*; Jim Lorimer of Formac with Stephen Archibald and Shelia Stephenson for their elegant *Heritage Houses of Nova Scotia*; and Donna Francis from Killick Press with Beth Ryan for her first book, *What is Invisible* a collection of short stories. Munificently conceived as a prize won by all, Formac took first ranking (\$1,000 for the writers and \$5,000 in printing costs to the publisher) with Acorn and Killick each rewarded with \$250 for the writers and \$1,000 in printing costs to the publishers.

Beth Ryan later returned to the stage to win the Margaret and John Savage Award before levitating a return to her seat in the audience.

Brian Bartlett, nominated last year for the Atlantic Poetry Prize, which was won by Anne Compton (*Opening the Island*), was articulate in his praise of Anne, who presented this year's Poetry Prize to Brian for *Wanting the Day* (Goose Lane Editions). Brian remarked at how validating it is to have one's work recognized, noting that his son Josh had been genuinely astonished that little tiny books could be lavished with \$1,000 prizes.

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DON AKER



STEPHEN ARCHIBALD AND
SHEILA STEPHENSON



BETH RYAN



BRIAN BARTLETT

PHOTO BY SUSAN KERSLAKE

PHOTO BY SUSAN KERSLAKE

PHOTO BY SUSAN KERSLAKE

Harry Thurston made it a hat-trick, taking home his third Evelyn Richardson Prize for Non-fiction for *Islands of the Blessed: the Secrets of Egypt's Everlasting Oasis* (Doubleday Canada). The Amherst-based poet and non-fiction writer also won in 1991 for *Tidal Life* and again in 1997 for *The Nature of Shorebirds*.



HARRY THURSTON



ELIZABETH PACEY

The Dartmouth Non-fiction Prize was presented to Elizabeth Pacey for *Miracle on Brunswick Street* (Nimbus), which tells the story of the first group of German-speaking immigrants to Canada and of the churches they built on Brunswick Street in Halifax.

On behalf of HRM Mayor Peter Kelly, Poet Laureate Sue MacLeod presented The Mayor's Award for Cultural Achievement in Literature to Linda Hodgins, Regional Services Manager at Halifax Public Libraries. Linda is part of the team who designed the libraries' award-winning summer reading program, as well as a founder of the Ann Connor Brimer Award and the Nova Scotia Children's Literature Roundtable. She's served on the boards of the IWK Read to Me program and Hackmatack Children's Choice Book Awards.

The Atlantic Book Awards are presented annually by a steering committee composed of representatives from the Atlantic Independent Booksellers Association, Atlantic Publishers Marketing Association, Nova Scotia Library Association, Halifax Public Libraries, Halifax Regional Municipality, PEI Writers' Guild, Writers' Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador, and Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia. ■

Loop snares a Griffin



Photo by Bernice MacDonald

The Canadian and international winners of the 2004 Griffin Poetry Prize are **Anne Simpson's** *Loop* (McClelland & Stewart) and August Kleinzahler's *The Strange Hours Travelers Keep*. The C\$80,000 Griffin Poetry Prize is the most lucrative award for books of poetry from any country in the world. It is awarded annually for the two best books of poetry (including translations) published in English the previous year. The winners each received \$40,000 at the fourth annual awards event held in Toronto on June 3.

The celebratory evening was hosted by Scott Griffin, the founder of the prize, with judges Billy Collins (US Poet Laureate 2001-2003) as MC, and Bill Manhire (New Zealand's inaugural Poet Laureate) and Canadian Governor General's Award-winner Phyllis Webb announcing the Canadian and International winners for 2004.

The judges read a record-breaking 423 books – nearly 100 more than were submitted last year – from 15 different countries translated from 17 different languages. Submitted books for 2004 were donated to various institutions: The Poets House in New York; International Institute of Modern Letters in Wellington, New Zealand; the Gulf Island Secondary School on Salt Spring Island; and Corrections Canada for distribution to the prisons' literary programs.

Preceding the awards, held at Toronto's heritage Stone Distillery, the seven short-listed poets read

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excerpts from their books at the MacMillan Theatre on June 2, attended by 600 poetry fans. The Canadian shortlist included Di Brandt's *Now You Care*, and Leslie Greentree's *go-go dancing for Elvis*. The international shortlist included Suji Kwock Kim's *Notes from the Divided Country*, David Kirby's *The Ha-Ha*, and Louis Simpson's *The Owner of the House*.

The Griffin Poetry Prize Anthology: A Selection of the 2004 Shortlist, edited by Phyllis Webb, has been published by House of Anansi Press and is available on their website (www.anansi.ca).

Anne lives with her family in Antiigonish, where she works as the Coordinator of the Writing Centre at St. Francis Xavier University. ■

Don Aker harvests trees

One week after his novel, *The First Stone* (HarperCollins), won the Ann Connor Brimer Prize, Atlantic Canada's highest award for children's literature, Middleton writer and teacher **Don Aker** found himself facing 400 young people at a gala ceremony at J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate/Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School in Durham, Ontario. Ting-Xing Ye, author of *Throwaway Daughter* (Doubleday), shared the stage with him as the result of the vote by students in some 195 high schools across Ontario was revealed. Shouts of excitement exploded as *The First Stone* won the vote for the 2004 White Pine Award.

The Ontario Library Association's Forest of Reading Literacy Initiative, includes the Blue Spruce (ages 5 to 8/Kindergarten to Grade 3), the Silver Birch (ages 8 to 11/Grades 4 to 6), the Red Maple (ages 11 to 15/Grades 7 to 9), the White Pine (Grades 9 to 12), and the Golden Oak (adult learners). The White Pine selects 10 recently released novels that have strong appeal for teenagers. Participating students must read at least five of these novels before earning the right to vote for their favourite.

The First Stone powerfully tells what it can be like to be an adolescent member of today's marginalized underclass. It's an unflinching story that captures readers from the first sentence, and one that is all the more powerful in being not so happily-ever-after.



Don says he's "overwhelmed by the response to the book. What makes the White Pine Award so special is that it's the readers themselves who choose the winner. Any program that gets young people reading like this is invaluable."

Don, who teaches math at an Annapolis Valley high school, sets his novels locally. He tells a story about his first book, *Of Things Not Seen* (Stoddart, 1995): "A student came to me and said, 'Mr. Aker! This book has your name on it!' When I told her, yes, I'd written it, she said, 'I thought writers came from far away.' I think that's how I intuitively felt when I was her age, that anything I had to say in Hants County, Nova Scotia, was of very little importance to anyone else. Now I know how wrong that is. I think it was George Bernard Shaw who said that the people who write about themselves and their own time are the only ones who write about all people and about all time." ■

Hayden dancing on the moon

Virginia Hayden is the winner of a 2004 Columbine Award for her short screenplay, *The Grocer and The Skinhead*, at the Moondance International Film Festival held in May in Boulder, Colorado.

The Moondance International Film Festival reaches out to filmmakers and authors from all six continents. Voted one of the three most important film festivals in the world – after Cannes and Sundance – by an international poll of filmmakers and industry professionals, the Festival promotes non-violent resolution in the arts and film and focuses on raising awareness of the invaluable contributions of women to the entertainment community. Established in 1999, it has won the respect of film industry leaders such as Jodie Foster and Francis Ford Coppola.

The Columbine Award Competition is open to films, video tapes, DVDs, film scores and screenplays, stageplays, radio scripts and tapes, TV pilot and movie of the week scripts, librettos and short stories that promote and reflect non-violent conflict resolution, alternatives to violence, or show why a violent resolution to conflict is counter-productive and inhumane.

Virginia's plays and short stories have placed in a number of competitions, been widely published in magazines and broadcast by BBC World Service and CBC Radio. Her one act play, *Well Women*, was staged at Festival Antigonish and her work was included in the International Women's Week Cabaret in Winnipeg this year. Her short screenplay, *Mercy* – an adaptation of a short story which placed second in the Atlantic Writing Competition – has just been shortlisted in this year's American Gem Short Screenplay Contest. ■

Young readers applaud Hackmatack Award winners



LUCIA CAVEZZALI, ALAN CUMYN, AND KAREN LEVINE

On May 28, young readers from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island packed the Brinton Auditorium at the Atlantic Baptist University in Moncton to hear the results of the 2004 Hackmatack Children's Choice Book Awards. Earlier in the spring, thousands of children in grades 4 to 6 across Atlantic Canada cast their votes for the best fiction, non-fiction and French-language books from the Hackmatack Awards shortlist of 30 titles.

An audience of 350 cheered as Ottawa writer Alan Cumyn took the microphone to accept the award in the English fiction category. A winner of many adult fiction literature awards, Alan accepted the prize for his first YA book, *The Secret Life of Owen Skye*.

Québec author Lucia Cavezzali was caught by surprise when she was announced as the winner of the French book award. Fighting back tears, Lucia thanked the Hackmatack readers for reading and voting for her book, *Opération Juliette*.

The auditorium was rocking when children presenters opened another envelope and read Karen Levine's name. Her first book, *Hana's Suitcase*, a true-life story of a 13-year-old girl in the Holocaust, won many national and international prizes, and now the Hackmatack non-fiction award.

For information about the books nominated for the 2004-05 Awards and how young readers can participate, visit the Hackmatack website (www.hackmatack.ca). ■

Rocky Mountain high

Banff International Literary Translation Centre

The Banff International Literary Translation Centre is the only one of its kind in North America. It offers literary translators an opportunity for a three-week residency where they can focus on their manuscript, spend time with the writer whose work they are translating, or consult with their colleagues and two experienced translators-in-residence. It is open to literary translators from Canada, Mexico, and the United States translating from any language, and to international translators working on literature from the Americas.

Linda Gaboriau, director

2005 Residency Program – June 13 to July 2, 2005

Application deadline: December 15, 2004

Writing Studio 2005 – May 9 to June 4, 2005

The Writing Studio is a five-week program offering a unique context for poets, fiction and other narrative prose writers to pursue their artistic vision and voice. Intended specifically for those producing work of literary merit who are at an early stage in their careers, it offers an extended period of uninterrupted writing time, one-on-one editorial assistance from experienced writers/editors, and an opportunity for involvement with a community of working writers.

Faculty: Greg Hollingshead, Edna Alford, Don McKay, Marilyn Bowering, Stan Dragland, David Bergen, Jack Hodgins, Terry Griggs, Daphne Marlatt

Self-directed Writing Residencies

Self-directed writing residencies provide time, space, and facilities for individual research, editing, and manuscript development. There are no formal activities organized around a self-directed writing residency; writers structure their own time, and are free to maintain privacy or to engage with other artists and activities at The Banff Centre.

Application deadline: writers may apply at any time

Notification date: processing and adjudication time is generally four to six weeks

For more information on these and other programs at the Banff Centre visit their website: www.banffcentre.ca.

Email: arts_info@banffcentre.ca

Call toll-free 1-800-565-9989 ■

The “Dear Publisher” letter

by Sue Goyette

The magnum opus is finished. The synopsis and sample chapters package is ready to make the rounds. But how do you get a publisher's attention? Sue Goyette comments on the art of the “Dear Publisher” cover letter. Sue's first collection of poetry – The True Names of Birds (Brick Books) – was nominated for the 1999 Governor General's Award. Lures (HarperCollins), her first novel was shortlisted for the Raddall Atlantic Fiction Prize. Brick Books has just released her second poetry volume, Undone. She's working on a second novel.

Congratulations. You've finished a novel or a collection of short stories. The long, hard, operatic, self-pitying, headache-inducing, can-you-people-keep-it-down-out-there-I'm-trying-to-write time is over. And isn't writing time like dog years? The words “day,” “month” or even “year” don't come close to the actual time you've spent waiting for the small drip of the next word to splash onto your paper or the wild, rampant rodeo of words to slow down so you can begin to breathe again. Either way, it is exhausting. And now you've come out of your room. Look! It's May, things have been invented while you were gone. So congratulations again and welcome back. I really mean it, it's a tremendous accomplishment to finish anything.

I'm assuming that you've had enough strength to plug in the kettle one more time and sit down with the piece you've just completed. You've read it over again. And again. It makes sense, there's a clean order to it, the spelling has been checked, the grammar is up to speed, your main character hasn't changed eye colour or age a dizzying amount of times. It's ready – this masterpiece of yours – in your humble opinion, to see the light of day, to receive a set of covers and a plethora of page numbers. I suggest you move now – before the awful, deflating, what-have-I-written, it isn't even a story, my main character should be a guest on the Dr. Phil show, I'm not even worth my tea bag stage sets in and paralyses you. Not that I speak from experience.

It's alright to spend an hour, two at most, waiting for the doorbell or phone to ring, waiting for the inevitable gaggle of agents to land at your house, the army of publishers to march up to you demanding to publish your best seller. It's alright for those two hours, at most, to imagine what you'll say when you win the Giller or the Nobel. Thank your mother and father and god while looking earnestly in the bathroom mirror for a few

minutes of those two hours while you're at it, practice sounding scholarly and witty at the same time. Practice that humble tilt of your head, that look of surprise, who me? I've won the GG? Then breathe and get over yourself. There's still work to do.

The query letter is the important next step. There are books written on the subject. I don't think you should waste your money on them. If you want to spend money, buy a book of poetry or a bunch of flowers for inspiration, buy a nice bottle of Australian wine, you've finished what you set out to do. The next step involves common sense and some good writing, rather than another five months of studying the not-so-complicated task at hand.

And the task is simply to get your manuscript in the hands of someone who is interested in reading it and, hopefully, publishing it. The best way to do that is to send your letter to an agent. Agents know publishers better than you do; it is their job to present your work to a publishing house they think is compatible with your writing. Your job was to write the book, their job is to sell it.

Sending a letter directly to a publisher is trickier. Use your imagination, an editor at a publishing house is a lot like being the only kid in the neighbourhood who has a swimming pool. Everybody wants to be their friend. Editors get a lot of unsolicited mail. There are only so many hours in the day. You might get a response sending directly to them or you might wait so long, you become emotionally attached to the mail carrier whom you'll come to know over the next few months, waiting, waiting, waiting for that special letter. Either way, keep the letter simple and to the point.

Use a good printer and good quality paper for your query letter, no fancy colours or stationery with kittens and puppies frolicking around the edges. It is your calling card and first impressions are important.

Use the standard business letter form. The date, name and address of the person you're sending it to should be typed in the upper left-hand corner. Please make sure you have spelled the person's name correctly and there is such a person in existence. A little research is worth its weight in gold.

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The letter shouldn't be more than a page long, made up of three paragraphs. The first paragraph should be an introduction to you, who you are and the book you've just written. Keep it clear and concise. Include the title, the word length, the genre of the manuscript, i.e. short fiction, sci-fi, historical fiction.

The second paragraph should describe the manuscript in a little more detail. Again, keep it simple. Describe the people populating your work and, briefly, what happens to them. Think about the theme of your work and include that in the description. Try to avoid the bottomless pit of retelling the story in such a short space. The idea is to hook the person into wanting to read the manuscript. This isn't the place to spell it all out.

The third paragraph should give some information about your life as a writer so far. This is the place to list credentials, publications, prizes, short-lists, and workshops you've attended. Remember, this is about you as a writer not as a long-distance runner, world class brownie baker or Aries with Virgo ascending – unless the information is pertinent to your manuscript. If your main character is a long-distance, brownie baking Aries runner, then go for it, with some modesty.

Thank the person for taking the time to consider your work. It's alright to express hope that you'll hear from them. It's not alright to tell them that your children are pale and pasty from lack of food and that you will not be able to endure another long and tragic day of being unpublished. Begging, blackmail and flattery are not allowed. Save the desperate opera for your friends and if they're tired of it, yodel it to the ocean after you've mailed your simple, clear letter to the right person.

Include an SASE – self-addressed stamped envelope. It's only polite business practice to make communication with you easy. It also usually means that one way or another, you'll get a reply. Include your mailing and email addresses and a phone number where you can be reached under your name in the letter.

Now, the hardest thing about the entire process: try and forget about the whole thing for awhile. Run long distances. Bake brownies. Study your birth chart and try to make sense of the rest of your life. The Turks have a saying: After ecstasy, the laundry. And most importantly: keep the faith. ■

Brave New Words at the Fed



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: NORENE SMILEY, JACKIE HALSEY, RICHARD CUMYN, RYAN TURNER, LAURA TRUNKEY, CAROLE LANGILLE

The third year of the Mentorship Program for Emerging Writers concluded with an evening of readings at the Writers' Federation offices on Wednesday, May 19. Brave New Words is an apt title for the event since most of the mentored writers read their work to an audience for the first time.

The writing presented was unique, fresh from the hearts, minds and fingertips of writers who committed to six months of hard work. Each fall, several new writers join the program with a draft of an idea that they itch to develop into a novel, poetry collection, young adult book or a series of short stories. Under the strict eye of their mentors they write, rewrite, edit, and watch their work grow and mature.

Four new writers participated in the program this year and three shared excerpts from their work. Jackie Halsey was the first to brave the podium after a warm introduction from her mentor, Norene Smiley. Jackie read an excerpt from her novel for young readers, "Peggy's Letters," that follows the fate of Peggy, her mom and baby brother in war-torn London.

Following Richard Cumyn's original and very funny introduction, Ryan Turner, a young writer from Halifax, read an excerpt from the novel he'd been developing with Richard's help for the past six months.

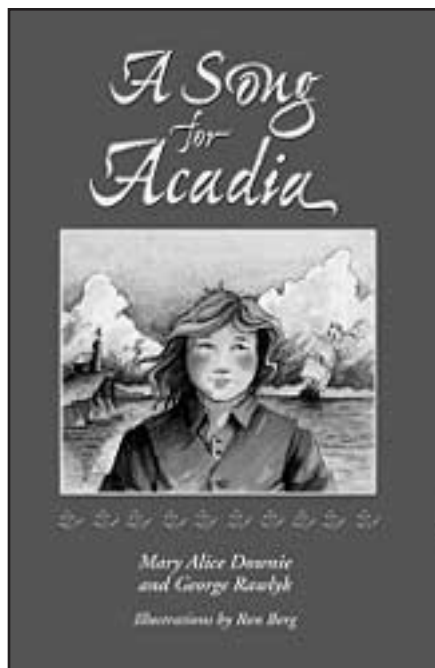
The last reader was Laura Trunkey, who worked on her short story collection with her mentor, Carol Bruneau. Set in a fictional town on Vancouver Island, Laura's story follows a Czech émigré who, after decades of living in Canada, decides to return to his homeland.

The last participant, Munju Ravindra, sent her regrets from Alberta where she was hard at work on her manuscript at the Banff Writing Studio. Before leaving in early May, Munju had been working on the creative non-fiction manuscript with the help of her mentor, Sue Goyette.

Since its inception in 2001, 14 writers have "graduated" from the WFNS's mentorship program. Over the past three years, we have watched them take further steps in their careers: some now have books published, others have placed in national writing competitions, have been signed by literary agencies or have had their work included in prestigious anthologies, including the *Journey Prize Anthology*.

For more information on the WFNS' Mentorship Program for Emerging Writers, visit our website at www.writers.ns.ca/mentorship.html. ■

imPRESSed — the newest titles by WFNS members



A Song for Acadia

Une chanson pour l'Acadie

Mary Alice Downie and George Rawlyk

Nimbus, 2004, \$7.75,

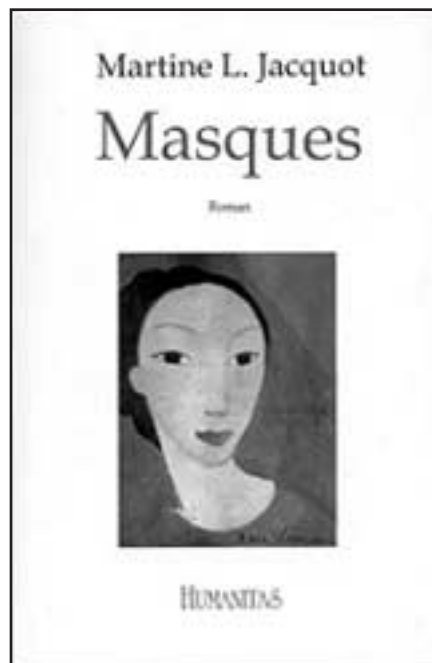
ISBN 1-55109-474-6 (English)

ISBN 1-55109-476-2 (French)

First published as *A Proper Acadian* (Kids Can Press, 1980), this story of a young boy caught up in war and politics still resonates with readers. When his aging father falls ill, Timothy Parsons of Boston is sent to live with his cousins in Acadia. While learning a new language and skills, he soon discovers the joy of rural life and the camaraderie of friends.

Acadia is caught in the middle of a dispute between the French and English, and the elders are ordered to leave. When the governor signs the deportation order, Timothy must decide: should he face the uncertain future with his newly found family or return to his old ways in Boston?

Mary Alice Downie was born in Alton, Illinois, (on Abraham Lincoln's birthday) of Canadian parents. She is the author of more than 20 books for children.



Masques

Martine L. Jacquot

Éditions Humanitas, 2003

ISBN 2-89396-247-5

À la veille du 21^e siècle, à l'heure où des destins collectifs s'effacent et d'autres se dessinent, Virginie se penche sur son destin individuel. Entre Halifax et la Nouvelle Orléans, ses masques dévoilent progressivement leur inconsistance. Un voyage d'affaires se transforme en quête personnelle. Virginie jette sur le monde qui l'entoure et sur elle-même un regard cynique et amusé. C'est le roman d'une dérive révélatrice et de la mise à nu.

Poet, novelist, short story writer and essayist, Martine Jacquot has published 15 books and has been invited to literary events on three continents. She lives in Waterville.



Interview with a Stick Collector

Carole Glasser Langille

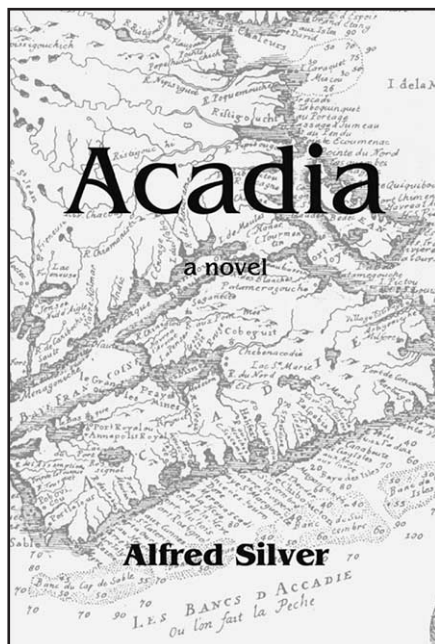
illustrated by Sydney Smith

Roseway Publishing, 2004 \$16

ISBN 1-896496-42-3

Interview with a Stick Collector is about a media-savvy kid who ignites his imagination with a bundle of what looks like ordinary sticks. Collected here and there, they are transported to the backyard in his mother's car. Reporters come with microphones, tape recorders and note pads to get the extraordinary scoop on this marvelous, magical collection. The stick may challenge a pirate, perhaps a stick can summon rain, it can be an airplane. There is a philosophy of sticks which the boy expounds with all the self-confidence of, well, a kid. *Interview with a Stick Collector* is about how to choose a Magic Stick and is obviously a book no kid can afford to miss.

Carole Langille is the author of two children's books and three poetry collections, *All That Glitters in Water*, *In Cannon Cave*, (Brick Books), and *Late in a Slow Time* (Mansfield Press). She lives in Black Point outside of Hubbards.



Acadia: A Novel

Alfred Silver

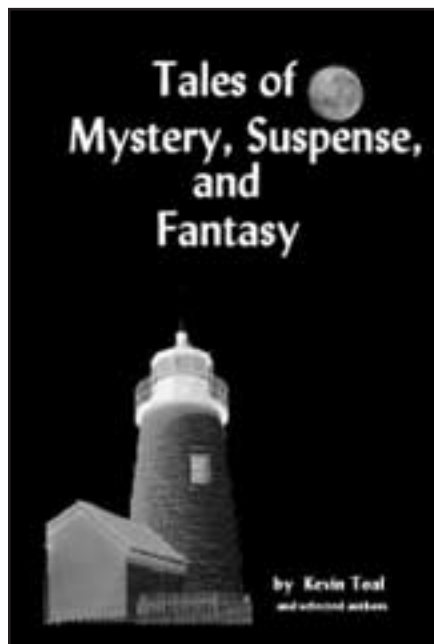
Pottersfield Press, 2004, \$22.95

ISBN 1-895900-62-X

Acadia is the true story of the civil war that forged a new world in North America and the four very different people at the centre of it.

In the 1640s, the authorities in Paris allowed two men to believe each was the sole governor of all of Acadia. Governor Charles La Tour was a rough-edged survivor. His wife Françoise Marie Jacquelin, was a retired Parisian actress who had done some surviving on her own. Governor Charles d'Aulnay was a son of French nobility determined to live up to his title; his wife, Jeanne Motin, was a daughter of the moneyed middle class, desperate to live up to her aristocratic husband's expectations. When King Louis XIII issued a decree meant to resolve the governors' dispute, his advisors' misunderstanding of North American geography made confrontation inevitable.

Alf Silver has published nine novels. He lives in a farm house in Ardoise, Nova Scotia, where he devotes his time to researching and writing historical novels or anything else someone will pay him to write. *Acadia* was the winner of the Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award.



Tales of Mystery, Suspense and Fantasy

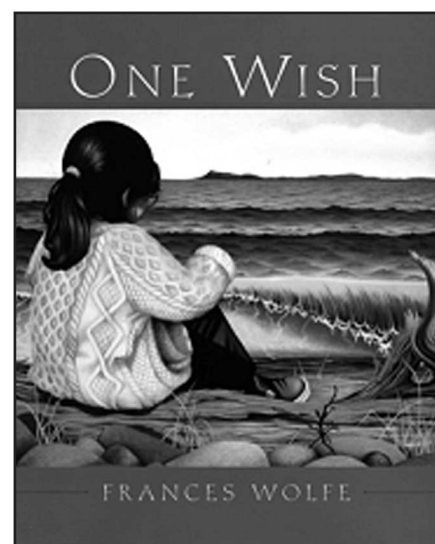
by Kevin Toal

Lulu Books, 2004, ISBN 1-4116-0465-2

\$11.16 US (approx. \$15 CDN)

Tales of Mystery, Suspense and Fantasy is a collection of seven short stories by Kevin Toal. Additional stories by S. Octavius, Noreen Lewis Cochran and fellow Nova Scotian, Barry Daniels complete the anthology. Various genres are reflected ranging from the supernatural to science fiction and humour. Included in the selection is Kevin Toal's award-winning entry, "A Change of Aspect," which appeared in the anthology *Journey*.

Kevin Toal is currently a stay-at-home father, who has written about his experiences in the *Daily News* and is working on a series of children's stories.



One Wish

Frances Wolfe

Tundra Books, 2004 \$22.99

ISBN 0-88776-662-5

One Wish is the story of a young girl's wish to live by the seashore, in a cottage that sits in "a fragrant field of Queen Anne's lace." There is a porch to sunbathe on, a beach full of treasures waiting to be discovered, sandcastles are conquered by the incoming tide. In this beautifully illustrated book, a young girl's wish comes true.

Frances Wolfe's love of the sea is in her blood. Her home is on the Nova Scotia shore, where her grandfather once fished and where her family has lived for more than a century. Her first book, *Where I Live* (Tundra), was published to critical acclaim and was the winner of the Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Award for Illustration and the Ann Connor Brimer Award. ■

Who's Doing What

■ **Racked** – members' work appearing in the limitless liberality of journals and mags and electronic signals crossing your editor's desk into the Fed Reference Library (open 9:30 to 4:30 Monday through Friday for your edification and entertainment):

Veronica Leonard focused on Mulu Gebre, an Ethiopian Canadian who's proving very successful with her Halifax hair salon and spa, in a recent issue of *Scarlett*, and explored the future for work opportunities in the trades for *Atlantic Business Magazine* with "Blue Collar Blue Chip"; the *Virginia Quarterly Review* published an excerpt from **Simone Poirier-Bures's** Kyrgyz memoir, a piece called 'Democracy'; **Hilton McCully** was one of the featured writers in the recently released *Island Quarterly*; **Betty Dobson's** flash fiction story "In the Face" will appear in the upcoming issue of *Quintessence: Encouraging Great Writing* while her poem "Gagetown Reflexes" appears in the June 13 edition of *The Book Lover's Haven*; **Elaine Ingalls Hogg** provides a regular column, "Heaven and Earth", for the *Kings Country Record*, and has had 11 pieces accepted for *Cup of Comfort* which will be released this fall. In spare moments she's been providing articles, interviews, stories and pictures for markets from Britain to California, Bermuda to the Yukon ... and points in between; **Mary Alice Downie** details the story of a missing manuscript concerning the Acadian dispersal in the *Queen's Alumni Review*; **Renée Hartlieb** has a short story in *The Antigonish Review*; **Thea Atkinson** watched the ice melt this spring in the glow of acceptance – *Front & Centre* featured one of her short stories and *Canadian Living*, an essay; **Gary Saunders** extolls the larch – a.k.a., hackmatack – in the pages of *Rural Delivery*. This not-so-ever-green, once prolific, has suffered from the demand for its hardy timber as telephone poles, fence posts and rails. In the same issue, **Jodi DeLong** focuses on the implications for local farmers of the demise of the Avon cannery;

Phil Moscovitch interviews Jeff Rosen, executive producer and creator of *Poko*, in *Canadian Screenwriter*; watch out Halifax! **Stephanie Domet** is back in town. Though still lancing free for CBC Radio's *Definitely Not the Opera*, it's swell to see her by-line pondering mutagens versus teratogens between the pages of *The Coast ...* where the likes of **Lezlie Lowe** add fuel to the fire and **Jane Kansas** is wont to come to the aid of a party; a special Home & Garden supplement to *Saltscapes* gives **Donna D'Amour** opportunity to look at sinks as functional art, **Kate Langan** to delve into post and beam structures, **Sandra Phinney** to soak in the hot tub and **Jodi DeLong** let her hair down and revel in cottage gardening; remember Juan? **Christy Ann Conlin** evokes the storm and its wake for the rest of the country in *Geist*; **Joanne Jefferson** remarks on the phenomenon of art showcases of school children's work at the DesBrisay Museum and Lunenburg Art Gallery for *Visual Arts News* where **Lezlie Lowe** susses out the good, the bad and the expensive in studio space in HRM; **Andrew Safer** has an update on the Coady Institute in *Nova Scotia: Open to the World* where **Joey Fitzpatrick** takes a closer look at innovation in shipment pallets and solar heating.

■ **Sprays of launch champagne!** **Carole Glasser Langille** was surrounded by four- and five-year-olds from the South End Day Care in Halifax for the June launch of *Interview with a Stick Collector* (Roseway) at the Spring Garden Road Library. May saw the launch of **Regina Coupar's** newest book *The Seeker's Heart*. Drawing inspiration from the *Book of Psalms*, the book was incorporated within a gallery exhibition, entitled *Intimacy*, which ran at the Peer Gallery in Lunenburg. **Steve Vernon** was holding launch court at The Café, a lovely little spot in Grand Desert, right on the Atlantic Ocean. In a warm-up to a more formal launch of *Nightmare Dreams* at the Keshen-Goodman Library, Steve read several short stories, several palms,

conjured up a ghost story and engaged a young listener in an impromptu storytelling. *The Latch*, which first captured our attention as the winner of the 2003 Joyce Barkhouse Award for Children's Writing for **Joyce Grant Smith**, was released in May at the Historic Gardens in Annapolis Royal. Given his background and the subject of the book, it was a launch with a difference for **Rigel Crockett**. An appreciative audience provided enthusiastic applause and attention as Rigel read from *Fair Wind and Plenty of It: A Modern-Day Tall Ship Adventure* (Knopf) at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.

■ **Kudos to prize-winning ways!** **Paul J. Cooper** was thrilled to have his series proposal shortlisted for the Alibi Unplugged in the Rockies competition. Alibi Unplugged is a BC-based script development program (www.alibiunplugged.com). **Edith Comeau Tufts** was recently honoured, as was Félix Thibodeau, by the Atlantic writing community for their contribution to the sustenance of Acadian literature in this region and Edith was particularly chuffed to find herself in conversation to the entire country when Shelagh Rogers broadcast her CBC program (*Sounds Like Canada*) from Grand Pré recently. **Barbara Whitby's** book proposal *Riding the Fox, Memories and Myths* is one of the 12 non-fiction finalists in the Books for Life Foundation international competition, the John T. Lupton Awards. The Webby's are a Very Big Deal in the online world, and the team that built the Halifax Explosion Site to accompany the CBC-TV production was blown away to learn that they'd been shortlisted – along with the BBC and National Geographic – for this year's award. **Sue Newhook**, instrumental to the development of the site, was happy to ultimately place second in the education category to the BBC's website on the human body; **Melanie Jasmine Grant** won this year's Joyce Marshall

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Hsia Memorial Poetry Award from SMU with **Miki Fukuda** placing third and an honourable mention to **Mary Burnight**; The winners of this year's League of Canadian Poets' Lowther and Lampert Awards were announced June 5, at a special awards banquet at the League's AGM in Montreal. Adam Getty, winner of the Lampert Award for his book *Reconciliation*, and Betsy Struthers, who won the Lowther Award for *Still*, both gave readings from their winning volumes and accepted their awards. Shortlisted authors for the Pat Lowther Award were Di Brandt, Mary Dalton, **Tonja Gunvalden Klassen**, and Erin Noteboom, and for the Charles Lampert Award Chris Banks and Ali Riley. They also gave readings.

■ It wasn't released until late in the spring and already, *Undone*, a second collection of poetry from **Sue Goyette**, has been put into a second printing by Brick Books.

■ **Blair Beed**'s book on the Halifax Explosion has been so successful that it is now available in a French-language translation – *L'explosion de 1917 à Halifax et les secours américains*. The original *1917 Halifax Explosion and the American Response* was released to enthusiastic reviews in 1999 and has gone into a second printing.

■ **Tony D'Amour** has a summer publication in the works. His first collection of stories, *The Runaway*, is due out from Shoreline Press (Québec) in August.

■ It's no ordinary school that has an annual Feast of the Dedication of the Temple but then the University of King's College in Halifax is no ordinary school. This April was King's 215th Encaenia, an occasion marked by honouring four outstanding individuals including Margaret MacMillan, award-winning author of *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed The World* and **Silver Donald Cameron**, the acclaimed journalist and author instrumental to the restructuring of the Isle Madame economy following the collapse of the

fishery. This, by your editor's count, makes Don Dr. Dr. Dr. Cameron.

■ What has 50 authors, works faultlessly in les deux langues officielles du Canada and celebrates one of Canada's most influential scholars? April's Northrop Frye International Literary Festival in Moncton! Launched in 2000, the festival is one of the few completely bilingual literary festivals in the world and celebrates writers from this region, the country and the world with readings, school visits, panel discussions, and market presentations. This spring **Sophie Bérubé**, **Christy Ann Conlin**, **Greg Cook** and **Simone Poirier-Bures** were among the participating writers. Simone, who grew up Acadian in anglophone Halifax and has lived for many years in Virginia, commented that "during the festival I spoke more French than I have in years, and it did my heart good!"

■ When her story first ran in *The Antigonish Review*, **Elaine McCluskey** was delighted that "The Watermelon Social" had found such a gracious home. Delight grew when she learned the story had been shortlisted for inclusion in *The Journey Anthology*, and turned to joy when it was chosen. Congratulations, Elaine.

■ Ottawa's loss is our theatre's gain: **Wendy Lill**'s *The Fighting Days* will be remounted this season by Eastern Front Theatre in Dartmouth, while on the other coast, Victoria's Belfry Theatre will produce *Corker*.

■ After a spring on the road throughout the region reading from and promoting *One Heart, One Way*/Adlen Nowlan: a writer's life (Pottersfield), **Greg Cook** is already planning for the fall when Black Moss Books will release his newest collection, *Songs of the Wounded: new and selected poems*.

■ **Katherine Anderson** was on the road this spring promoting her new book *Weaving Relationships*. She touched down in Kingston, Ottawa and Montreal and has been invited to speak on a

panel pertinent to her book at the Canadian Association of Latin American Studies in late October at the University of Guelph, when she'll also give a public reading in Kitchener-Waterloo.

■ **Alice Burdick** is going to be reading at the Scream in High Park in Toronto this month along with Michael De Beyer, Di Brandt, Maggie Helwig, Russell Smith, Souvankham Thammavongsa, the nth digri and many, many more. She'll then move on to the Speakeasy series. One of her recent poems has been anthologized in *My Lump in the Bed: Love Poems for George W. Bush*.

■ **Betty Dobson**'s website – inkspotter.com – placed second in *The Writer's Room Magazine's* Author Web Site Contest and Betty has just signed on as new host/editor for BellaOnline: Canadian Culture (www.bellaonline/site/canadianculture).

■ Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library makes reading fun for kids. For the third summer running, they've created a summer writing camp upstairs in their airy program room. **Paul Zann**, **Sylvia Gunnery**, **Linda Little** and **Magi Nams** are the camp counsellor-writers in residence with camp coordination from Steve MacLean.

■ **Lorri Neilsen Glenn** used a professional development grant from the Province of Nova Scotia, Culture Division to head for the Banff Writing Studio this spring, and felt thrice blessed when she learned in April that The Canada Council supported her proposal to work on a collection of essays, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council approved her project to study women and poetry. May found her in Winnipeg reading at the *Prairie Fire* Wordfest and crossing her fingers that poems which had appeared last year in *Prairie Fire*, "Prairie Home Companions" and "Cast Off", might win in the poetry category of the 2004 National Magazine Awards, for which they were shortlisted.

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■ Canadian Children's Book Week will unroll in all its magnificence again this fall from October 30 through November 6. On the road from this region are **Maureen Hull** with her new book from Lobster Press, *Rainy Days with Bear* (illustrated by Leanne Franson), which she'll be taking to NWT; **Alice Walsh** who'll be taking her new book, *Pomiuk: Little Prince of the North* (Beache Holme) to Alberta; NB's Robert Rayner with his new book from Formac, *Just for Kicks*, heading up to Nunavut; and PEI's David Weale with *Three Tall Trees*, new from Acorn Press, en route to Ontario. In return, they're sending us Tim Wynne-Jones, winner of every prize for children's writing that ever existed ... and some that haven't!

■ **Donna Morrissey**, author of *Kit's Law* and *Downhill Chance*, was off to PEI in June to read from her new work and show the video made from her screenplay, "The Clothesline Patch."

■ **Martine Jacquot** celebrated not one, but two, novels last November: *Le Secret de l'Île* was launched at the Moncton Book Fair and *Masques* (Éditions Humanitas) shortly thereafter. She was invited to speak in Ottawa on International Women's Day, to the Paris Book Fair in March where she was one of the leaders for Marathon de l'écriture, an online 24-hour writing marathon open to people all over the planet, and to Edmundston for another Book Fair in April. She also had several of her poems included in a new anthology, *Pour l'amour de toi* (Éditions du Loup de Gouttière).

■ **Alf Silver** was on the road this summer celebrating the recent Pottersfield reprint of his Raddall Prize-winning novel, *Acadia*, with readings at the Avon Emporium in Summerville (rumour has it the evening concluded in hilarity when a wild turkey ran across the property ... talk about evocative!), at Spring Garden Road Library in Halifax and at a vast Acadian family reunion in Antigonish. Fall will find him settling in

to promote *Clean Sweep*, which is being released by Pottersfield as a mystery novel after its considerable success as a CBC radio drama several seasons ago.

■ In 2005, the Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the building of the Angus L. MacDonald Bridge ... what? a mere 50 years of paying bridge tolls? As part of the celebration, the Commission will be using **Hilton McCully's** Bridge poem, as they have on two previous commemorative occasions. Not to be outdone, another of his poems will be included in a new book to celebrate the Canso Causeway.

■ **Munju Ravindra** had to miss the Mentorship Reading scheduled during Atlantic Book Festival but she was absent with leave, indeed with encouragement ... chosen as she was to attend the Banff Writing Studio.

■ **Gwen Davies**, founder of the Tatamagouche Community of Writers, was sharpening her pencil with delight at being accepted for "two glorious weeks of writing" at St. Peter's Summer Colony in Saskatchewan.

■ The Pictou County Writers Group began meeting in January 2001 and found animated support from the New Glasgow Public Library and feisty leadership from **Ray Pierce**. Though slowed by a stroke last year, the ever resourceful and resilient writer recently wrote the foreword to an anthology of the collected work of the group. Twenty-two writers contributed 64 pieces to *East River Anthology* which is available from group members and at the New Glasgow Book Exchange for \$10.

■ In honour of April's Poetry Month, PEI Writers' Guild and Reading Well Books sponsored (W)rites of Spring Island Poetry Extravaganza hosted by **Joe Sherman** and featuring, among others, **Hugh MacDonald**.

■ **Joanne Taylor** is paired with Cape Breton painter Peter Rankin for the September release of *Making Room*, her second picture book from Tundra. Set in Joanne's native Cape Breton at some point in the 19th century, we're introduced to John William Smith who goes searching for a wife and soon they're spending the rest of the century making room.

■ **Christy Ann Conlin** has inked a deal with Doubleday Canada for *Watermarks*, described as the story of a "white trash" protagonist and her reunion with three old friends from the Valley.

New members

The Directors, members and staff of WFNS are delighted to extend the warmest welcome, or welcome back, to the following member writers:

Tony D'Amour, Louisdale
Mark Chatham, Dartmouth
Allan Coggan, Mahone Bay
Regina Fitzgerald, Halifax
Heather Gifford, Halifax
Darren Hatt, Gold River
Lynn Henry-Boutilier, Glen Margaret
Heather Hindle, Timberlea
Kathy-Lynn Lee, Halifax
Gail Lethbridge, Halifax
Sandy MacDonald, Arisaig
Neil MacKinnon, Halifax
Christopher Meuse, Saulnierville
Jim Power, Truro
Stella Price, Port Maitland
David Redwood, Halifax
Edna Roberts, Charlottetown, PEI
Victor Sakalauskas, North Sydney
Rick Shaver, Scotsburn
Tom Sheppard, Caledonia
Ruth Wells, Mineville ■

Markets, etc.

Mention of a market or competition in this column does not imply endorsement by WFNS. For those without Internet access or a computer, there are public access computer sites available in public libraries throughout the province.

❑ Small Spiral Notebook:

(www.smallspiralnotebook.com) The Art of Leaving is the theme for the autumn issue. Looking for poetry, fiction and non fiction that revolves around the theme of "leaving" in any shape/form. Deadline August 15.

❑ **Seismicfish:** (www.Seismicfish.com) New, short fiction ePublisher is looking for quality submissions. Deadline is 21st of each month. Crime fiction, science fiction, historical fiction, articles, reviews, interviews, puzzles and art wanted.

❑ **The Chattahoochee Review:** 2101 Womack Road, Dunwoody, GA 30338-4497 (www.chattahoochee-review.org) literary quarterly sponsored by Georgia Perimeter College. Sample copies available. Literary fiction 6,000 words max. pays \$20/page \$250 max. Poetry – send 3 to 5, pays \$30 each. Non-fiction – personal essays and creative non-fiction, pays \$15/page \$200 max. Publishes interviews with writers – query first, pays \$10/page. Detailed writers guidelines.

❑ **Descant:** PO Box 314 Station P, Toronto ON M5S 2S8 (www.descant.on.ca) "an exquisitely produced journal of international acclaim." Quarterly, publishes new and established writers. Poetry (send 6), short stories, novel excerpts, plays, essays, interviews, musical scores, visual presentations. Read at least one issue before submitting. Sample copies available. Currently accepting submissions for two themed issues to be published in 2006 – Cuba and Barbara Gowdy.

Contests

Blind Judging = writer's name must not appear on manuscript. Include a separate sheet listing your name, address, email, phone number, title of entry, word count, category.

❑ Atlantic Provinces/Quebec

Mystery/Crime Short Story Contest: c/o Crime Writers of Canada, PO Box 4816, Rothesay NB E2E 5X5. Deadline July 31 postmark. Entry fee: \$10. Open to all writers, published and unpublished, in the Atlantic provinces and Quebec. The only content stipulation is that your story involve a crime. All else is left to your creativity. Prizes: 1st \$300; 2nd \$100; 3rd \$50 plus 1-year membership in Crime Writers of Canada for all 3 winners. Stories must be original, unpublished, 2,000 to 2,500 words. Blind judging. Include a 25-50 word bio with cover sheet. Ms not returned. Winners announced in mid July.

❑ Atlantic Writing Competition:

Writers Federation of Nova Scotia, 1113 Marginal Rd., Halifax NS B3H 4P7 (www.writers.ns.ca) Deadline August 6. 5 categories: novel, writing for children, poetry, short story, essay/magazine article. Entry form and detailed guidelines are on website (click on competitions). Entry fee: novel \$25/entry, \$20 for WFNS members, students, seniors; all other categories \$15/entry, \$10 for WFNS members, students, seniors. Prizes: novel \$250, \$150, \$100; writing for children \$150, \$75, \$50; poetry, short story, essay/magazine article \$100, \$75, \$50.

❑ Arizona State Poetry Society 37th

Annual Contest: Open to all poets. 16 categories. Cash prizes to \$100 with publication of winners in *Sandcutters* their quarterly journal. Rules and guidelines on website (www.azpoetry.org). Deadline Sept. 7.

❑ Samuel French Canadian

Playwrights Competition: Deadline September 30. Open to all Canadian playwrights. Looking for original, unpublished full-length stage plays. The winning play will received publication

and representation from Samuel French. Application form necessary. Samuel French (Canada) Ltd., 100 Lombard St., Toronto, ON M5C 1M3, 416-363-8417.

❑ American Literary Review Poetry

Contest: PO Box 311307, University of North Texas, Denton, TX 76203-1307 (www.engl.unt.edu/alr) Deadline November 1. Entry fee \$10 US (includes subscription) Send up to 3 poems, no more than 10 pages total. Blind judging. Prize \$1,000 plus publication.

❑ TWUC's Short Prose Competition for Developing Writers:

SPC, The Writers' Union of Canada, 90 Richmond St. East, Suite 200, Toronto, ON, M5C 1P1. Deadline November 3 postmark. Entry fee: \$25/entry. \$2,500 prize and possible publication. Open to Canadians not published in book format and who do not have a book contract. Unpublished non-fiction and fiction, up to 2500 words, in English. Blind judging. Manuscripts not returned. Details on website (www.writersunion.ca).

❑ Prairie Fire Writing Contests:

423-100 Arthur Street, Winnipeg, MB R3B 1H3 (www.prairiefire.mb.ca) Deadline November 30. **Bliss Carman Poetry Award** – 1-3 poems per entry, max 150 lines. **Short Fiction** – one story/entry, 15,000 words max. **Creative Non-Fiction** – one article/entry, 5,000 words max. 1st prize \$1,000, 2nd \$500, 3rd \$250, in all categories. Entry fee \$27, includes subscription to mag. Blind judging. Details on website.

Awards

❑ The Bronwen Wallace Memorial

Award (Poetry Category): c/o The Writers' Trust of Canada, 90 Richmond St. East, Suite 200, Toronto, ON M5E 1C7 (www.writerstrust.com) Deadline October 15. \$1,000 to a Canadian writer under the age of 35, unpublished in book form and without a book contract, whose work has appeared in at least one independently edited magazine or anthology. Send 5-10 pages of previously unpublished poetry in English, double-spaced. Details on website.

Minutes of the AGM - June 19, 2004

1. There being a quorum of WFNS members, more than half of whom were Writers' Council members, and there also being a quorum of Directors at WFNS, 1113 Marginal Road, Halifax, President Mary Jane Copps called the meeting to order at noon.

2. **Approval of the Agenda:** Moved/Seconded/Carried to approve the Agenda (Susan Kerslake/Kathy Mac)

3. **Approval of the Minutes:** M/S/C to approve the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 14 June, 2003, as circulated in the July/August 2003 *Eastword* (Susan Kerslake/Peggy Amirault).

4. **Business arising:** None.

5. **President's Report:** Mary Jane detailed the triumphs and tumult of the past year and thanked her colleagues on the Board of Directors for their thoughtful support of the Federation and of her at the conclusion of her term as Federation President. She noted that the Federation was composed of a lot of very interesting people who want to make a difference in the world, and who make that difference by making a very large difference in their own community. She encouraged members to remind other members how valuable is this resource – WFNS – that all have mutually created and which all must mutually sustain, and do ... in spades.

Directors retiring from the Board (Christy Ann Conlin and Richard Cumyn) were lavished with praise and a gift (a book, of course) and extolled to the heavens for their many kindnesses to the Federation. Before Mary Jane could leave the podium, Allan Lynch came forward and on behalf of the Board, the membership and staff of WFNS thanked her for her extraordinary leadership of the Federation over the past two years, her energy, her fundraising, her willingness to tackle difficult issues and to work collaboratively with the Board. M/S/C that the President's Report be accepted (Susan Kerslake/Ken Ward)

6. **Treasurer's Report:** Laura Jolicoeur presented the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended March 31, 2004.

Despite a continued funding freeze from the Province of Nova Scotia, it's been a good year at the Writers' Federation with our long-term investments holding their own in a difficult market and our earned revenue growing in the areas of membership fees and workshops. Fundraising has been a little stronger. Although we did not go after Heritage Canada support for Book Week during our 2004 season, it has been confirmed for the coming Festival in the amount of \$50,000. On the expense side, the Board approved a raise to our Executive Director for the past and coming years and for our Executive Assistant in the current fiscal year.

Almost 62% of expenses were to support the direct cost of services to our members, who currently number 700 writers. And office support costs were actually minimally decreased from our previous fiscal year. WFNS is in very stable condition indeed, and I should like to recommend that the AGM approve these statements.

M/S/C that the audited financial report be approved and that Michael Sutherland be reappointed auditor to the Federation for the 2003/4 fiscal year and that he be commended for the excellent service he offers WFNS (Kathy Mac/Peggy Amirault). M/S/C that there be no change in dues in the coming year: i.e., \$40 annual membership/\$20 student membership. (Ken Ward/Susan Kerslake)

7. **Writers' Council:** Allan Lynch presented the report of the Standards Committee, which had been unanimously adopted by the WFNS Board. Sixteen writers made application to the Standards Committee for this year's April 30 deadline. The

Standards Committee recommended that the following writers be invited to join Writers' Council: Kathryn Anderson, Anne Carter, Karin Cope, Regina Coupar, Shauntay Grant, Renée Hartlieb, Sean Kelly, Blake Maybank, Leah Sandals, Tom Sheppard, Joseph Sherman, Andrew Younger, Susan Zettell. M/S/C (Allan Lynch/Gwen Davies)

8. **Executive Director's Report:** see page 15. M/S/C (Peggy Amirault/Susan Kerslake)

9. **Nominating Committee Report:** Budge Wilson reported for the Nominating Committee. The Committee proposed the following slate of Directors for the coming year: Mary Jane Copps, Past President; Allan Lynch, President; Douglas Arthur Brown, Vice-president; Sue Newhook; Rachelle Richard, Secretary; Susan Cameron; Marilyn Iwama; Laura Jolicoeur, Treasurer; Lorri Neilsen Glenn; Shauntay Grant; Philip Moscovitch; Lezlie Lowe; and Kathleen Martin James. Mary Jane Copps called three times for further nominations from the floor. There being none, she declared the slate and named officers elected.

10. **Other Business:** Mary Jane invited the membership to remain at the conclusion of the AGM to hear the members of the Board read, and asked Jane if she would open the gift presented by the Board. Jane was even more animated than is her wont to find Ken Ward's "Chrome Roses," which he'd donated to the Gala silent auction, for which Budge Wilson had bid valiantly and successfully, as a gift. Beyond gushing her thanks, Jane was, for once, at a loss for words.

11. **Adjournment:** There being no further business, and lots of splendid food weighing down a lavish table, Virginia Hayden moved that the Annual General Meeting be adjourned. ■

Executive Director's Report to the AGM

Jane Buss

As I listened several weeks ago to Culture Minister Rodney MacDonald announce a \$100,000 grant to support the Gaelic language – in a province where there are an estimated 500 Gaelic speakers – I could only wish that his largesse extended to the more than 700 members of the Writers' Federation. If only we could all toe the line and write culturally relevant prose featuring bekkilted, Gaelic-speaking fiddle players. However, we don't and there is no provincial investment in publishing in our province.

We've been through a particularly difficult decade in Canada with domestic bookselling, distribution and publishing in a state of free fall, often mitigated – usually at the last moment – with hastily cobbled national book policies. But there are, at the moment, a wide variety of federal programs to support the book industry, which have been prompted from the understanding that it is extremely difficult to develop, produce and distribute Canadian books at a profit.

For 2000/2001, Statistics Canada reports \$2.4 billion in revenues from book sales, including \$154.8 million in exports. More than half that revenue came from Canadian publishers printing works by Canadian writers. In Atlantic Canada, there were \$12.2 million in book sales, including \$1.6 million in exports. In Canada, the publishing industry employed more than 10,000 people while here in Atlantic Canada, we employed 115.

Nova Scotia has not yet made a political commitment to include books as part of a cultural economic strategy. Ontario has a long standing Book Publisher Tax Credit. BC introduced a \$2.2 million program early in 2003. During 2002-03, the Arts Council in Manitoba invested \$203,740 in book publishing and \$211,050 in periodical publishers; Saskatchewan, \$294,560 and Ontario invested \$1.2 million in publishing.

Nova Scotia has yet to articulate an integrated provincial policy for domestic publishing and distribution programs, or for the provision of any infrastructure for the industry. Fortunately, publishers elsewhere in Canada are eager to publish work by Nova Scotia writers and the past year saw 34 of our writers published elsewhere in Canada, in the US and in Britain.

Given this context, it's difficult for the Federation to work constructively with an industry that does not have a cohesive presence in the province. We've concentrated our industrial support activities in promotion of Nova Scotia

(and Atlantic) writers and their books, and in trying to assist writers in this province to become "market ready."

The Federation helped to found Word on the Street in Halifax to promote our writers and engage our readers. And we continue with a permanent seat on the WOTS Board, where we've been brilliantly represented for the past four years by Sue Goyette.

We were instrumental in creating the Hackmatack Children's Choice Awards to encourage children in the Atlantic region to read and enjoy fine books written by Canadian writers, and WFNS has fought for a firm commitment to reflect writing from this region in the selection offered. Sharon Palermo has served energetically on our behalf on the Hackmatack Board.

We promote our professional writers through up-to-date web pages at the Federation's site, through the creation and endowment of book prizes which we publicize in the four Atlantic provinces, as well as in the larger country and by chairing the Atlantic Book Festival and Awards Committee. We invest considerable energy in managing a Writers-in-the-Schools program, which introduces young Nova Scotians to our published writers and their books; and we have recently seen some modest success to our years of lobbying the Department of Education, which has begun to develop an Atlantic component to recommended book lists. Unfortunately, the demise of the teacher-librarian in our schools means that neither WITS nor children's trade titles are incorporated effectively into the curriculum.

In terms of market readiness, WFNS provides contract evaluation services (book, freelance, film and stage), professional development workshops and seminars in a variety of genres and subjects. The Federation belongs to a wide range of professional organizations – including Access Copyright, where we're represented by Stephanie Domet – in order to be able to keep the membership informed of issues and information of concern to writers.

Our bi-monthly newsletter maintains a current markets section, and our weekly e-loops alert working writers to markets in a timely fashion. Our website has complete market listings for all Canadian book and periodical publishers, so that writers may do their research more easily from home, and we provide a public access terminal equipped with high-speed internet connection at the Federation for any writer without access to the technology.

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We have also worked for almost a decade with our sister organizations in the film industry, first as the Pan Industry Group, then the renamed Moving Images Group. We have invested countless hours in trying to keep afloat this organization of organizations whose members work professionally in film, television and the media. Currently a WFNS member – Alan MacAulay – chairs MIG, and our Executive Director is serving as Treasurer because we are so concerned that Nova Scotia professionals working in this sector have access to ongoing, high-quality professional development opportunities.

We do workshops, we do fundraising. We have a swell time bringing writers together to meet, mingle, gossip, share information and a sense of belonging, a sense of place and a sense of ownership.

And it's all proving very successful and not a little exhausting. Thank heavens the Federation board and volunteers are inexhaustible: Peggy Amirault gets *Eastword* out on deadline, usually just barely fending off hell and highwater; Monika ... well Monika ... we've all heard of horse whisperers? Monika is a writer whisperer – ever patient, ever helpful, resourceful, resilient and reassuringly real. Susan Kerslake has been reading for the competition for a record 26 years now and no president in recent history has committed more energy, thought or wisdom to this organization than has Mary Jane Copps.

It literally never stops here anymore. It wouldn't be possible without all the contributions that so many of you bring, and I thank each and every one of you for being so kind to each other and so generous to the office. ■

Read by the Sea at River John – July 24

Head for the Sunrise Trail meandering along the Northumberland Strait, Saturday, July 24. The seaside village of River John is hosting its annual Read by the Sea festival.

The day kicks off at 9:30 with three of the best writers for kids in the country. The younger set will be enthralled by Joanne Taylor (*Full Moon Rising*) and storyteller David Weale (author of the classic *The True Meaning of Crumbfeast*). Teens will enjoy the award-winning Janet MacNaughton (*An Earthly Knight*, and *The Secret Under My Skin*).

The Main Event starts at 2 – rain or shine. The warm, sunny venue is the River John Legion Memorial Garden; if it rains, it's indoors at the River John Consolidated School. Bring a lawn chair and settle in for an afternoon of readings by Ed Riche (*Rare Birds*, Doubleday), the irrepressible Sue Goyette (*Undone, Lures*), Deborah Joy Corey (*Losing Eddy, The Skating Pond*), and David Weale.

At 5 p.m. and for the economical price of \$12, chow down to a barbeque dinner at the River John Legion Hall. The menu is a delicious smoked pork chop, salads, roll, and strawberry shortcake.

The popular open mike session is set for 6:30 at the River John Legion Hall. There are eight spots, and the names will be chosen by lottery that evening. Ten minutes is your limit – let's hear what you've got.

River John is on the Sunrise Trail (Route 6) between Pictou and Tatamagouche – 50 km. west of New Glasgow, 150 km. north of Halifax and 120 km. east of Amherst. It's easy to find with great directions on the festival website (www.sunrisetrail.ca/read-by-the-sea). ■



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