

east word

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WRITERS' FEDERATION OF NOVA SCOTIA

Atlantic Book Award Winners 2005



LORRI NEILSEN GLENN
HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
POET LAUREATE

With 25 different books shortlisted, the booktables in the Alderney Theatre lobby were spilling over with stock as a milling crowd buzzed excitement at the sixth annual Atlantic Book Awards Ceremony in Dartmouth. From an initial six awards, the event now includes 10 different book prizes plus the announcement of the Mayor's Award for Cultural Achievement in Literature, and this year, a welcome to Halifax Regional Municipality's second Poet Laureate.

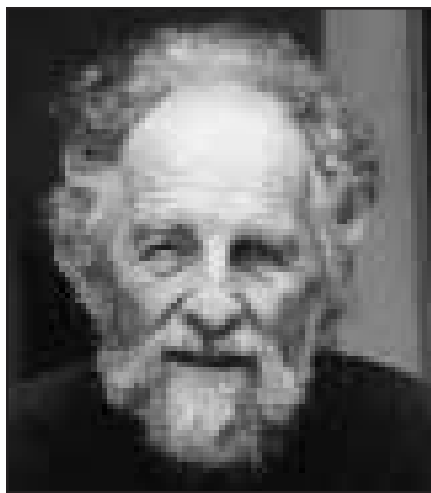
CBC Radio-One *Maritime Noon* host Costas Halavrezos presided with panache over an array of writers, presenters and special guests including Mayor Peter Kelly and Dartmouth MP Mike Savage. Poet Laureate Sue MacLeod retired her laurels as the ceremony began, introducing Halifax's second **Poet Laureate, Lorri Neilsen Glenn**. Raised on the Prairies, Lorri and her family have lived in Halifax since 1983. A professor at Mount St. Vincent University teaching writing and ethnography, Lorri is author and co-editor of a number of acclaimed books on research and literacy. Her first collection of poetry, *All the Perfect Disguises*, was released by Broken Jaw Press in 2003.

Jonathan Campbell was a two-time winner with his first novel, *Tarcadia*, from Annapolis Valley publisher Gaspereau Press. *Tarcadia* was chosen for the **Dartmouth Book Award – Fiction** (\$1,500) and the **Margaret and John Savage First Book Award** (\$1,500). In presenting the latter, Mike Savage noted that an endowment is being established to fund this award with assistance from Dalhousie Medical School's Music in Medicine program. A

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JONATHAN CAMPBELL
DARTMOUTH BOOK AWARD – FICTION
MARGARET & JOHN SAVAGE
FIRST BOOK AWARD



DAVID HELOWIG
ATLANTIC POETRY PRIZE



MORA DIANNE O'NEILL
BEST ATLANTIC PUBLISHED BOOK

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NOVA SCOTIA
Tourism, Culture and Heritage

fundraising concert, Tuned to Words, featuring baritone Jonathan Brake and singers from the Music in Medicine program, opened the Festival and was a rousing success. Also shortlisted for the Dartmouth Book Award – Fiction were *Undone* by Sue Goyette (Brick Books) and *Ivor Johnson's Neighbours* by Bruce Graham (Pottersfield Press). Leo Furey's *The Long Run* (Key Porter) and Genevieve Lehr's *The Sorrowing House* (Brick Books) were nominees for the Savage First Book Award.

Gaspereau Press, which has been basking in a number of national award nominations this season, was elated to hear that **David Helwig** had won the **Atlantic Poetry Prize** (\$1,000) for his long poem, *The Year One*. Also shortlisted were Sue Goyette for *Undone* (Brick Books) and John Smith for *Fireflies in the Magnolia Grove* (Acorn Press).

The **Best Atlantic Published Book Award** was presented to **Nimbus Publishing** and **Mora Dianne O'Neill** for *Paintings of Nova Scotia*. Administered by the Atlantic Publishers' Marketing Association, the prize is adjudicated on a book's content, presentation, quality of design and production, as well as its contribution to a broader understanding of Atlantic Canada. The winner's prize, sponsored by Friesens Corporation, presents the publisher with \$4,000 and the writer with \$1,000. The runners-up – Acorn Press for *The Brown of Dawn* by Catherine Edward and Killick Press for *Down to the Dirt* by Joel Hynes – were each presented with a \$1,000 printing credit and \$250 for the authors by Hignell Book Printing.

Alistair MacLeod was greeted with a standing ovation as he accepted the **Booksellers' Choice Award** (\$1,000) for *To Everything There is A Season* (illustrated by Peter Rankin) published by McClelland & Stewart. Independent bookseller Mary Jo Anderson (Frog Hollow Books) noted that the book

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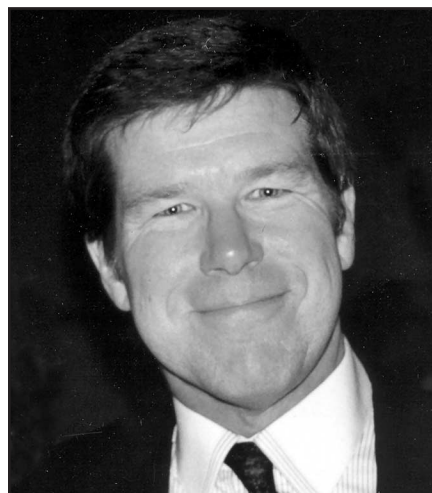


TED RHODES PHOTO

ALISTAIR MACLEOD
BOOKSELLERS' CHOICE AWARD



ALICE WALSH
ANN CONNOR BRIMER CHILDREN'S
LITERATURE PRIZE



PAUL ERICKSON
DARTMOUTH BOOK AWARD –
NON-FICTION



FRANCES WOLFE
MAYOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN
BOOK ILLUSTRATION



CAROL McDOUGALL
MAYOR'S AWARD FOR CULTURAL
ACHIEVEMENT IN LITERATURE



EDWARD RICHE
RADDALL ATLANTIC FICTION PRIZE

"was a bestseller before it hit the shelves . . . in anticipation. It was almost impossible for M&S to keep up with orders – what bookseller doesn't adore Alistair MacLeod?" Also shortlisted were Jacques Poitras for *The Right Fight* (Goose Lane Editions) and Beth Powning for *The Hatbox Letters* (Knopf Canada).

Denis Connor presented the award that bears his mother's name, the **Ann Connor Brimer Children's Literature Prize** (\$1,000) to **Alice Walsh** for *Pomiuk, Prince of the North* (Beach Holme). Maureen Hull and *Rainy Days With Bear* (Lobster Press) and Joanne Taylor and *There You Are* (Tundra) were also shortlisted.

The **Dartmouth Book Award – Non-fiction** was presented to **Paul Erickson** for *Historic North End Halifax* (Nimbus). Also nominated were John Boileau, *Fastest in the World: The Saga of Canada's Revolutionary Hydrofoils* (Formac) and Harry Thurston for *A Place Between the Tides* (Greystone Books).

Norene Smiley presented the **Mayor's Award for Excellence in Book Illustration** (\$1,500), on behalf of Peter Kelly, to **Frances Wolfe** for *One Wish* (Tundra Books). A resident of Portuguese Cove and for many years a favourite in the children's department at Spring Garden Road Library, Frances was commended for capturing evocative images of her childhood, growing up on the shore just outside Halifax. The **Mayor's Award for Cultural Achievement in Literature** (\$1,500) went to **Carol McDougall** for an extraordinary 25 years of championing books for children, most recently as founding director of the innovative IWK Read to Me program which presents books and literacy materials to every single new-born in Nova Scotia.

The 28th **Evelyn Richardson Non-fiction Prize** (\$1,000), the oldest writing award in Atlantic Canada, was presented to **Marq de Villiers** and **Sheila Hirtle** for *A Dune Adrift: The Strange Origins and Curious History of Sable Island* (McClelland & Stewart). Marq has previously won this award for his Governor General Award-winning *Water* (Stoddart, 2000). Also nominated were David B. Flemming for *Explosion in Halifax Harbour: The Illustrated Account of a Disaster that Shook the World* (Formac) and Roger Marsters for *Bold Privateers: Terror, Plunder and Profit on Canada's Atlantic Coast* (Formac).

Alistair MacLeod presented the \$10,000 **Thomas Head Raddall Atlantic Fiction Prize** to **Edward Riche** for *The Nine Planets* (Viking Canada). Previously nominated for the Raddall for *Rare Birds*, Riche is known for the kind of irreverent humour that created a cult following for his work on CBC-Radio One's *The Great Eastern. Eyehill* by Kelly Cooper (Goose Lane Editions) and *The Big Why* by Michael Winter (House of Anansi) were also shortlisted for this prize. ■



MARQ DE VILLERS AND SHEILA HIRTLE
EVELYN RICHARDSON NON-FICTION PRIZE

And the winning books are –

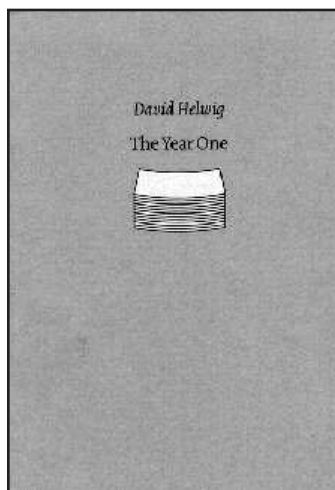
Atlantic Poetry Prize

The Year One,
David Helwig

Gaspereau Press ISBN 1-894031-84-9

In 12 long poems spanning January through December, David Helwig combines the gradually changing seasons with daily goings-on and memories. *The Year One* is a calendar populated with birds, Shakespeare, kitchen utensils, leaves, slugs, dead poets, neighbours, weather, and friends. Within the cycle, David suspends immediate and remote, present and past, individual and collective in such a way that he opens an unsuspected drawer and invites us to join him as he sorts.

Born in Toronto, David Helwig worked as literary manager for CBC-TV Drama and taught at Queen's University. He has been a full-time writer and editor since 1980 and has worked extensively with Oberon Press in Ottawa. He has published many books of poetry and fiction, most recently *The Stand-In* (2002), *Living Here* (2001) and *This Human Day* (2000). His *Catchpenny Poems* won the CBC poetry award in 1983. Today he lives on Prince Edward Island.



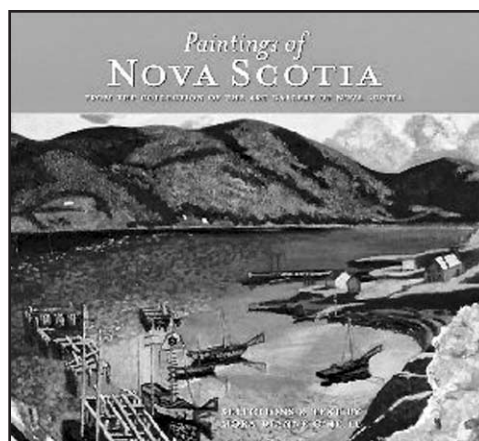
Best Atlantic Published Book

Paintings of Nova Scotia,
Mora Dianne O'Neill
Nimbus Publishing
ISBN 1-551095-06-8

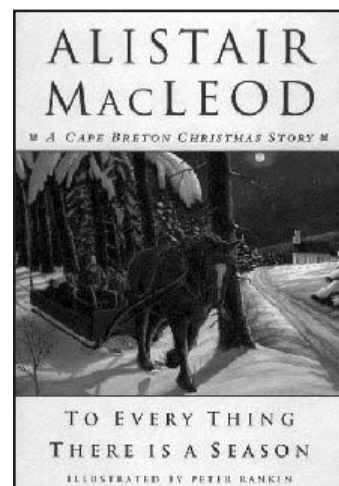
Spanning over two centuries of art, *Paintings of Nova Scotia* pays homage to 100 masterpieces depicting the splendours of the province. Chosen from the collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the paintings reflect a range of aesthetic responses to Nova Scotia's most captivating and celebrated asset: her landscape. Ranging from Arthur Lismer to Alex Colville to Alice Reed, Mora Dianne O'Neill's insightful captions combine a biographer's detail with the knowledge of an art historian and the appreciation of an art lover.

Nimbus Publishing Ltd., based in Halifax, has been publishing local books for more than 30 years. President John Marshall says, "There are wonderful stories still to be written and we are ready to tell the world about them." The largest book publisher in Atlantic Canada, Nimbus produces 30 to 35 titles each year, specializing in non-fiction. Nimbus recently has branched out to publish literary fiction under a new fiction imprint, Vagrant Press.

Mora Dianne O'Neill is associate curator of historical prints and drawings at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. She has prepared exhibitions of the Nova Scotia Society of Artists, Alan Syliboy and Nancy Edell. Among her most recent exhibitions are "At the Great Harbour: 250 Years on the Halifax Waterfront" and "Choosing Their Own Path: Canadian Women Impressionists." She lives in Halifax.



Booksellers' Choice Award

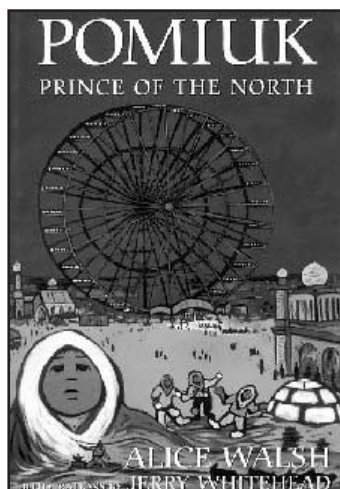


To Every Thing There is A Season,
A Cape Breton Christmas Story
Alistair MacLeod
(with illustrations by Peter Rankin)
McClelland & Stewart
ISBN 0-7710-5565-X

The story is simple, seen through the eyes of an 11-year-old boy. The time is the 1940s and the Cape Breton farm family eagerly awaits Neil, due home from the Lake Boats in Upper Canada on Christmas Eve. Some intriguing packages have arrived, but will Neil? The story is simple, short, sweet with not a word too many nor a word out of place. Matching and enhancing the story are 26 black and white illustrations from Mabou Coal Mines artist/illustrator, Peter Rankin.

Born in Saskatchewan, Alistair MacLeod was raised in Cape Breton, where he still spends his summers writing. During the winter months, Dr. MacLeod maintains an office in the English Department at the University of Windsor. His first novel, *No Great Mischiefs* (1999), continues to be hugely acclaimed, winning Alistair the Dublin IMPAC Prize among many other kudos. His previous collections of short stories – *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood* and *As Birds Bring Forth the Sun* – are Canadian classics.

Ann Connor Brimer Children's
Literature Prize



Pomiuk, Prince of the North,
Alice Walsh

Beach Holme ISBN 0-88878-447-3

The year is 1893, the place is Chicago. The most fabulous fair ever seen becomes an unusual home for a young Labrador Inuit boy, dubbed Pomiuk, Prince of the North, who captures the hearts of millions. With help from Cree artist Jerry Whitehead's black and white illustrations, Walsh tells an enchanting tale based in history. Just as they did in 1893, Pomiuk's adventures enchant, charm and enthrall.

Alice Walsh was born and raised in Newfoundland. She is the author of three other children's books: *Heroes of Isle aux Mortes* (2001), *Uncle Farley's False Teeth* (1998) and *Something Is Wrong With Kyla's Mother* (1992). Gaspereau Press is just releasing her history of Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia, *Mermaid: A Puppet Theatre in Motion*. A former preschool teacher, she lives in Lower Sackville where she is working on a novel.

Dartmouth Book Award – Fiction
Margaret & John Savage First Book Award

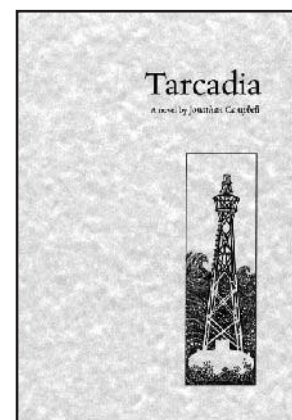
Tarcadia

Jonathan Campbell

Gaspereau Press ISBN 1-894031-94-6

The Chisholms are a rollicking, unpredictable family living in the north end of Sydney. At the start of the summer, 14-year-old Michael, his older brother Sid and two of their friends find a raft on the tar ponds. It seems the ideal start to the holidays but over the course of the summer Michael's family gradually stops making sense. This is a thrilling first novel, bristling with humorous encounters, witty family banter, camaraderie and a boy's response to overwhelming uncertainty and loss.

Jonathan Campbell is the author of a number of short stories, plays and television dramas. *Tarcadia* is his first novel. Born in Montreal, raised in Cape Breton, Jonathan earned a BA from Acadia and a Master's Degree in English from Dalhousie. He lives in the Annapolis Valley with his wife, painter Lindee Climo.



Dartmouth Book Award – Non-fiction

Historic North End Halifax

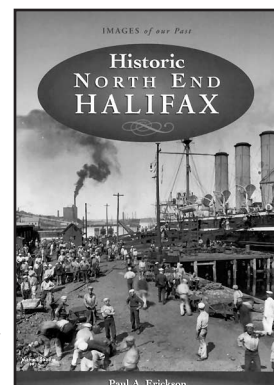
Paul Erickson

Nimbus ISBN 1-55109-498-3

North End Halifax has changed dramatically over the past 250 years. Once a thriving community defined by military forts, a naval presence and heavy industry, the area was devastated by the Halifax Explosion in 1917. Through subsequent decades of revitalization, especially in the Hydrostone neighbourhood, and destruction, most tragically in the forced evacuation of Africville, the North End has always been a fascinating and unique neighbourhood.

With photographs of Gottingen Street as a bustling shopping district, pre-Explosion Richmond and Africville-before, *Historic North End Halifax* is a comprehensive, engaging and fitting tribute to the North End.

Paul Erickson has lived in the North End since 1978. From there, it's an easy commute to work where he is a professor of anthropology at Saint Mary's University. He has written a number of publications including *Halifax's North End: An Anthropologist Looks at the City* (1986) and *Halifax's Other Hill: Fort Needham From Earliest Times* (1984).



Mayor's Award for Excellence in Book Illustration

One Wish

Frances Wolfe

Tundra Books ISBN 0-88776-662-5

At the seaside, where the narrator of *One Wish* lives, there sits a cottage 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, and a young girl's wish – to live by the seashore – 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. Although she has been drawing all her life, she has no formal art training. Frances worked for more than 30 years in a library setting. Her first book, *Where I Live*, was published to critical acclaim and was the winner of the Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Award for illustration and the Ann Connor Brimer Award.



Thomas Head Raddall Atlantic Fiction Prize

The Nine Planets
Edward Riche
Viking Canada
ISBN 0-670-04456-3

Savaging the pieties of our days, *The Nine Planets* is a satire about family, love, greed, desire, and the strange business of education. Hilarious and poignant, it is a novel that gleefully punctures the hot-air balloons of small-town corruption, intellectual pretension and political correctness. With rapier wit, Riche skewers the social face of private schools, urban development, hip culture and the arts community. His irreverent humour is bracingly honest, muscular and aggressive and, ultimately, profoundly compassionate.

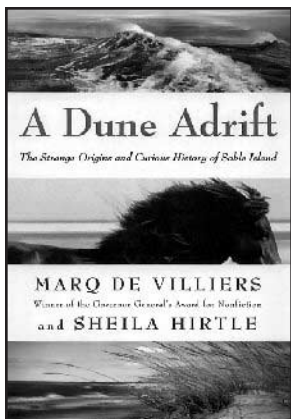
Edward Riche is a novelist, playwright, screenwriter and radio writer. He wrote the film adaptation of his novel *Rare Birds*. He has written frequently for the television comedy *Made in Canada* and is, along with Glen Tilley, Mack Furlong, Steven Palmer, responsible for the glorious lunacy of CBC Radio's *The Great Eastern* and last summer's *Summer Days and Night*. He lives in St. John's.

Evelyn Richardson Non-fiction Prize

A Dune Adrift
Marq de Villiers and Sheila Hirtle
McClelland & Stewart ISBN 0-7710-2642-0

Sable Island lies off our coast. A shape-shifting ghost of an island, it is more a sandbar adrift in the Atlantic, pushed now east, now west in the storms that frequently batter it, sometimes shrinking, sometimes growing, its wanderings taking it perilously close to the edge of the continental shelf. Sable is a fascinating place, the product of many forces, both natural and historical, that have shaped it – sometimes literally – and continue to do so. Marq de Villiers and Sheila Hirtle have done it justice in this informative, entertaining and frequently lyrical book.

Born in South Africa, Marq de Villiers is the author of eight books on exploration, history, politics and travel, including *Water: The Fate of Our Most Precious Resource* (winner of the Governor General's Award and the Richardson Non-fiction Prize 1999). He and his partner, Sheila Hirtle, have collaborated on several books including *Sahara: A Natural History*. They live near Port Medway.



Mayor's Award for Cultural Achievement in Literature

Carol McDougall has worked with books and books for children for almost 25 years. Trained as a librarian, she gravitated to children's books, eventually working as librarian with the Canadian Children's Book Centre in Toronto in the mid-1980s. The Centre flourished with Carol's enormous energies and drive.

In 1991, her husband's studies took her to the University of Cambridge where she worked as librarian at the Scott International Institute of Polar Studies. When she returned to Canada in 1994, she came to Halifax and re-established ties with friends old and new in the Atlantic children's book community, initially working at Woozles Bookstore. She became Atlantic Liaison Officer for the Canadian Children's Book Centre, organizing Canadian Children's Book Week in the Atlantic provinces. She teamed up with Norene Smiley to offer a series of Writing for Children workshops under the auspices of WFNS. Initiated in 1996, the sessions have advanced from beginner writers through intermediate to the Writing for Children Working Group for advanced writers. The results are demonstrated in the dozen or more books that have been published by writers who have been enrolled in these sessions since they began.

Carol helped to establish the Hackmatack Children's Choice Book Award, is a mainstay of the Ann Connor Brimer Prize Steering Committee and the Nova Scotia Children's Literature Roundtable, and has invested countless hours and thought in raising funds and promoting fine books by Canadian authors for children. She has served on the Board of Word on the Street Halifax, and has worked as a freelance editor and writer.

For the past five years, she's been working around the clock making "Read to Me!" a reality in Nova Scotia. Officially launched in January 2002, Carol has served as Director of this innovative literacy program since its inauguration. What began at the IWK in Halifax with the presentation to newborns of a canvas book bag containing two books, information on reading development and community literacy resources and baby's first library card, is, three years later, a literacy program that reaches out to all hospitals in Nova Scotia to welcome all 10,000 babies born in this province each year. Read to Me! is a celebration of books, words and reading that is reaching every child born in Nova Scotia. It's helping to ensure that every child has the best possible start. Carol has made a herculean contribution to laying the foundation for future generations of literate and successful Nova Scotians. Carol's gift to this community transcends any ordinary recompense: she has clocked untold hours, worked tirelessly and given without hesitation – always from behind the scenes, never thinking of personal recognition – satisfied that she has done something very real to contribute to a child's immense capacity and inner compulsion to learn. ■

The Hackmatack winners

The winners of the Hackmatack Children's Choice Book Award 2005 were announced at a ceremony on Friday, April 22 at the Kenneth C. Rowe Heritage Hall, Pier 21, Halifax. Deborah Ellis, the author of *Mud City*, was the winner in the English fiction category, Diane Swanson received the English nonfiction award for her book *Tunnels!* and the winner of the French category was Alain M. Bergeron for *Zak le fantôme*.

Mud City is the third book in the acclaimed Parvana trilogy. It continues the story of Parvana's friend, Shauzia, and her search for a better life, from a refugee camp in Pakistan to the dangerous streets of Peshawar. Deborah Ellis is a multi-award-winning author who donates royalties from *Mud City* to Street Kids International. She lives in Simcoe, Ontario.

Tunnels! is a book of 10 gripping stories of true underground dramas from around the world. Diane Swanson has written more than 40 books for children, on everything from dentists and doctors to animals eating and Einstein. She lives in Victoria, British Columbia.

Dans *Zak le fantôme*, Zak lui faudra attendre très longtemps avant qu'une élève ose lui venir en aide pour le "libérer de sa classe." Alain M. Bergeron a cinquantaine de livres jeunesse à son crédit. Il habite à Victoriaville, Québec.

The Hackmatack Award ceremony was the culmination of this year's award week, during which 20 of the nominated Canadian authors visited participating schools and libraries in New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and the Prince Edward Island. Approximately 300 reading groups, and thousands of children from grades four to six, participated this year by reading the 30 nominated books.

To see the books nominated for the 2005/2006 Hackmatack Award and for more information about the award program and how children can participate, check out their website at www.hackmatack.ca. ■

The Digest

Get in the loop

Ma Fed's weekly e-loop is sent to current WFNS members each Friday, listing upcoming book launches, readings, workshops, calls for submissions, and other writerly notices.

Our e-loop lists now hold more than 700 members' addresses and from time to time our messages fail to reach some. If you have recently changed your e-mail address or haven't received News from Ma Fed for some time, please e-mail our office with your changes at talk@writers.ns.ca to get back in the loop. ■

Thurston nominated for British Columbia Award for Canadian Non-fiction

A Place Between the Tides: A Naturalist's Reflections on the Salt Marsh by Harry Thurston is finding a place on the shortlists of book prizes across the country. It was nominated for the prestigious Drainie-Taylor Biography Prize, awarded annually for the best work of biography, autobiography or personal memoir. (Peter C. Newman's *Here Be Dragons: Telling Tales of People, Passion and Power* took the honours of the five books nominated.)

A Place Between the Tides (Greystone Books) is now up for the first annual British Columbia Award for Canadian Non-fiction, a major prize originating in BC that celebrates Canada's best in literary non-fiction. Also on the shortlist are Jane Jacobs for *Dark Age Ahead* (Random House Canada), Patrick Lane for *There Is a Season* (McClelland & Stewart), and Ronald Wright for *A Short History of Progress* (House of Anansi Press). The prize will be awarded in Vancouver on May 30. ■

Build it and they will come

Since a new library was built in Windsor, reading has soared to new heights. *The Chronicle Herald* reports that book circulation within the library increased by 70 percent since the 4,000 square-foot library opened in November. The figures cover the first three months of the library's operation compared with the same period in the previous year. The Friends of the Windsor Regional Library Society spearheaded the drive to raise the \$800,000 to build the library. Usage is up because of better facilities, more computers and books, and a more central location near the downtown area. ■

BusStop – Dented but not daunted!

Jane Buss, Executive Director, WFNS

I could have cried. Searing anger and scorching frustration at the ravages wrought by late-spring storms complicated by a conflagration of bikers and incompetent venue management, evaporated such mewling inclination. Oh the horror of postponement; oh the gloom of cancellation. For the first time since the Atlantic Writing Competition was born almost 30 years ago, we were unable to fete the winners and welcome them into the warm. No Silly Silent Auction of Lunatic Literaria to help fill the WITS coffers – the stunning bowl donated by Vicki Grant that Sue Goyette's been slaving over; exquisite tiny mitts and toques fashioned by Pam Donoghue; Anna Horsnell's gannets which hanker to live at my house; brunch with Budge; Sheree Fitch's complete purple-phase accoutrement . . . all languishing in a tumble at the Federation. Well, we may be dented but we are not daunted. Board and staff have returned to the drawing board and are devising new plans.

And while there we took a look at where we've come from and where we're going. Thirty years ago the working writers of Nova Scotia had no means of communicating with, giving encouragement to, or helping each other with contract tips, current market information, or even reassuring shop-talk. Writing for a living is a lonely job. Ever resourceful, these pioneering writers organized meetings and imagined the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia. It was to be their "shared" office, founded by working writers to sustain the craft and profession of writing. In 1975, this dream became a reality with the Federation's first writing competition, a single desk in a small space provided by St. Mary's University which was occupied three days a week by a part-time director. Today, the Federation has grown to be more than 700 members drawn from all over Nova Scotia, and as far afield as Japan and South Africa.

The advent of computers has allowed your two full-time staff members to take on work previously accomplished by four, and while the digital world has created a wealth of communications opportunities – our website garners praise nationally, weekly notes from Ma Fed to warm your literary cockles, regularly updated web pages for our Writers' Council members, our ever-expanding library online in a searchable database – this world just sucks up the labour. Your shared office space is filled every night of the week, year-round, with writing classes led by writers-who-have-actually-been-there . . . and this office expands to include sessions in Cape Breton, the South Shore and New Glasgow. We've created and endowed book awards and chair the Atlantic Book Festival Committee which, as I write this, has 48 writers on the road appearing in bookstores, libraries, theatres, halls, and cafés in all four Atlantic provinces.

In fact, we're so tightly scheduled, budgeted and staffed at Fed Central that a single mishap sends a shiver to our soul; a series, brings our carefully constructed house down around our ears like so many cards. The combination of the phenomenal time lost postponing, rescheduling, and then cancelling the Gala combined with Monika Sormova's decision that it is time

to move on and explore the larger world, and the tighter timeframe for Book Festival 2005 (normally at the end of May, moved to the end of April for space considerations) has occasioned a good old-fashioned soul searching for the WFNS Board and staff.

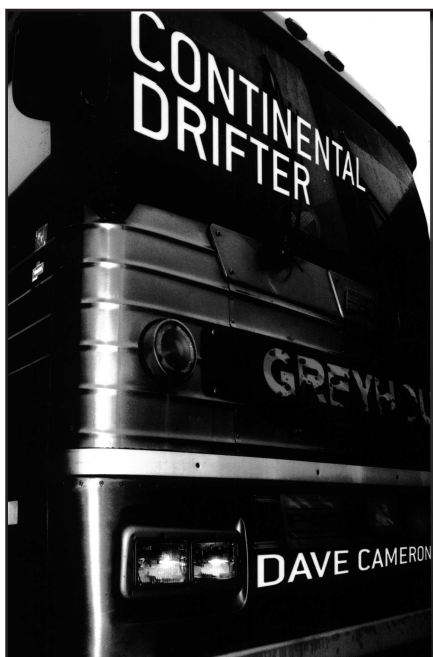
Operations will, of necessity, slow while we train new staff at the Federation so we will put dreams of establishing a Writers-in-Seniors'-Homes (WISH) program on indefinite hold. Administration for WITS, our hardest perennial, will be streamlined: no single school may book more than three full subsidized days; all bookings will be taken directly by the WFNS office with details to be worked out later between the school and WITS writer.

The Gala, which is regularly sabotaged by March weather, will be moved to the last Saturday in September, just before Word on the Street. This way, travelling writers can attend not only the happiest celebration of our literary season but can spend the following day at our liveliest book and magazine fair, which will be held at Pier 21 this year – a huge improvement over the dingy, cold, dark sheds at Pier 20. This rescheduling changes the deadline for the Atlantic Writing Competition. Rather than swotting to meet that hot first Friday in August, aspiring (perspiring) writers can cosy up to a first-Friday-in-December challenge. All that lovely auction loot has been safely stored. Thanks for your imaginative and generous contributions: the auction will take place and we'll forward everyone rescheduled tax receipts.

The Board has scheduled this year's *Annual General Meeting* for **Saturday, June 4 at noon**. All Federation members in good standing are encouraged to join the gathering at the Federation offices, 1113 Marginal Road, Halifax. New Writers' Council members will be announced, the Board of Directors for 2005/06 ratified, and our balance sheet will receive a public airing. Light refreshment will be served; and what better way to get to know the directors than to hear them read something idiosyncratic from their oeuvres? It's a festive couple of hours, your chance to meet and mingle and share some fun writing gossip.

Most of you have worked with Monika Sormova. Since she joined us four years ago, she has been that warm, comforting, informative, helpful voice at the other end of the phone. Monika's replies to your e-messages and letters reflect her generosity, tact, patience and good humour. She has orchestrated WITS and the Atlantic Writing Competition and her attention to detail is inspiring. Her stubborn conviction that writers are due respect has made her your champion and friend. She has been my colleague, confidante and sounding board, and we shall all miss her enormously. Monika has contributed uniquely and substantially to the Federation's accumulated riches. We wish her happiness and success as she soars to new challenges, knowing she will always be our friend. Thank you, Monika. Fare well. ■

imPRESSed — the newest titles by WFNS members



Continental Drifter

Dave Cameron

Signature Books, 2004, \$18.95
ISBN 1-897109-00-8

Equal parts travel picaresque and coming-of-age memoir, *Continental Drifter* is at once an interpretation of many fleeting individuals and a gradual discovery of one in particular. Dave Cameron collected stories and mementos on his meandering four-month bus trip from Dawson City, Yukon, to Key West, Florida. *Continental Drifter* is the record of that journey.

Dave Cameron grew up in Maple, Ontario, and studied magazine journalism at Ryerson University. His work has appeared in *The Globe and Mail*, *The Toronto Star*, *The Ottawa Citizen*, and *Cottage Life* magazine. He has lived in Vancouver, Toronto, and Halifax, and has travelled in Europe, Asia and Australia.



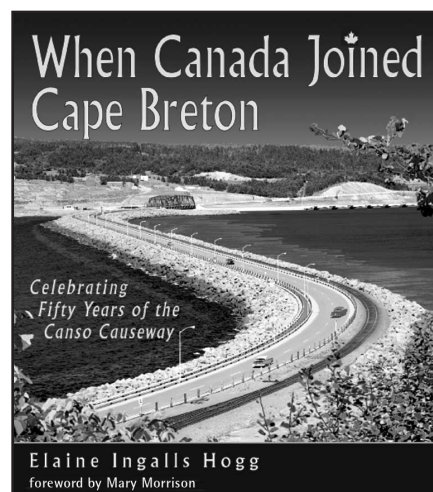
Quid Pro Quo

Vicki Grant

Orca Book Publishers, 2005,
ISBN 1-55143-394X hardcover \$19.95
ISBN 1-55143-370-2 paperback \$8.95

Quid Pro Quo is a high-stakes, fast-moving legal thriller about real people and funny people at that. Cyril's mother is a 28-year-old ex-street kid who drags her son to all her law school classes, then proceeds to get herself kidnapped. That aside, Cyril's life isn't too different from that of his peers. He has the usual issues to deal with: parent problems, self-esteem problems, skin, hair and girl problems. He has legal problems too. If he wants to save his mother's life, he's going to have to solve them.

Vicki Grant always knew she wanted to be a writer. It just took her a while to figure out what type of writer she wanted to be. She's worked as an advertising copywriter then fell into television scriptwriting for *Theodore Tugboat*, *Big Comfy Couch*, *Sesame Park*, and *Scoop and Doozie*. Her first novel for kids 10 to 14, *Puppet Wrangler* (Orca 2004), was nominated for the Ontario Library Association's Silver Birch Award. Orca will also release her third book, *Dead End Job* – a teen novel in the Orca Sounding Series.



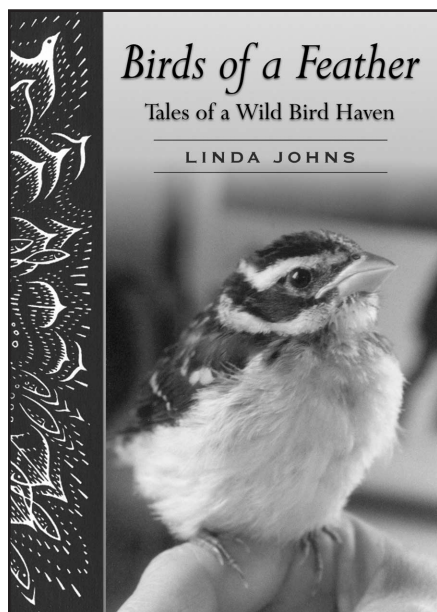
When Canada Joined Cape Breton: Celebrating Fifty Years of the Canso Causeway

Elaine Ingalls Hogg

Nimbus Publishing, 2005, \$16.95
ISBN

When Canada Joined Cape Breton gathers stories from those who remember the time before the Canso Causeway was built, its construction and the effect it had on life for those on either side of it. These recollections combine a personal look at what the building of the causeway has meant to those who use it with an overview of the causeway's history.

Elaine Ingalls Hogg has experience in self-publishing, writing for magazines, reading for and contributing to *Chicken Soup for the Volunteer's Soul* and writing non-fiction articles for *FACES Magazine*, *New Brunswick Reader*, *Catherine Magazine*, as well as writing and performing a radio documentary for CBC's *Out Front* and *First Person Singular*. Her first children's book, *Remembering Honey* (Nimbus), won the Marianna Dempster Award in 2000.



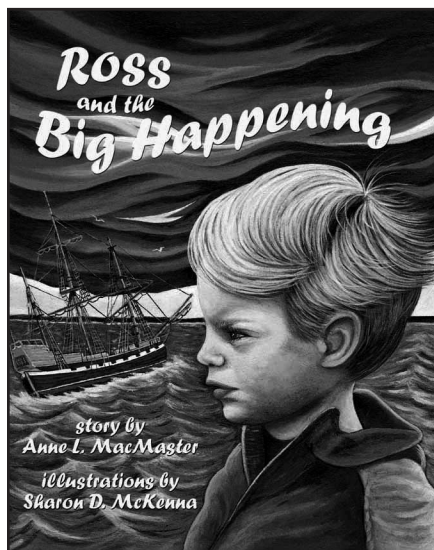
Birds of a Feather

Linda Johns

Gooselane Editions, 2005. \$19.95
ISBN 0-86492-430-5

Well-known naturalist and artist Linda Johns and her husband Mack share their woodland home with a changing gaggle of injured or disabled wild birds and a lively crew of animals. *Birds of a Feather* is a warm and funny account of four seasons in the life of this passionate yet respectful lover of wild creatures, a woman who offers a helping hand to nature's miracles. With exuberant joy, Johns tells about the many birds she has released back into the wild and the few whose disabilities make them permanent family members. A renowned wildlife artist, she has illustrated the book with more than 20 sensitive and humorous drawings.

Linda Johns is the author of several books based on her unique lifestyle, including *Sharing a Robin's Life* (winner of the Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-fiction), *In the Company of Birds*, and *For the Birds: Notes from a Woodland Studio*. She lives in rural Nova Scotia.



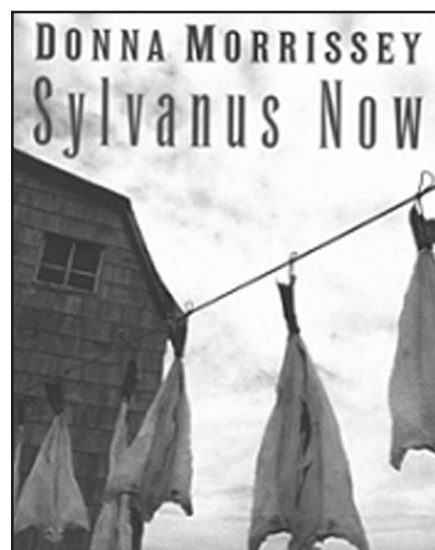
Ross and the Big Happening

Anne L. MacMaster

Illustrated by Sharon D. McKenna
Self Published with Community Books
Lockeport, NS, 2004, \$20
ISBN 1-896496-45-8

Ross and the Big Happening is based on true events in Pictou, Nova Scotia. Ross, a young boy, looks for something big to happen, and on September 20, 2003, it does. Hurricane Juan visits the town and sets the replica ship *Hector* free. Inspired by the author's photographs, international-award-winning artist, Sharon D. McKenna stirs emotion, imagination and humour with her beautiful illustrations.

Anne MacMaster is a resident of Caribou, NS. She is a poet, painter, rug hooker, photographer, and mother whose creativity has always been inspired by the community she loves.



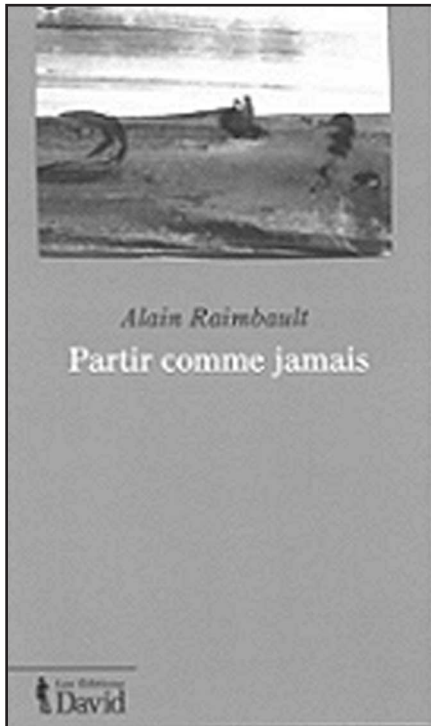
Sylvanus Now

Donna Morrissey

Penguin Canada, 2005, \$24
ISBN 0-1430-1425-0

The time is the 1950s, and the place is Canada's Atlantic coast at the edge of the great Newfoundland fishing banks. *Sylvanus Now* is a young fisherman whose youthful desires are simple: he wants a suit to lure the fine-boned beauty Adelaide and he knows exactly how much fish he has to catch to pay for it. Adelaide, however, longs to escape the stultifying community, but her need of refuge from her own troubled family leads her to Sylvanus and life in the neighbouring outport. Set against the love story is the sea, the Great Mother, that is on the cusp of cataclysmic change. Caught between his desire to please his wife and his strongly independent nature, Sylvanus must decide what path his future will take.

Donna Morrissey's best selling, award winning novel *Kit's Law*, has been translated into Japanese, German and Dutch. Her two screenplays have won the Atlantic Film Scriptwriting Competition two years in succession, with one of her scripts, *Clothesline Patch*, filmed and aired on CBC. Her second novel, *Downhill Chance*, won the 2003 Thomas Head Raddall Atlantic Fiction Prize.



Partir comme jamais

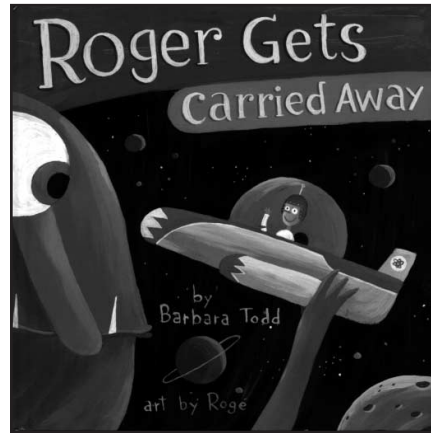
Alain Raimbault

Les Éditions David, 2005, \$15

ISBN 2-89597-040-8

Partir. Le voyage prend la forme d'un souvenir impossible à soutenir, la quête d'une vie à deux, brisée. Le poète cherche à retrouver la trace de la femme désormais fugitive. Exploration de l'absence, nouvelle géographie du sud. Point de retour possible. Le poète hésite cependant à se soumettre "aux métaux lourds du présent."

Né à Paris, Alain Raimbault s'installe en Nouvelle-Écosse en 1998. Il enseigne à Greenwood, à l'École francophone Rose-des-Vents. Il a publié des recueils de poésie et des romans pour la jeunesse.



Roger Gets Carried Away

Barbara Todd

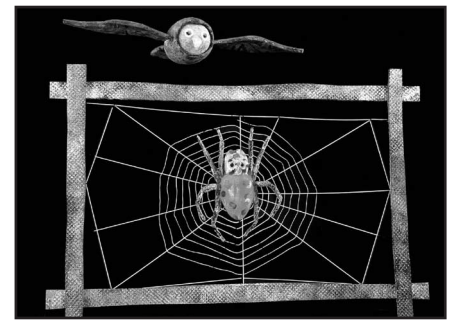
Illustrated by Rogé

Annick Press, 2005, \$7.95 paper, \$19.95 hardcover, Ages 4-7

ISBN 1-55037-898-8 paper,
ISBN 1-55037-899-6 hardcover

Roger is a little kid with a big imagination. In fact, he is secretly known as the heroic Captain Kaboodle. But when Mom announces a trip to the eye doctor, he faces his biggest foe yet. Roger escapes into deep space, but can his mind's eye focus on why he needs to flee? An out-of-sight tale from the creators of *The Rainmaker*.

Once upon a time, Barbara Todd was a teacher and storyteller in Toronto. Now, she lives in Wolfville and writes picture books. She is the author of *The Rainmaker*, also from Annick Press.



Mermaid:

A Puppet Theatre in Motion

Alice Walsh

Gaspereau Press, 2005, \$31.95

ISBN 1-894031-85-7

First established in response to the need for live theatre in rural areas, Mermaid Theatre – based in Windsor, Nova Scotia – swiftly rose to international acclaim.

Author Alice Walsh uses Mermaid's productions, from "The Happy Prince" to "Guess How Much I Love You," to tell the story of the company's evolution in the history of Canadian theatre. Walsh describes the first steps taken by its founders and provides an extensive look at the development of each production, as well as the creative trends and decisions that have contributed to Mermaid's stellar reputation among children, parents, educators and directors.

Alice Walsh was born and raised in Newfoundland. She is the award-winning author of several children's books including *Pomiuk: The Little Prince of the North* (2004), *Heroes of Isle aux Morts* (2001), and *Uncle Farley's False Teeth* (1998). A former preschool teacher, Walsh lives in Lower Sackville.

Prez' rant: Enough with goin' down the road!

Allan Lynch

One of the most disturbing movies I ever saw was *Going Down the Road*. The name says it all – Atlantic Canadians leaving the region for jobs and opportunities in bigger places. I saw this movie in college and 30 years later, it's still the reality. But now we have given it a name: the brain-drain and more trendily, out migration.

Well, in the arts we not only suffer from a brain drain, we suffer from a loss of voice. That loss of voice comes in two strains. One is when an artist moves from the province (Natalie MacMaster, Anne Murray, John Grey, Spider Robinson, Lynn Coady have all felt the need to move to other places to advance their careers); the other loss comes when an artist gives up. I know a number of truly fine writers who, having reached their 40s or early 50s, and facing an old age of poverty, have shifted careers for something that pays more money – like a living wage, one which allows them to save for the future. One writer told me when her husband considered quitting his day job to take up the pen she put her foot down, “We can't afford two artists in the family.”

Isn't it a shame that so many of our colleagues have to rely on a working spouse to support their art? This is a weakness in our cultural policy. Frankly, we do a hell of a job in this province in fostering new careers and new voices. The Fed's workshops are over-subscribed, our Writers in the Schools program is over-subscribed, our Mentorship program is a raging success. The daily advice the office provides to writers is mind-boggling. Provincially we have all kinds of support for the new, yet we have very little for helping move mid-career artists onto world-class stages or publications. There is this notion that by mid-career the artist/writer should be able to pay for this themselves or have developed such a body of work that advancement would be part of a natural progression. That attitude doesn't face the reality of competition.

I mostly work in the travel sector. Several of the Canadian editors I know tell me they receive an average of 400 queries a week! Multiply by 52, that's 20,800 queries a year, from which they commission 60 articles! A book publisher tells me he receives 250 manuscripts a year – those are the manuscripts not culled by staff – and he only publishes eight books per annum.

So yes, there is fierce competition in the arts and writing community.

This notion that mid-career artists don't need help flies in the face of how the government treats other sectors of the economy. Multi-billion dollar businesses get payroll tax relief worth millions each year. Manufacturers, exporters, and travel industry members qualify for marketing support and are included on trade missions to help sell their goods, services and the province as a holiday destination. If it's legitimate to help profitable companies expand their business, why isn't it legitimate to help proven writers and artists reach new markets and new audiences?

A lot of attention is given to Nova Scotia's film industry. And while it's worth a lot of money, film is not overtly loyal. Those productions coming to Nova Scotia are here for one reason: cheap costs. If another location becomes cheaper, they're gone. And fair enough, that's business. But for all the films shot here, when did Nova Scotia last get to be portrayed as Nova Scotia? I can only think of *The Hanging Garden*. Otherwise we're just the cheap stand-in for another place. I submit that's because we haven't made our reputation as a centre for artistic excellence. We're as good as anyone else, anywhere else, but nationally and internationally we are pretty much ignored.

This loss of voice translates into a loss of cachet which has a wide ranging impact. For example, a cruise ship travelling from Boston and Montreal stopped in Charlottetown and took on 400 pounds of live lobster. That evening's menu read: Fresh New England Lobster! That lobster was no more from New England than I am, but New England lobster has a brand identification with Americans. The irony, of course, is that New England can't meet their market demands so lobsters from Atlantic Canada are shipped to what my uncle called “The Boston States” and resold as New England lobster.

We seem content to be an incubator province, where we launch a career, then watch it go down the road. As I have said before, we are all but invisible.

If funding agencies and government policy allowed us to help our mature voices expand audience and markets, we could go a long way to building not just a thriving, sustainable artistic community, we could help the economy sing by showing the world the value of all things Bluenose. ■

Who's doing what

■ **Racked** – members' work appearing in the provocative profusion of journals, mags and e-notes crossing your editor's desk into the Fed Reference Library (open 9:30 to 4:30 Monday through Friday for your edification and entertainment): **Charlotte Musial's** delving into the North Sydney Garden Club bloomed in the April issue of *The CapeBretoner*, and she was astonished to see an article she'd sent *The Canadian Writers' Journal* in March 2001 appear in their most recent issue . . . reflecting on writing, Charlotte mused, "talk about putting a message in a bottle and throwing it in the ocean . . . mountain climbing must be easier"; **Jocelyn Bethune** surfaces occasionally from motherhood with her features for *The Chronicle Herald* and *The CapeBretoner* and recently was featured in *Maclean's* innovation issue; with the season almost upon us, you won't be able to resist the lure of **Don McLean's** weekly fishing columns carried by the *Truro Daily News*, *New Glasgow Evening News* and the *Cape Breton Post* . . . and in season, *The Antigonish Casket*; TAR (*The Antigonish Review*) is publishing "Bluffing," a story Gwen Davies completed while working with a mentor at the Banff Wired Studio; **Paul MacDougall** tells Ma Fed we can quote him on the fact that he found *Ars Medica: A Journal of Medicine, the Arts and Humanities* mentioned in our very helpful *Eastword* markets . . . and they've just accepted his short story "Peg" for their inaugural issue. He, too, has been keeping *The CapeBretoner* lively with four articles in as many months; *Wordworks*, quarterly journal of the BC Writers' Guild, has just featured "Categories" by **Ann Graham Walker**, an essay about growing up in Peronista Argentina straddling two languages; **Michelle Mulder** bounded from her mouse-hole WFNS-writer-in-residence "office" to shout to the roof that *Nashwaak Review* and *Regina Weese* have accepted her stories; **Ian Colford**, still buoyant from success with the Canada Council's last jurying round, was walking on air to learn that *Grain* is featuring one of his stories; in reviewing

mode for *Visual Arts News*, **Joanne Jefferson** highlighted the Lunenburg beat and recent work from **Regina Coupur**, while **Peggy MacKinnon** checked out snapshots at the MSVU Art Gallery and **Donna D'Amour** explored the Spirit of Place with Joanne Chilton at Pictou Lodge; *Atlantic Books Today* thudded from our *Globe & Mail* recently with novel reviews from **Sue MacLeod**, **Jodi DeLong** covering the garden plot, and **Bette Tetreault** visiting the audacious world that is young adult fiction these days; dishwashing soap moves **Frank Macdonald** to Buddha-like wisdom in *Rural Delivery*, where you'll also find **Gary Saunders** analyzing his woodlot blow-downs and **Jodi DeLong** unravelling knotweed problems.

■ **Coming soon to a bookstore near you!** **Susan Tooke** took flight on the back of her bedragonned illustrations to join her award-winning author Janet McNaughton's launch of their new picture book, *Brave Jack and the Unicorn*, in St. John's. Newfoundland has a rich tradition of story telling, and fairy tales. In Newfoundland, the hero of these stories is almost always called Jack, so the stories themselves are called "Jack Tales"; Mercutio Press has just released *In the Light of Day*, **Richard Provencher's** first poetry chapbook; acclaimed for her writing for children and young adults; ever since she became a WFNS member several years ago, **Kimberley Hicks** has cherished a notion of seeing her name in this column! With her first book, complete with ISBN number and CD-ROM, *How To Communicate with Your Spanish and Asian Employees: A Translation Guide for Small Business Owners* (Atlantic Publishing Group), Kimberley's dream has been realized. Congratulations!; could there be a more appropriate publisher for **Linda Johns**? Goose Lane Editions has just released the fourth in her observations of the changing gaggle with which she and husband Mack share their lives. *Birds of A Feather* also includes more than 20

of this talented writer/artist's feathered drawings; despite the fact that **Alain Raimbault** teaches full time, he's celebrating the release of his second book so far this year: *Partir comme jamais* is his latest collection of poetry published by Les Éditions David. February saw the release of *Dodo, Les Canards*, an early reader set at Grand Pré Historic Site; appropriately the launch in Antigonish was sponsored by All For Horses Association and **Anne Louise MacDonald's** first novel, *The Ghost Horse of Meadow Green*, soared over all the jumps – triumphal reading, frisky sales and record breaking attendance; never has a Nimbus launch sold so many books! **Elaine Ingalls Hogg** was walking above the water at the response to *When Canada Joined Cape Breton: Celebrating Fifty Years of the Canso Causeway*. Launched in Port Hawkesbury, an area Elaine called home for more than 20 years, she realized in writing and researching the book that her instant sigh of "Home!" on sighting the bridge, is one that she shares with thousands of Cape Bretoners.

■ **Kudos . . . the tip of the quill for prize winning words!** **Tonja Gunvaldsen Klaassen** was delighted that a suite of her poems, "August," placed second in the CBC Literary Awards. Asked to respond live to all those nice things the judges had said about her, Tonja, who meant to inject a little levity, found herself dazzled by the bright lights, forgot her punch line and had to resort to her other strategy – get off the stage quick!; **Paul MacDougall** and co-writer Kenny Chisholm won The Boardmore Prize for Best Play at the Elizabeth Boardmore One-Act Play Festival at UCCB. Directed by Chisholm, *O Night Divine*, also won for Best Ensemble Cast; **Don MacLean** hooked the third place finisher in the National Fishing Week Contest hosted by the Outdoor Writers of Canada; *Last Days in Africville* is earning **Dorothy Perkyns** plaudits. It's been shortlisted for almost all the "tree" awards – the Diamond Willow,

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the Silver Birch and Hackmatack, as well as shortlisted for the Canadian Library Association's Children's Book of the Year. It even topped *The Chronicle Herald's* Children's Best Seller list in February; **Elisabeth Gold** earned second prize in Rising Tide Press' first annual poetry competition while **Anna Horsnell** was cited for an honourable mention; **Jerry Locket** was shortlisted for an Atlantic Journalism Award in the Atlantic Magazine Article category for an article in *Atlantic Business Magazine*.

■ **Chalking up those frequent flyer points in support of literature!** Genevieve Lehr took to the sky, landing in Prince George, Dawson Creek and Victoria to read from her first poetry collection from Brick, *The Sorrowing House*; **George Elliott Clarke** is soaring high with *George & Rue*, touching down at home to read at Acadia in April, then off to Jamaica for the Calabash International Literary Festival where he'll be sharing a lectern with Andrea Levy (*Small Island*) . . . then it's off to Edinburgh for the Book Festival in August; **Steve Vernon** was in New York to attend the World Horror Convention in April. Despite some contretemps clearing Customs and negotiating check-in culture at swank uptown hotels, he was able to pitch three publishers and has returned home to tell the spine-tingling tale; although her previous visit to Ottawa found her at Rideau Hall, her April foray found **Budge Wilson** scheduled to the nano-second for the annual MASC Conference for young readers.

■ **Douglas Arthur Brown** and **Charlotte Musial** have joined the editorial advisory committee to UCCB Press. In its 30-year history, UCCB Press has become known as a publisher of works related to community economic development (CED), read by scholars and activists around the world, but their list of titles continues to grow and includes award-winning illustrated intercultural books for children, as well as writing of significance to Cape Breton Island, its history and cultural vibrancy.

■ **Greg Cook** joined fellow poets Rebecca Fredickson, Jesse Robichaud and Judith Hamel for the fourth annual CBC Poetry Face-Off in Moncton. Down the road in Saint John, he joined singer/songwriter Debbie Adshade in a performance of song and poetry.

■ **Betty Dobson** has recently acquired the print newsletter *Heritage Writer* and is revamping the publication and relaunching it in July as a paying market. Established in Oregon in 1992, *Heritage Writer* focuses on the world of family history, genealogy, biography, memoir, and scrapbooks with articles for practitioners and stories about memorable people from the past. (visit <http://inkspotter.com/products/newsletters/heritagewriter/>)

■ **Joy Yourcenar** organized a poetry/prose/erotica fundraiser that was staged at Attic Owl in Moncton this spring. With record attendance crammed into the cozy bookstore, Joy joined Michael Thorpe, Lee Thompson and Ed Lemond in readings against a backdrop of photography by Joy's husband Eric Boutilier-Brown.

■ Poetry Month Readings at Halifax Public Libraries featured **Sue Goyette**, **Tyne Brown** and **Jenni Blackmore** in solo sessions, as well as a grand finale of rumbling poets **Alice Burdick**, Zach Well and **Brian Bartlett**.

■ STARZ has been running the *Pit Pony* television series on cable in the US and has made the movie available on DVD, which can be purchased online at Amazon.com. Winner of the inaugural Ann Connor Brimer Award for Children's Literature, *Pit Pony* was originally published in 1989 by Gage as part of their Jeanpac paperback series. **Joyce Barkhouse** was in her seventies when she began researching the book. The research was daunting: "I knew about poverty, because I had lived through the Depression and I knew about children, but I didn't know anything about mining," said Joyce, but it's research that has resulted in a valiant little pony, Gem, continuing to work

for his creator. Congratulations to Joyce who is celebrating her 92nd birthday this May.

■ **Lorri Neilsen Glenn** was at the library in April inviting the public to transform personal stories into compelling poetry, essays, songs or postcard fiction. The two-hour session, *Writing Your Life*, was offered free-of-charge to all library patrons.

■ International writers touched down in Halifax in early April. A panel discussion focusing on the relationship (if any?) between novels and screenplays proved a lively diversion for a small but animated crowd. **Donna Morrissey** and **William Kowalski** joined Jonathan Lethem, entertainment lawyer Rob Aske, and Newfoundland & Labrador Film Development Corporation ED and writer, Leo Furey.

■ *Canadian Poems for Canadian Kids*, recently released by Subway Books is receiving mixed reviews but kudos for contributions from **Lynn Davies** ("Only at Night") and **Ken Ward** ("I Want to Be a Painter").

■ "... *Quid Pro Quo* has the kind of timing, pacing, dead-pan one-liners and punchy humour that a seasoned stand-up comic would envy. No wonder **Vicki Grant** earned a Gemini for writing her preschool comedy series, *Scoop & Doozie*, and praise for her debut children's novel, *The Puppet Wrangler*." So goes the understated tone of *Quill & Quire's* recent review of Vicki's latest YA novel from Orca . . . with words like these, who needs perfume?

■ When he's not winning awards for his luminous non-fiction writing, **Harry Thurston** is acclaimed for his fine poetry. Gaspereau Press will release his long poem this fall, *A Ship Portrait*. Harry's also in the news recently, protesting the province's delisting of the Chignecto game sanctuary. "What they're proposing to do is totally unacceptable. What they really need to do is declare

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it a wilderness area to improve the protection of the ecosystems and the wildlife within the sanctuary.”

■ BlueSun Films in the UK has just optioned *Otello and Desdemona*, a short film screenplay that **Virginia Hayden** adapted for her stage play of the same name; and her dramatic monologue *The Inspiration* was produced by Sarasvati Productions at the International Women’s Week Cabaret of Monologues in Winnipeg in March.

New members

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

Mary Acres, Hatchet Lake
Judy Adamson, Dartmouth
Soren Bondrup-Nielsen, Port William
Robert Louis Boudreau, Victoria, BC
Paul W. Brennan, Bedford
George Burden, Elmsdale
Wanda Candolini, Truro
Richard Charlton, Dartmouth
Charles Crosby, Halifax
Philip Dinn, Halifax
Richard Dittami, Pugwash
Emily Holton, Halifax
Vanessa Knock, Amherst
Yvonne Lantz, Truro
Daniel L. Little, Yarmouth
Susan MacDonald, Halifax
Lorne Matheson, New Glasgow
Michael Monk, Dartmouth
Nancy Newcomb, Halifax
John O’Keefe, Halifax
Anne Ottow, Middleton
Elizabeth Price, Dartmouth
Robert Rafuse, Middle River
Debbie Rodgers, Tatamagouche
SinD Roy, Lower Sackville
Linda Scaravelli, Banff, AB
Susan Sellers-Bain, River John
Craig M. Smith, Yarmouth
Carla Taylor, Halifax
Diane Tinkham, Halifax
Margo Wheaton, Halifax
Diane Wile-Brumm, Dartmouth
Brenda Wright, Saint John, NB

The HighWRITERS – members making a mark!

Sheree Fitch fêtes fundraiser with debut novel on June 4

“An odd-shaped shell caught my eye . . . I turned it over . . . It was a tiny, perfect skull.” This moment compels the action of **Sheree Fitch’s** first novel for young adults, *The Gravesavers*, about to be released by Doubleday Canada. Sheree’s main narrative is set in contemporary Nova Scotia and is intertwined with the second, which is related by young John Hindley as he embarks with his family for the New World in 1873 aboard the ill-fated SS *Atlantic*, a steamship that sank off our shores with 500 of the 952 passengers perishing.

The Gravesavers will be launched, appropriately enough, in the Ship Gallery of the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic on Saturday June 4 at 7 p.m. Devised as a fundraiser for the Ann Connor Brimer Children’s Literature Prize, Sheree will deliver a keynote address, talking about how living “away” has affected her as a writer. Former Brimer winners will be highlighted, Brimer-nominated titles sold, and dessert and wine served. Admission will be by donation with a suggested \$10 to \$25 range. For more information, contact WFNS.



PHOTO BY DAVID MIDDLETON

Shauntay’s day job

When not artistic directing the Nova Scotia Mass Choir, animating spoken word performances across the region as a founding member of Word Iz Bond Spoken Word Artists’ Collective, freelance reporting for *Mainstreet*, *Information Morning* and CBC TV’s *Canada Now*, **Shauntay Grant** is going to find time to sit behind the mic and be the new host of *All the Best*, CBC Radio Two’s Sunday morning performance show focusing primarily on classical music.



Not without artistic merit

Citing **Wendy Lill’s** “courage and conviction,” The Writers Union of Canada presented the 2005 Freedom to Read Week Award to Wendy Lill. TWUC Chair, Bill Freeman said “We believe Ms. Lill is a worthy recipient for her hard work in the House of Commons last year trying to protect writers’ interests in amendments to the Criminal Code.”

The amendments, which would have removed the defense of “artistic merit” from charges laid under the child pornography section of the Code and replace it with the vague defense of “public



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good,” met with widespread opposition throughout the arts community. Wendy led much of the debate to retain the defense of artistic merit. Freeman noted that, “It takes great courage for a politician to publicly adopt anything but a zero tolerance stance against charges of child pornography, but the amendments being proposed would have seriously chilled any writer or artist trying to deal with youth sexuality in a fictional or non-fictional forum.” The proposed amendments died with last year’s federal election and a new version, Bill C -2, with an artistic defence restored, has received first reading in the Commons.

Borderless in an Open Field

Although the protocol was reminiscent of strategy usually reserved for a military offensive, the New York City launch of *Open Field: 30 Contemporary Canadian Poets*, a new anthology edited by Sina Queyras published by Persea Books, a small New York press, was the most cordial of ententes. **Sue Goyette** shared the stage at Poets House with Christian Bök, Ken Babstock, Erin Moure and Karen Solie.

The Canadian Consulate had the wine chilling by noon, goodie bags for after were all assembled, and Scott Griffin made a donation of a large collection of Canadian poetry to the permanent library of Poets House. The following evening **Anne Simpson**, Margaret Atwood and Michael Ondaatje joined their colleagues at the recently launched Canadian-owned McNally Robinson Bookstore on Prince Street between Mulberry and Lafayette. Again the wine was duly chilled, poets given guillotine orders if the five-minute time allotment were exceeded and consular protocol clarified. Consul Pamela Wallin would preceed, and apologies made in advance for early departures for the Pen World Voices event, a week-long celebration of international literature, elsewhere in town. The launch was a fitting tribute to Canada’s rich history of poetry and National Poetry Month.



SUE GOYETTE

Rockbound makes waves

Panelist **Donna Morrissey** survived the tempest of this year’s *Canada Reads* on CBC Radio One and brought *Rockbound* to shore. Frank Parker Day’s story about an isolated fishing community, and the majesty and power of living by the sea, occasioned raucous debate, accusations of regionalism and Roch Carrier’s pacific observation that “all writing is regional . . . the Bible is regional, Shakespeare is regional.”

Donna, who travelled to Toronto to tape the program with fellow panelists Carrier, Toronto City Councillor Olivia Chow, Olympic fencer Sherraine MacKay, and singer Molly Johnson was delighted and dismayed by the experience. “Hanging with the literary elite, being whisked around the room as if I were one, too . . . I drooled over the magnificent libraries with their own fireplaces, shelves and shelves of books, oaken desks and lovely lamps . . . and not one chair comfortable enough to curl upon.”

Although sales for *Rockbound* have skyrocketed, Donna is hoping that the next beautiful royalties she sees come with the release of *Sylvanus Now* which is being published by Penguin in the middle of May. The publisher is so enthralled with Donna’s latest work that the novel is their lead title for the fall list!



Saunders is famous forester

Gary Saunders is the newest inductee into Nova Scotia’s Forestry Hall of Fame. A forester with the Department of Lands and Forests from the 1960s to the 1990s, where he worked as a writer, educator and artist, Gary has continued to write and paint in his retirement from his Old Barns home and his studio in Twillingate. He’s a regular columnist in *Rural Delivery* and the acclaimed author of *Discover Nova Scotia: The Ultimate Nature Guide*, *The Trees of Nova Scotia* and *So Much Weather! Facts, Phenomena and Weather Lore from Atlantic Canada*, among others. Gary continues to manage his own woodlot, aided and abetted by the occasional hurricane, and heats his 150-year-old home with the driest of wood.

Stature no longer in question



Budge Wilson found herself in Rideau Hall in March, listening to Governor General Adrienne Clarkson praise the stature she had achieved as a writer of some of our finest books for children and adults. The experience had one of our most celebrated writers floating on air. Each year, outstanding Canadians, from community volunteers to astronauts to writers to scholars, earn our applause and gratitude by induction into the Order of Canada. The Governor General presents honours and awards on behalf of all Canadians to recognize those people who have demonstrated excellence, courage or exceptional dedication to service in ways that bring special credit to this country. The Order of Canada recognizes lifetime achievement and WFNS applauds Budge on this fitting recognition. ■

Presenting the Atlantic Writing Competition winners . . .

The annual gala was all set to go: invitations sent, presenters and speakers confirmed, speeches and press releases written, programs designed, auction items collected, sorted, labelled and matched with bidding sheets. Many of you had generously given to the auction, had called to confirm donations of refreshments and dozens of volunteers had offered help with the set up, bartending, drink ticket sales, greetings, coat check, and other duties. More than 200 people RSVPed, and many more were expected to arrive. But Winter wasn't ready to depart, and sent another blazing snowstorm our way.

We rescheduled everything and everybody involved, and found replacements for those who couldn't make the alternate date. Then two days before the gala night, we were unceremoniously shut out by a scheduling glitch at the chosen venue.

The annual gala is a fun and friendly event where we celebrate the participants and winners of the annual Atlantic Writing Competition for unpublished manuscripts, introduce writers, publishers and other folk who work behind the scenes of this lively writing community. We mingle, munch, drink, chat and bid on some outlandish auction items in support of Writers in the Schools. Year after year, the event has returned and grown, nurtured by the support and generosity of many.

Although the new gala date is still to be determined, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who continue to give time and energy, share culinary skills and donate prizes to the annual fundraiser. Ma Fed's heartfelt applause goes to those who must

remain anonymous, the competition judges, who read and evaluated more than 260 entries in this year's contest.

WFNS congratulates the winners of the 28th Atlantic Writing Competition:

The H.R. (Bill) Percy Prize for Unpublished Novel

1st – *The Bottle Collector* by Dave Cameron (Halifax, NS)

Dave Cameron's travel memoir, *Continental Drifter* (Signature Editions), was published in the fall of 2004. "The Bottle Collector" is the second novel Cameron has written. His first remains dormant in a desk drawer.

2nd – *One's Aspect to the Sun* by Sherry Ramsey (Sydney Mines, NS)

Sherry is a science fiction and fantasy writer whose work has appeared in print, online and over the airwaves. A copy editor for the *Internet Review of Science Fiction*, she steals whatever spare moments she can to write and publish a monthly web magazine.

Honourable Mention – *Unlike the Great Majority* by Charlotte Mendel (Enfield, NS)

A native of Halifax, Charlotte spent 10 years in Israel working as an editorial assistant in a publishing company and as a freelance journalist for the *Jerusalem Post*. Since returning to Nova Scotia five years ago, she has worked as an instructional designer.

The Short Story Award

1st – *Methods of Rest* by Vivien Shotwell (Halifax, NS)

Vivian Shotwell was born in Boulder, Colorado, and moved with her family to Halifax in 1989. The daughter of booksellers, she grew up in a household where reading was

natural, thrilling and abundantly practiced. She attended Williams College, where she completed an honours thesis in fiction. Vivien is currently studying Baroque and classical singing at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague.

2nd – *Places to Drink Outside in Halifax* by Amy Jones (Halifax, NS)

Amy is a writer and actor living in Halifax. She has an MA in Drama from the University of Toronto, and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Creative Writing from the Humber School of Writing. When she's not writing or teaching, you can find her on stage with her theatre company, Angels and Heroes, or off hiking the woods.

3rd – *No Need To Panic* by Munju Ravindra (Halifax, NS)

Munju has abandoned a "career" with Parks Canada to embark on the excruciating process of writing a book about her experiences in a West African village at age 21. An excerpt was short-listed for a CBC Literary Award and won the AWC Essay contest last year. Another was published this winter in *THIS Magazine*.

Honourable Mention – *Carmelita* by Rhonda Church (Bridgewater, NS)

A native of Dartmouth, Rhonda now makes her home in Bridgewater with her husband and two children. A family physician by profession, she writes in her spare time. Her humorous essays and creative nonfiction pieces have appeared in *The Medical Post*, *Stitches*, *Maclean's*, and on CBC Radio's *First Person Singular*.

Honourable Mention – *Bottomless* by Trenton Pomeroy (Rothesay, NB)

Born in Fredericton, Trenton has lived in the Saint John area all of his adult life. He works

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as a manager for a software company, and has worked in the technology sector for nearly 30 years. Trenton says he writes as a hobby, sporadically at best, and has never really made an attempt to be published.

The Joyce Barkhouse Writing for Children Award

1st – Guinness the Gobber and the Pickle Farm Fiasco by Jamie Leck (Dartmouth, NS)

Although seldom published, Jamie Leck's works have been read extensively by his biggest fan: his wife. He is currently finishing his education degree at Mount Saint Vincent and looks forward to combining his passion for writing with his love for teaching.

2nd – Bubba Begonia, You'll be Sorry by Gerry OBrien (Bonshaw, PEI)

Gerry writes humorous chapter and picture books for the 7-12 year-olds he has been teaching for the past 20 years. He has won the top prize in the Writing for Children category of the PEI Literary Awards. He lives in Argyle Shore, PEI.

3rd – The Cat Who Sailed Across the Lake by Philip Roy (Antigonish, NS)

Philip works variously as a teacher, labourer, or at whatever comes his way. He comes from a family of enthusiastic writers, though none of them is yet published. His first book is coming out this year from DreamCatcher Books.

Honourable Mention – Tales from Portage Vale by Karen Davidson (Elgin, NB)

Karen published a chapbook, *Windows*, and her work has appeared in *Grain*, *The Fiddlehead*, and *Border Crossings*. She attended the 2004 Writing Studio at the Banff Centre to put the finishing touches on her poetry manuscript, "Jewelweed."

Honourable Mention – Acrobat Sol by Judith Meyrick (Halifax, NS)

Judith has been writing for children for the past two years. She

has written several picture books and is currently working on a children's novel.

Honourable Mention – A Christmas Tree for Nan by Janet Russell (Tors Cove, NL)

Janet is an independent biologist and audio producer. She is a founding Director of the Alder Institute for which she produces a weekly one-hour radio program. She founded an audio book venture, Rattling Books.

The Frog Hollow Books Poetry Prize

2nd – Alphabetology: Bold Characters Put Up Strange Fonts by Laura Crawford (Greenwood, NS)

A senior Honours student in English at Saint FX University, Laura is preoccupied with theory, performance, modern and postmodern British fiction, all things queer, and words spoken or written by the fabulous writers in *Antigonish*. She co-founded lower basement press, which has released her micro-book, *Eleven Bites*, and some of her poems are forthcoming in *The Nashwaak Review*.

2nd – Side Effects by Joy Yourcenar (Moncton, NB)

Joy's poems have been published in several online literary zines and off-line in *Moist*, *The Maine Review*, *The Stolen Island Review* and *Silhouettes in the Electric Sky*.

3rd – Country Skin, City Shoes by Brenda Tate (South Ohio, NS)

A retired English and Drama teacher, Brenda shares her back-road country home with an assortment of animals. Several of her scripts were performed by drama classes during her tenure at Yarmouth High School. She's been a finalist in several writing contests.

Honourable Mention – Fall Morning by Jenna Murphy (Halifax, NS)

Jenna Murphy is a native of Halifax who currently divides her time between writing, teaching, and practicing yoga. This is her first submission to the Atlantic Writing Competition.

Honourable Mention – Five Poems by Richard Norman (Tantallon, NS)

Richard Norman has published poetry in *The Fiddlehead* and *The Antigonish Review*. He currently lives in Brussels.

Magazine Article/Essay Award

1st – Move Hands Like Clouds by Penny Carver (Mahone Bay, NS)

Penny Carver is a retired social worker whose interest in writing was stimulated by creative writing courses offered in Lunenburg County. Penny belongs to two writing groups and finds herself producing creative non-fiction more easily than the fiction she aspires to.

2nd – My Untended Garden, Open to All by David Mercer (Halifax, NS)

After teaching high school French, history and geography for 30 years, David dabbled in travel slide show presentations and tour guiding. Since there are only so many times he can tell the story of Peggy's rescue before wanting to stray into fiction, he decided that writing is the best way to earn a few dollars.

3rd – The Long Walk by Shelagh Edwards (Halifax, NS)

A fully licensed investment broker, Shelagh was born in Halifax and also lived for almost a decade in Kelowna, BC. She has been published in both *The Coast* and *The Globe and Mail*. In her spare time she likes to travel and scuba dive.

The deadline for the 29th annual Atlantic Writing Competition is December, 2005. Entry forms will be available from the WFNS website (www.writers.ns.ca) this summer. ■

Summer retreats & workshops

by Sue Goyette

What is the proper collective noun for a tribe of writers spending enough time together that they stamp up a halo of inspiration that surrounds them for awhile like Saturn's ring? A pride? A murder? A flock? A verb? Many of you have had the experience of retreating from your day into an undiluted stretch of time, when you have only one role to be and that role is the secret person you've been carrying around all your life: the writer. Forget the laundry, defrosting supper, forget picking up the kids or feeding the cats, for the allotted time all you have to worry about are line breaks or character details. Luxurious adverbs and languorous run-on sentences. Does that sound too good to be true? Eating and walking and musing and amusing with your clutch, your gaggle, your team of fellow wordsmiths?

Writing retreats offer exactly that. An opportunity, a long vista of time with home far off on the horizon not yet nudging into view and breaking your concentration. A room of your own. A blessing of time to spend anyway you want to, in the company of people who understand the long look off into nowhere and how that long look is one way of writing. How we peel our orange, tie our shoes, notice the bird just alit from the tree is all a way of writing, and for now it's being given the clearing it needs to come out of its wilderness and shyly make its way to our paper. Writing retreats offer company in our solitary pursuits, we become a gang of loners meeting at tables or under trees to briefly give our news, our discoveries and inventions definition before returning to our desks, to our blank paper with a meadow of wild ideas and a stretch of day ahead of us. Luxury.

This isn't the place where you have to bravely confess that you write. Everyone at the retreat already knows that. *What do you write*, they'll want to know. *What are you working on?* And you'll tell them, surprising yourself by how well you know what you're doing without having mapped it out loud before. You will at once become both testimony and witness. *I'm working on a short piece*, you'll hear yourself say with a confidence that astounds and delights you. *I'm working on a series of poems*. Luxurious indeed.

There are several writing retreats offered across Canada this summer. Retreats for all levels of writers and in all genres of writing. **The Sage Hill Writing Experience** in Saskatchewan's Qu'Appelle Valley offers workshops in Poetry, Fiction, Playwriting for Adults and an Introduction to Creative Writing from July 25 to August 4. Their website (www.sagehillwriting.ca) has all the details.

The 30th Annual Maritime Writers' Workshop (July 10-17) on the Fredericton Campus of the University of New Brunswick also has workshops in Fiction, Poetry and Writing for Children. Visit their website (<http://extend.unb.ca/writers/>) for more information.

The Writers' Retreat in Stanstead, (Eastern Townships region) Quebec, is offering weekend workshops for screenwriters, novelists, and short fiction writers: Self-Editing for Publication (May 28-30, 2005); Screenwriting Dynamics (June 25-26); and Dynamics of the Dramatic Structure (August 20-21). Their website is: www.writersretreat.com/workshop/Quebec/costschedule.htm

Closer to home, **The Community of Writers** (July 24-29) at the lovely Tatamagouche Centre, on the shores of Nova Scotia's Northumberland Strait, offers workshops in Fiction, Poetry as well as Writing Mysteries with Gail Bowen. Information about this summer's program can be found at the Centre's website: www.tatacentre.ca.

The Great Blue Heron Writing Workshop will be held at St Francis Xavier University in Antigonish from Wednesday, July 6 to Saturday, July 9, 2005. Fiction, Poetry and Playwriting workshops are being offered. Their website is: www.stfx.ca/people/gbheron/

The Island Writers' Association of PEI has a series of full-day writing workshops: June 18 – Basic Steps to Launching Your Writing Career; July 23 – Garden Writing; August 13 – Steps Along the Road to Self-Publishing; and September 23-25 Revved Up For Romance. Visit www.gotocreativeconnections.com for all the details.

If you want to go even further away from home, **Booming Ground** in Vancouver, BC is offering a week-long non-credit intensive summer writing workshops in Fiction and Poetry from July 9th to the 15th. For more information, their website is: www2.arts.ubc.ca/bg/.

Also in Vancouver, **The Simon Fraser University Summer Publishing Workshops** offer a new two-day course this summer, The Art and Business of Writing. You can read a full description of the workshop by following the link: <http://www.ccsf.sfu.ca/pubworks/artwrit.htm>

And if you really want to get away, there's the **Aegean Arts Circle** on the Greek Island of Andros offering two creative writing workshops from June 27th to July 7th or July 11th to 21st. If you're tempted, check out their website at: <http://www.aegeanartscircle.com/>

Of course, you can simply close your door to your world, to the demands of popsicles or power bills but you've been doing that all year, why not pack your writing clothes, those linty day in, day out elastic waist banded things? Why not spend a few days in the company of kin? If you do decide to travel, drop us a line, send us a postcard with the right collective noun for a swarm of writers written on it with your best pen. An exaltation perhaps? An absence? A cloud? A wake? A luxury? You do the work and let us know. ■

Tax credits propel film industry

by Ron Foley Macdonald.

March came in like a lion for Nova Scotia's film and television production scene. The long-awaited news that Premier John Hamm would announce a boost to the provincial tax credit system re-energized an industry that suffered some significant slippage through 2003 and '04.

The news was more than just reassuring. Hamm gave the assembled crowd of producers, government officials, craftspeople and actors a bit more than they were expecting. Not only was the tax credit raised from 30 to 35 percent (35 to 40 percent if you shoot outside of Halifax), but repeat producers will qualify for an extra 5 percent sweetener as a bonus, raising the whole credit to a possible 45 percent, the highest in the country.

If that wasn't enough, the gentle country doctor – who seems to like getting his picture taken with Hollywood stars like Kathy Bates, in town to star in and direct an American TV movie, *Ambulance Girl* – backed up his commitment to the sector with a \$600,000 boost to the Nova Scotia Film Development Corporation's film equity investment fund. The intrepid premier topped the whole thing off with a 10-year commitment to promote stability in the sector.

This triple whammy left just about everyone smiling. A couple of producers even 'fessed up to some major projects scheduled to shoot in the province. Just around the corner is yet another American Movie of the Week, *Klassen's Pier*; and Chester-based producer Wayne Grigsby let the cat out of the bag concerning two sizable mini-series: a four-hour dramatic bio on Conrad Black and a massive eight-hour dramatic reconstruction of the 1970 October Crisis. Grigsby was quoted in one paper as saying that contemporary Dartmouth looks more like Montreal in 1970 than Montreal looks today. For any disbelievers, this is a man who has already made Halifax stand in for Ottawa and British Columbia for not one but two TV series on Pierre Trudeau.

The tax credits will probably push 2005 into the record books for production. The year started with January's shoot of *The Conclave* and February's *Ambulance Girl*, both taking place in what should be the industry's down time. The new equity investment money will probably result in five or six indigenous documentaries,

a couple of TV series and maybe even a feature film or two.

Meanwhile, Nova Scotia's good fortune seems to be spilling over to the other provinces. New Brunswick has snagged a major TV mini-series based on the 1972 hockey contests between Canada and the Soviet Union. A co-production between NB and the Nova Scotia company responsible for the *Trailer Park Boys* phenom, *The Summit Series* is one of the biggest shoots for the Picture Province ever. Most of the post-production – the editing and sound-editing – will take place in Halifax.

And *The Ballad of Jack and Rose*, a feature film written and directed by Rebecca Miller (daughter of the late playwright Arthur Miller), shot in PEI and starring her hubby Daniel Day-Lewis, is slated to open across North America through April and May, raising the profile of the Atlantic Region considerably.

The only weak point in a relatively strong chain is the feature film sector. This year's pitiful showing by English Canada in the Genie Awards – held the same night as Halifax's Merritt Awards for local theatre and both ignored by the Canadian and Bluenose publics – shows that sector is in dire need of an overhaul. And while former Jewison School hotshot Wayne Clarkson has made some of the right noises as the new head of Telefilm Canada, it will take some mighty efforts to co-ordinate an English Canadian feature film renaissance.

Still, Nova Scotia will undoubtedly retain its national position as the fourth-largest motion picture production centre in the country. With shocking statistics dribbling in from other parts of this great realm the Bluenose Province should count itself lucky that we weathered the storm so well. Last year, Quebec's indigenous production dropped 2 percent while its service or American production dropped a whopping 52 percent.

Of course, tell that to the worried post-production worker I spoke to who admitted he barely had three months work in 2004. There'll be more this year, but his argument that we're running to stand still shows that the motion picture production sector carries no guarantees. Despite the cautionary note, there's no question that the Premier's announcements qualify as an unqualified good news story, no matter what kind of spin you apply to it. ■

Vagrant finds home with Nimbus

Dictionaries define “vagrant” as a person with no settled home or work, an idle wanderer, a vagabond, one who has no established residence and wanders idly from place to without lawful or visible means of support. Perhaps an appropriate description of the publishing industry and writers in this country.

Vagrant Press may be the newest kid on the publishing block, but it is not an idle wanderer. It has a nice home in a modest building on MacKintosh Street nestled at the approach to the A. Murray MacKay bridge, near the Fairview Cove pier on the shores of Halifax harbour. It has visible means of support – its parent company is Nimbus Publishing, an established presence in the book business. And Vagrant Press has a job – publishing fiction by Atlantic Canadian writers.

Nimbus, a 30-year-old veteran of the book industry and the largest general publisher of English-language books east of Ontario, introduced Vagrant to the world at a launch during the Atlantic Book Festival in April.

Sandra MacIntyre took over as managing editor of Nimbus about 18 months ago, when long-time editor Dorothy Blythe retired. An Ottawa native, MacIntyre took her undergraduate degree at the University of Victoria in women’s studies and English, and a master’s degree in English at Dalhousie University.

While it has published fiction, Nimbus has its strength in non-fiction that reflects Atlantic Canada. “Nimbus decided it was time for us to do fiction,” says MacIntyre. “It was a matter of having the right people and staff in place.” So they created

Vagrant Press as a new imprint to handle fiction while Nimbus retains non-fiction and young adult/children’s books.

When asked why Nimbus decided to re-enter the fiction market, MacIntyre said, “Because we haven’t done it, because people love fiction, because a lot of writers don’t have a place to go in Atlantic Canada. There’s room for another fiction house – we’ve got so many writers with so much talent. Readers want to read local authors.”

MacIntyre says Vagrant will actively look for fiction as well as entertaining manuscripts received through the mail from Atlantic writers. While they prefer the material be set in the Atlantic region, it’s not essential. “We’re interested in supporting people who are serious about their writing,” she says. “Vagrant is a place where new writers can come with their work.” She’s looking for historical and contemporary fiction and welcomes new writers. While Vagrant will consider mysteries, it’s not looking for genre fiction such as romance or science fiction. She’s also looking for fresh, innovative writing (“I want to feel I’ve never read this book

before”), but not experimental prose “because we’re not that weird.”

Vagrant will launch its first two novels in the fall – *Relative Happiness* by **Leslie Crewe** and *Maclean* by **Alan Donaldson**.

MacIntyre describes Leslie Crewe, from Homeville, Nova Scotia, near Sydney, as “an amazing new talent,” and *Relative Happiness*, set in Glace Bay, as manistream women’s fiction. Alan Donaldson, from Fredericton, New Brunswick set *Maclean* in 1943 and follows a day in the life of an alcoholic war veteran who tries to find the money to buy his mother a birthday present.

MacIntyre expects Vagrant to publish a couple of titles a year, to start with. Vagrant will have its own website. And changes are planned for Nimbus’ web site (www.nimbus.ns.ca). Within the next couple of months, MacIntyre says the Nimbus website will have more information on its authors and more descriptions of their books.

“If you’re writing a novel,” says MacIntyre, “send it to us. We’re really open, looking for talent, looking for that book that you just can’t put down.” ■

Fly with the Great Blue Heron July 6–9

The first Great Blue Heron Writing Workshops take flight in Antigonish in July. The workshops will offer mid-level writers an opportunity to discuss poetry, fiction and playwriting. Poets will have the opportunity to work with **Anne Simpson**, the winner of the 2004 Griffin Poetry Prize. Leo MacKay Jr. will be on hand for fiction writers; his first collection of short stories (*This*) was nominated for the Giller Prize and his first novel (*Twenty-Six*) was a national best-seller. Playwright **Sheldon Currie** is the resource person for playwrights. Registration is limited. The registration of \$395 (\$375 for WFNS members, students and seniors) includes tuition, meals, and accommodation. Call Gina Sampson for details (902-867-4533, gbheron@stfx.ca) or visit www.stfx.ca/people/gbheron ■

Gaspereau up for Small Press Publisher of the Year

Gaspereau Press, the precocious seven-year-old that produces exquisite books in Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley, is on the shortlist for the Canadian Booksellers Association's annual Libris Awards. It's up for two awards – Book Design of the Year and the Small Press Publisher of the Year.

The Logogryph: A Bibliography of Imaginary Books by Thomas Wharton is designed by Gaspereau's Andrew Steeves. It shares the book design shortlist with titles from much larger publishers with much deeper pockets – *The Museum Called Canada* (published by Random House Canada, designed by Jonathan Howells and his studio, Dinnick + Howells, and Sara Angel of Otherwise Editions) and *Tree: A Life Story* from Greystone Books, designed by Jessica Sullivan.

Gaspereau Press continues to wrack up award nominations – and even to take home a few, including the Governor General's Award for Poetry (*The Execution Poems* by George Elliott Clarke), several Alcuin Awards for excellence in book design, and Atlantic Book Awards such as the Dartmouth Book Award: Fiction and the Atlantic Poetry Prize.

A partnership between Gary Dunfield and Andrew Steeves, Gaspereau Press is a literary publisher and printer in Kentville. The press is committed to literature and the book arts, incorporating a range of modern and antique forms of printing and binding to create books that are distinctive in manufacture and design. Publishing short-run editions of both literary and regional interest, Gaspereau Press produces quality first-edition paperbacks and limited-edition

hardcover books aimed at the Canadian market. Their list includes poetry, local history books, literary essays, novels, and short story collections.

"At Gaspereau, the relationship between the author and publisher is foremost," says Andrew Steeves. Gaspereau is also committed to the book arts. It is one of a handful of Canadian trade publishers that prints and binds books in-house. The result is a publishing program that is intimate, creative and informed, and books that are

distinctive in manufacture and design.

This is Gaspereau's second nomination for the CBA's Small Press Publisher of the Year Award. Also nominated are Cormorant Books and The Porcupine's Quill. The award is in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the Canadian bookselling industry, based on consistent high quality in author relations, editorial production, marketing skills and commercial success. ■

Gardening in July with Jodi

Discover the delights of gardens and writing about them from Jodi DeLong. The 12-acre New Glasgow Country Gardens in central Prince Edward Island is the site of this day-long writing workshop, Saturday, July 23. Jodi DeLong is a freelance writer and a compulsive gardener. Her gardening columns appear in *The Chronicle Herald*, *Saltscapes Magazine* and the *Atlantic Cooperator* and she is a regular contributor on garden-related topics in publications across Canada and the US. Registration is \$50 and pre-registration is necessary. For information visit www.gotocreativeconnections.com (click on "writers workshops") or phone 902-569-3913, 902-566-9748 or contact Debbie Gamble-Arsenault at dgamble@isn.net ■

Memoir, travel and romance in Saint John

If you're looking for a weekend out of town consider a quick trip to Saint John. The Southwest New Brunswick chapter of the Periodical Writers Association of Canada is hosting several workshops June 4 and 18 at the Courtney Bay Hotel in Saint John.

On Saturday, June 4, Ken McGoogan, best-selling author of *Fatal Passage: The Untold Story of John Rae, the Arctic Adventurer who Discovered the Fate of Franklin*, will present two workshops. The morning is devoted to "The Memoir: Feature and Creative Non-fiction," and the afternoon will cover "Techniques, Issues and Arguments in Creative Non-fiction." On the same day, Kathy-Diane Leveille (*Roads Unravelling*) will present two workshops: "Striking the right balance between passion and structure" and "The End is the Beginning – Are We There Yet?"

On Saturday, June 18, Sandra Phinney will present two travel writing workshops. And Deborah Hale, who has more than a dozen books published by Harlequin Historicals, will discuss genre fiction.

The fee is \$75 per day, or \$125 for both days. For more information contact Dorothy Dearborn at dearborn@nbnet.nb.ca ■

Markets, etc.

Mention of a market or competition in this column does not imply an endorsement by WFNS. Writers guidelines can usually be found on a publication's website and sample copies can be purchased. For those of you without Internet access or a computer, there are public access computer sites in your friendly neighbourhood library.

■ **The Massachusetts Review:** Editorial Office, South College, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003 (www.massreview.org) An independent quarterly of literature, the arts and public affairs. "In addition to poems and stories of the highest quality by writers both nationally known and emerging, our pages also regularly include literature in translation, personal witness pieces, lively and incisive social and historical commentary. Ours is a generalist reader who cares deeply for both literature and the wider world." Considers one short story (25-30 pages) per submission. Poetry: send up to 6 poems. Pays 35¢ a line for poetry (\$10 minimum/poem), \$50 for an essay or work of fiction. Reading period: Do not send poetry or fiction between June 1 and October 1.

■ **Tampa Review:** University of Tampa, 401 W. Kennedy Blvd. Box 19F, Tampa, FL 33606-1490 (<http://tampareview.ut.edu>) A literary mag dedicated to the blending of contemporary literature and visual arts. Publishes twice a year "in an elegant hardcover format." Reading period: between September 1 and December 31. Submit 3 to 6 poems and/or 1 or more prose manuscripts up to 5,000 words. Writers guidelines on website. Responds within 4 months. Pays

\$10/published page for both prose and poetry on publication.

■ **Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review** PO Box 33096, Austin, TX 78764 (www.borderlands.org) A literary journal that publishes poetry, along with photographs, reviews and essays. No simultaneous submissions. "Submit outwardly directed poetry that exhibits social, political, geographic, historical or spiritual awareness. We are open to traditional and experimental forms."

■ **Fantasy & Science Fiction:** PO Box 3447, Hoboken NJ 07030 (www.sfsite.com/fsf/) Has no formula for fiction, looking for stories that will appeal to science fiction and fantasy readers. The SF element may be slight but it should be present. Prefers character-oriented stories. Receives a lot of fantasy fiction, but never enough science fiction or humour. Fiction up to 25,000 words. Read the magazine before submitting. Send only one manuscript at a time. Responds in 2 months. Pays 6¢ to 9¢/word on acceptance.

■ **Granta:** 2-3 Hanover Yard, Noel Road, London N1 8BE United Kingdom (www.granta.com) publishes new writing – fiction, personal history, reportage and inquiring journalism, documentary photography – 4 times a year. Every issue contains at least 256 pages. Guidelines on website.

■ **Absinthe Literary Review:** (www.absinthe-literary-review.com) An online journal published in Spring Green, Wisconsin. Looking for "transgressive works dealing with madness, sex, death, disease, and the like; the clash of archaic with modern day; archetype, symbolism, Surrealism, philosophy,

physics, existential and postmodern flavoring; experimental or flagrantly textured language; alternative poetry in classical form; intense crafting of language from the writer's writer." Detailed guidelines on website. Payment: fiction/essay \$2-\$10, poetry \$1-\$10.

■ **The Grove Review:** 1631 NE Broadway, PMB# 137, Portland OR 97232 (www.thegroverevue.org) A new quarterly published in Oregon. Guidelines on website (click on "community") Pays an honorarium of \$50 on acceptance. Poetry (3 to 6 poems), one short fiction (up to 5,000 words).

■ **Boulevard Magazine:** 6614 Clayton Rd., Box 325, Richmond Heights, MO 63117 (www.boulevardmagazine.com) publishes 3 times a year. Fiction, poetry and non-fiction (essays, interviews). Does not accept submissions between May 1 and October 1. Poetry: up to 200 lines, light verse not accepted, pays \$25 to \$300. Fiction: up to 8,000 words, pays \$50 to \$300.

■ **Canadian Cowboy Country Magazine: Celebrating People, Places & the Western Lifestyle:** (www.canadiancowboy.ca) Interested in receiving e-mail queries from writers with an interest in the history and the preservation of the history of the Canadian cowboy and ranching way of life. A bi-monthly publication from the Tanner Publishing Group in Edmonton, AB.

■ **Storyteller Magazine:** 858 Wingate Drive, Ottawa, ON, K1G 1S5 (www.storytellermagazine.com) A 10-year-old quarterly general fiction magazine. Stories must be original works of fiction between 2,000 and 6,000 words. Occasionally accept reprints, but not from well-

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known magazines or webzines. "We publish an average of 40 stories a year, ranging from Ellis Award winning Matt Hughes' thrillers to Aurora nominee Stephanie Bedwell-Grime's comic romantic fantasies. Our stories have been reprinted in everything from the Journey Prize anthologies to educational texts." Pays half a cent per published word for original stories, a quarter of a cent per published word (their count) for reprints.

■ **AGNI Magazine:** Boston University, 236 Bay State Road, Boston, MA 02215 (www.bu.edu/agni) Publishes poetry, short fiction, and essays. Regularly features emerging writers. The print magazine appears twice yearly, in spring and fall. The website grows weekly with postings of new online-only fiction, poetry, essays, reviews, and interviews. Reading period: September 1 to May 31. Pay \$10/printed (or printed-out) page for all accepted work (\$20 minimum for the print magazine; \$150 maximum for both). Responds in 2 to 4 months. Detailed guidelines on website

■ **Fiction International:** Harold Jaffe, Editor, Department of English, San Diego State University, 5500 Campanile Drive, San Diego CA 92182-8140 (www.fictioninternational.com) Annual magazine that showcases innovative forms of fiction and non-fiction, also addresses themes that serve progressive political ideas. For an issue on the Abject and Outcast, it will read fiction, non-fiction and indeterminate prose between September 1 and December 1.

■ **The First Line:** PO Box 250382, Plano TX 75025-0382. (www.thefirstline.com) Quarterly. They provide the first line, you

provide the rest of the 300 to 3,000-word story. Pays \$10 US on publication.

■ **Fourth Genre: Explorations in Non-fiction:** Journals Division, Michigan State University Press, 1405 S. Harrison Road, Ste 25, East Lansing MI 48823-5245 (www.msupress.msu.edu/FourthGenre) Devoted to publishing notable, innovative work in nonfiction. Welcomes a variety of works – personal essays and memoirs to literary journalism and personal criticism. Invite works that are lyrical, self-interrogative, meditative and reflective, as well as expository, analytical, exploratory or whimsical. Encourages a writer-to-reader conversation that explores the markers and boundaries of literary/creative nonfiction. Also features interviews with prominent nonfiction writers.

■ **turnrow:** English Department, University of Louisiana at Monroe, 700 University Ave., Monroe LA 71209 (<http://turnrow.ulm.edu>). Publishes fiction, poetry, essays, interviews, social commentary and visual art twice a year. Pays \$50/poem, \$15/page of prose, \$150-200 for features, \$100 for cover art. Send 1 or 2 stories or essays, 3 to 5 poems.

■ **Elysian Fields Quarterly: The Baseball Review** PO Box 14385, St. Paul, Minnesota 55114-0385 (www.efqreview.com) An eclectic journal of writing on baseball. Work must be about baseball – poetry, fiction, memoir, essay, drama, interview, scholarship, humour, analysis, and opinion are all acceptable.

■ **E/The Environmental Magazine:** 28 Knight Street, 2nd floor, Norwalk CT 06851 (www.emagaizne.com) A bimonthly mag that covers everything environmental – from rainforests to recycling, and from the personal to the political. Pays 30¢/word on publication. Query first. No fiction, poetry or nature writing. Interested in articles dealing with environmental issues, current environmental thought and action, also pieces that explore the connections between environmental and other social change/humanitarian issues. Likes articles that suggest ways to become involved. Looking for material for various sections of the magazine.

■ **The Funny Times: Humor, Politics & Fun** PO Box 18530, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118 (www.funnytimes.com) Publishes monthly. "We only publish cartoons and funny stories (500-700 words)." Detailed guidelines on website. Pays \$25-40 for cartoons and \$60 for stories. "There is no limit to our scope and we cover just about everything that can be funny, including politics, news, relationships, food, technology, pets, work, death, environmental issues, business, religion, seasonal events, and everything else related to the human condition."

■ **Ms. Magazine:** (www.msmagazine.com) Quarterly. "The oldest and preeminent feminist magazine." Considers articles on politics, social commentary, popular culture, law, education, art, and the environment. Pay varies. Also publishes fiction (5,000 words max) send to Amy Bloom, Fiction Editor, Ms. Magazine, 336 Foothills Road, Durham, CT 06422. Writers guidelines on website (www.msmagazine.com/contact.asp)