

east word

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WRITERS' FEDERATION OF NOVA SCOTIA



Notes from the Christmas Party

by Miss Appropriate

Oh the fun we had at our Annual Open House. First, there was the Parking Adventure made possible by our minions, the comedy construction crew – who not only pave but dig up to pave the sidewalks that will have to be dug up once more this coming spring. The crew is an endless source of entertainment here at the Fed with their bickering and mistakes and um, hardhats. We often watch them through the window and wonder a great many things. For example, which one is Moe? And if a sidewalk

appeared in the middle of a forest, would they tear that one up as well?

Added to the Parking Adventure was the Weather Fiasco. In the fiery depths of weather hell, known as Halifax, we were fortunate to experience each type of weather system at once, while looking for parking. Some of you look marvelous drenched. In fact, I think, it added to the writerly look. I've never seen such heavy boas and who knew gold lamé could look so sunset-riveresque when wet? Thank god the punch was strong enough to

burn off any residual make-up with its fumes, or we would have looked like a *Dawn of the Dead* convention with mascara down to our grins.

Now, we may say we turn up to this shindig for the gossip, for the glamour, the paparazzi but if we drank a wee dram of truth serum, a.k.a. punch, we'd have to admit we come to the party for the food. And the feast was delectable. I'm with the gentleman who said he isn't afraid of heights, just of widths because I am deeply afraid of the width my

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WRITERS' FEDERATION OF NOVA SCOTIA

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NOVA SCOTIA
Tourism, Culture and Heritage



Patrimoine
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The Cape Breton party scene



derriere has expanded to because of the party food. I personally will not be wearing stripes anytime soon, let me tell you.

Thanks to the good people at George's Fish Emporium, we had quite the dance floor this year. I didn't catch the names of the men doing the synchronized dance to the Bay City Rollers Christmas record, but I could tell they were non-fiction writers by the way they polkaed. No one polkas like non-fiction writers. Non-fiction writers are born polkaing. The poets, as usual, wanted quiet and dimmer lighting but after copious amounts of punch, they were pretty agreeable except about their line breaks – they always do go on about their line breaks. I have no idea, I told them, break after hangover.

Luckily, we had both time-travel technology and satellite hook-up to our Cape Breton Annual Open House held in the Ross Ferry fire hall a few days later. We were very

impressed with their impromptu puppet rendition of How to Write Happy Endings for a Cast of Pessimists. And I've never before heard rejection letters sung in four-part harmony but the results were stunning. No, no, no and noooooo.

After the fireworks, a children's writer jokingly suggested we invite the comedy construction crew in so we did. You wouldn't recognize the office. Between the punch and the power tools, a transformation has taken place. Our desks are literally teetering on the abyss they made and fell into. We can hardly hear them anymore. Which is a blessing. They were pretty loud. I think they've tunneled into Garrison Brewery next door. Which can only be good for business.

If any of you can explain how the rum balls got into the Canada Revenue Agency file, we'd love to hear from you. Seriously. ■

Rural Writes 2007

– Antigonish – Boularderie – Bridgewater – Canning – New Glasgow – Truro –

The book in you with Douglas Arthur Brown

Boularderie School CAP Site, 12065 Kempt Head Road,
Boularderie, Cape Breton

Saturday mornings, 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 17, 24, 31; April
7 through 28.

Cost: \$125 (WFNS members) \$145 (non-members) (Easy payment
terms available)

In this seven-session workshop, you will concentrate on the short story, novel and creative non-fiction. The focus will be on copy-editing and creating material that is near-ready for publication. Each participant will submit the first full chapter of a novel, or a finished short story (a minimum of 2,000 words to a maximum of 3,000 words), or a creative non-fiction piece (2,000 words). Submissions will be read and evaluated by the participants in a jury approach and the workshop leader will evaluate the collected submissions in a competition-style framework, judging the work as if it had been submitted to a literary competition. During the session, each participant will read one novel and one collection of short fiction from an assigned list (all in the library), and explore the art of reviewing by writing reviews of the material read.

One of the sessions will be devoted to copy-editing; another will be led by Don Sedgwick, president of the TransAtlantic Literary Agency and publishing associate Shawn Bradley, and will focus on the publishing industry and how agents work. (Note: this will be a four-hour workshop on March 24/storm date, March 31). A third session will be led by Peter Kirby, program officer for the Culture Division of the provincial Department of Tourism and Culture, and will deal with preparing a funding application.

Douglas Arthur Brown is the author of the short story collection *The Komodo Dragon and Other Stories*, the novel *A Deadly Harvest*, and two children's titles, *Archibald's Boo-boo* and *The Magic Compass*.

Writing for children with Anne Louise MacDonald

Antigonish (location to be confirmed)

Saturday mornings, 10 a.m. to 12 noon. March 10 to May 5 (no
class April 7)

Cost: \$125 (WFNS members) \$145 (non-members) (Easy payment
terms available)

This workshop will offer experiences in writing fiction for children and young adults: finding individual writer voice and themes; developing authentic characters and storylines; rereading and revising objectively; considering markets; and preparing manuscripts for submission to publishers. You may bring works-in-progress or begin new projects. There will be opportunities for sharing individual pieces for feedback with the group and/or the instructor. You will be expected to set a regular work schedule during the program with a goal of completing a short piece of fiction.

Anne Louise MacDonald is the author of three picture books for children: *The Memory Stone*, *The Dog Wizard* and *Nanny-Mac's Cat*. Last year, KidsCan Publishing released her first YA novel, *The Ghost Horse of Meadow Green*, to great acclaim. Anne Louise lives outside Antigonish at Hug-a-Horse Farm.

And more to come

Other sessions are planned for **Bridgewater** with **Joanne Jefferson** (freelance writing), **Canning** with **Ami McKay** (fiction), **New Glasgow** with **Maureen Hull** (short fiction), and **Truro** with **Leo McKay** (fiction) during the spring. Details are not final as *Eastword* goes to press but will be posted online at www.writers.ns.ca early in the new year. Just click on workshops.

Freelance writer Joanne Jefferson's work has appeared in many national and regional publications. Ami McKay's first novel, *The Birth House*, knocked *The Da Vinci Code* out of the #1 spot on *The Globe and Mail's* bestseller list. Maureen Hull's short story collection, *Righteous Living*, was short-listed for the Danuta Gleed Award, and her first novel, *The View From a Kite*, was published in 2006. Leo McKay Jr.'s debut story collection, *Like This*, was shortlisted for the Giller Prize and his first novel, *Twenty-six*, was a national bestseller. ■

Halifax Fed Central workshops

The ABCs of writing for children with Norene Smiley

When: Tuesday evenings, 7 to 9, from March 13 – May 1

Cost: \$150 WFNS members; \$175 non-members (Easy payment terms available)

If you have stories you'd like to tell children but feel you need help to develop your work, this course is for you. Designed to provide support and resources to writers for children and young adults, this workshop will give you the kick-start you need to keep moving forward with your craft. Norene Smiley will help you find your unique voice by exploring character development, structure, plot, and point of view using the rich resources of the WFNS Resource Library and the Canadian Children's Book Centre collection. Each class will feature writing exercises tailored to build specific skills, sharing work in progress and getting critical feedback in a supportive environment. The course provides an opportunity to meet other writers with common goals and to share ideas and strategies. You should come with a project in mind that can be developed and honed during the eight weeks.

Norene Smiley has worked as an editor, bookseller, publisher, writer, teacher, and arts administrator. She was Executive Director of Word on the Street until 1999, and has served on the board of the Canadian Children's Book Centre. Today she is Director of the Hackmatack Children's Choice Book Awards.

Short fiction with Carol Bruneau

When: Wednesday evenings, 7 to 9, from February 7 – March 28

Cost: \$150 WFNS members; \$175 non-members (Easy payment terms available)

The art of the snapshot, Alice Munro calls the short story – a do-able form where the ending is everything and every word and image counts. This eight-week workshop, limited to 12 writers, will focus on endings, beginnings and all points between, from developing characters and plot to creating dynamic settings that serve both. The class is open to writers of all levels whether simply intrigued by, or already in love with, the form. Sessions will be structured to enable writers to work on stories in progress or to develop new ones, with tips on revision and making submissions.

Carol Bruneau is the author of two critically acclaimed collections of short fiction, *After the Angel*

Mill and *Depth Rapture*, and the novel *Purple for Sky*. Published in the U.S. as *A Purple Thread for Sky*, the novel won the 2001 Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award and the Dartmouth Book Award. Carol's second novel, *Berth*, was released by Cormorant last year, and she is currently at work on a third. ■

Writers match!

A panel of three writers drawn from different disciplines, geographies and sexes pored over 29 applications for this season's mentorship positions. Introduced in 2001, the program has been sustained through support from the Canada Council for the Arts and from Alistair MacLeod, who named WFNS and this program for support from his Portia White Prize.

Designed to address the needs of emerging writers committed to their writing and creative development, the Mentorship Program is not an introduction to the craft. It is a hands-on opportunity intended to provide a disciplined and focused period of work for the developing writer with guidance and feedback from a more seasoned writer who has travelled some of the territory.

After a month of reading the applications and writing samples, the panel agreed there were five applicants who would benefit from this particular approach. Each had demonstrated a matureness of work and vision, and had achieved a unique voice that, with some directed polishing, was ready to compete for professional publication. Writers chosen for mentorships and a five-month term of work paired with a senior partner for 2006-07 are: Ann Foster working on a YA novel with Vicki Grant; Marlene Stanton working on a novel with Susan Haley; Christina McRae working on a collection of poetry with Marilyn Iwama; Keir Lowther working on short stories with Bill Kowalski; and Marilyn Rudi working on poetry with Tonja Gunvaldsen Klaassen.

At an initial meeting at the Federation in early November for introductions and ground rules (no calling your mentor in the middle of the night!), these writers negotiated work structures that suited each pair and each project and set off to work. The Federation will toast these writers next spring at the AGM on Saturday, June 2, with a celebratory "family" reading that has become the highlight of this annual meeting. ■

It's elementary – A writer in residence



In the first program of its kind in Nova Scotia, Cape Breton writer Douglas Arthur Brown will be writer-in-residence at the Boularderie Elementary School from January to June, 2007. Visiting the school one day each month, Douglas will work with students, one-on-one and in small writing groups.

He will also oversee the creation of a Canadian Children's Literature collection (fiction and non-fiction) for the school library with support from community sponsors. Although the program doesn't start until January, parents will be donating books rather than coffee mugs to the staff at Christmas, providing a head-start on acquisitions for the collection.

The entire school will be involved in a project where each student will create a hand-made book based on a story concept created by Douglas and Boularderie Elementary School visual arts teacher, Meghan MacInnis. *The Woollies* is the story of several woollen sweaters that have been washed and put out to dry on a clothesline. Passing the time, they each tell the story of their country of origin: Iceland, Afghanistan, Peru . . . Each class in the school will take on a different sweater's country of origin to research as part of their social studies.

Douglas Arthur Brown's work with the students' writing projects has been made possible in part by the Fed's WITS program and by Boularderie Elementary School. The author of four books, his latest – a collection of stories, *The Komodo Dragon and Other Stories* – was released earlier this year to favourable reviews and his new novel will be published by Key Porter Books. ■

Harry Thurston and Bill 17

On November 7, Harry Thurston made a presentation to the legislature's Law Amendments Committee on the Criminal Notoriety Act, a bill fashioned to ensure that criminals or members of their families, don't profit from selling their stories or memorabilia of their crimes. After second reading, the bill went to the committee for input and potential amendment.

A member of the board of The Writers' Union of Canada, and speaking as their representative and from personal conviction, Harry spoke in defense of freedom of expression and TWUC's position that if Bill 17 becomes law, it will infringe the freedom of expression guaranteed by the federal Charter of Rights and Freedoms because it will have the potential to stifle both new and old stories and opinions.

Harry reminded the committee that many books written by people who have committed crimes have contributed to public awareness and a greater understanding of important issues, citing Roger Caron's Governor General Award-winning *Go Boy*, and books and documentaries on Guy Paul Morin, David Milgard, Stephen Truscott and Donald Marshall. He argued that the feared harm is hypothetical, asking which books and articles should not have been published, and what pressing social ill or problem is addressed by the proposed legislation. Third reading is expected in the spring. Similar legislation has already been passed in Alberta and Manitoba. ■

Crown wants writer's notes

The Writers' Union of Canada has expressed concern over the latest attempt by Crown authorities to seize a writer's notes.

Derek Finkle, author of a best-selling book about the Robert Baltovich murder case, has been ordered to hand over a collection of documents, interviews and tapes that he used to prepare the book, *No Claim to Mercy*. Baltovich is awaiting a retrial for the 1990 murder of his girlfriend, University of Toronto student Elizabeth Bain, after the Ontario Court of Appeal overturned the original conviction. Finkle says he intends to fight what he views as a blatant attempt by the Crown to turn him into an investigator for the state. The Crown has issued a subpoena to seize such material as the prison journals kept by Baltovich and the Christmas cards he sent to Finkle.

"We are seeing yet another instance in Canada of Crown authorities attempting to make writers do their investigative work," says TWUC chair Ron Brown. "We call on the authorities to carry out their own investigations and stop forcing writers to do the heavy lifting for them. There have been too many instances in this country of writers being forced to hand over material. In Ottawa, we've seen the police raiding the home of *Ottawa Citizen* reporter Juliet O'Neill in relation to her reporting on the Maher Arar case. In Hamilton, we've seen police attempting to force *Hamilton Spectator* reporter Bill Dunphy to provide four years of notes from interviews conducted with a reputed crime boss. These fishing expeditions have to stop. They make a mockery of Canada's right to have a free press." ■

High Noon for publishers & producers

Ron Foley Macdonald

Tucked away on the final Friday morning of the Atlantic Film Festival was a private seminar that didn't appear in the AFF catalogue. Thirty people attended this momentous meeting between the film and publishing industries. Incredibly, this was the first time Atlantic publishers had formally met with members of the East Coast film sector. I was lucky enough to chair this fascinating and exceptionally productive meeting. It was set up by Peggy Walt of the Atlantic Publishers Marketing Association with help from AFF executive Gregor Ash.

What the APMA wanted was an opening to what can be a considerable market. Many writers – and musicians too – have come to the realization that film and television might provide the only real payday in a world of shrinking opportunities and rising costs. Much very basic information was hungrily consumed by both sides. Publishers rapidly took notes about options, consultancies, readers' reports and moral rights; film producers took pitches directly from both authors and publishers.

There was information flying about that even I wasn't aware of. One example is that funding agencies (Telefilm Canada, the Nova Scotia Film Development Corporation) now consider four-year options to be the standard. When I was working with writer Lance Woolaver on several projects a few years ago, two-year options were the rule. I regret to say I didn't pursue that essential follow-up question: if the option has gone from two to four years, does that mean the author gets twice as much money? Somehow, I just can't imagine it.

Several times, the panel was asked to back up and define the terminology being bandied about. An option, for example, is a leasing agreement to develop a book, play or article into a script; a partial fee is paid until the first day of principal photography starts (when the full payment for the script is paid out). That is, of course, if the original book writer takes on the actual scripting duties. There was discussion about whether writers would, or should, go on to the murky world of scriptwriting; the process of development was also a major talking point that helped illuminate the complex and frustrating world of getting projects from the page to the screen.

Producer Wayne Grigsby – who made the two

Trudeau bio-pics and now has the motion picture rights to Alistair MacLeod's novel *No Great Mischief* – admitted the allotment for acquiring rights represents about two percent of the overall project budget. While this fact certainly puts the writer's end of things in perspective, two percent of a \$5- or \$10-million project suddenly begins to look like a revelation to a writer making less than \$10,000 a year from book royalties.

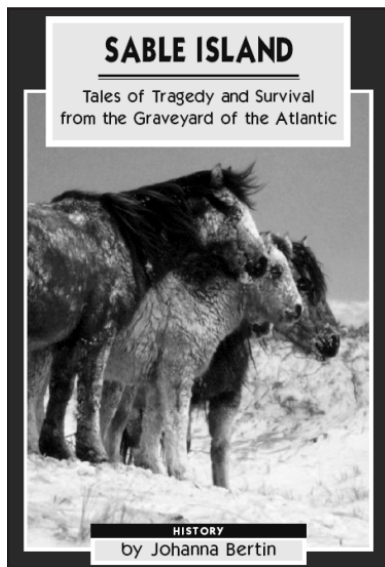
A great deal of attention was paid to the film business's culture of pitching. Publishers requested a follow-up conference for next year's AFF to include a basic pitching session; there were calls for more contacts and opportunities to meet and greet producers, funding agencies and film-related companies.

What took place was a valuable exchange of goodwill and information. The filmmaking industry is driven by storytelling, and that is what publishers deal with on a day-to-day basis. Think of it in the most elemental industrial terms: the publishers have the raw material; the film producers want to turn the raw material into finished products. Print stories into motion pictures. It's that simple.

And because this was essentially a private seminar, people were unafraid to ask the most basic questions. Consequently, the seminar brought both sides together in a fresh, direct and non-confrontational manner. The film industry thrives on this kind of face-to-face contact. It's a very social sector, where who you know is as important as what you do. Putting the Atlantic Publishers Marketing Association together with Atlantic Film Festival opened new vistas for both cultural sectors. By the time the three-hour session came to a close with a savoury lunch at the Delta Hotel in downtown Halifax, it was possible to detect a new era of cooperation emerging. The fact that *Word on the Street* would take place 36 hours later meant that travel costs for people from as far away as Newfoundland and Toronto could cover both film and book activities and made the conference twice as useful.

This modest seminar proved to be, for me anyway, a highlight of the 2006 Atlantic Film Festival. For the East Coast publishing and film sectors – to paraphrase the final line of that classic motion picture *Casablanca* – it looks like the beginning of a beautiful friendship. ■

imPRESSed — the newest titles by WFNS members



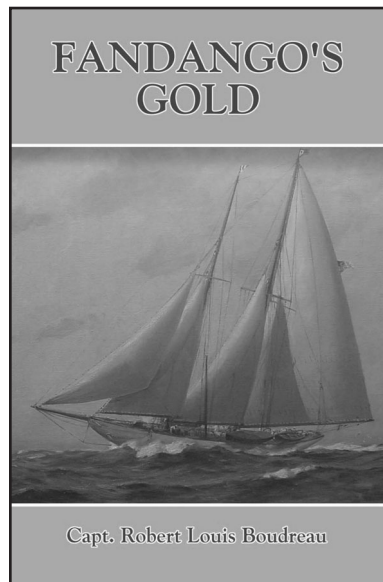
Sable Island: Tales of Tragedy and Survival from the Graveyard of the Atlantic

Johanna Bertin

Altitude Publishing, 2006, \$9.95
ISBN-10 1554390109

Sable Island has been indelibly marked by its unique history. Since 1583, more than 350 ships have wrecked on its shape-shifting shores as if lured by a whispering siren wind. This exciting collection casts explorers, castaways, pirates, settlers, and the quintessential symbols of survival – the Sable Island horses – in tales of death, destruction, and endurance. Set on the isolated island of fog-covered sand banks, these true accounts are both tragic and inspiring.

Johanna Bertin lives in Smithfield, New Brunswick. She has been entranced with Sable Island since she was a young girl, and researching this book was a labour of love that served only to increase her fascination with the island, and the people and horses that call it home. She is the author of two other books: *Strange Events: Incredible Canadian Monsters, Curses, Ghosts and Other Tales*, and *Strange Events and More: Canadian Giants, Witches, Wizards, and Other Tales*, both from Altitude Publishing.



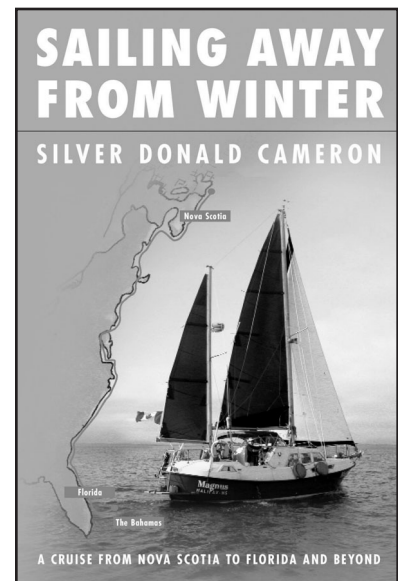
Fandango's Gold

Robert Louis Boudreau

Tiller Publishing, 2006, \$16.95
ISBN-13: 978-1-888671-19-3

Ex-Navy test pilot Jack Carlton operates his 90-foot charter schooner out of English Harbour, Antigua. With his trusty mate Cobb and beautiful cook Megan, Jack sails the *Fandango* through squalls and reef-strewn waters to Aves Island. On a routine dive expedition, his passengers turn out to be more than just tourists. Long-lost treasure spells trouble for Jack and his crew as they find themselves unwillingly embroiled in a plan to salvage the gold. Marooned on the lonely sand spit in the middle of the Caribbean, Jack and Megan face a hurricane and certain death on the waterless Caribbean cay.

Born in Baddeck, Lou Boudreau grew up in the Caribbean. He spent a lifetime under sail in vessels from 50 to 247 feet. Through hurricanes, an attempted drug hijacking in the Bahamas and a shipboard fire during a storm off the African coast, he has led the adventurer's life. Swallowing the anchor in 1996, he returned to Canada where he devotes his time to writing. His first book, *The Man Who Loved Schooners*, was published in 2000 to critical acclaim.



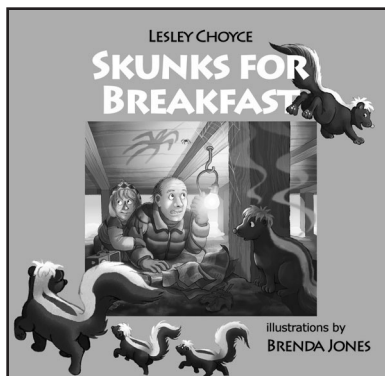
Sailing Away from Winter

Silver Donald Cameron

McClelland & Stewart, 2006, \$34.99
ISBN 0-7710-1841-X

On July 21, 2004, Silver Donald Cameron and his wife, Marjorie Simmins, set sail from D'Escousse, on Cape Breton Island, toward the white sand beaches and palm trees of the nearest tropical islands. They were sailing an old Norwegian-built ketch named *Magnus*. Accompanying them was their dog, Leo the Wonder Whippet. Leo was 13. The skipper was an old-age pensioner. His youthful mate was new to the cruising life. Yet 236 days later, with more than 3,000 nautical miles behind them, this distinctly trepid crew rowed ashore in Little Harbour, in the Bahamas, heading for Pete's Pub, a palm-thatched tiki bar on the beach.

Silver Donald Cameron dreamed of this trip for 30 years before finding the 33-year-old *Magnus* and turning her into the ideal boat for the voyage. He has written about the Atlantic coast in many books, including *Schooner: Bluenose and Bluenose II*; *Sniffing the Coast: An Acadian Voyage*; *The Living Beach*; and the bestselling Nova Scotia cruising classic *Wind, Whales, and Whisky*.



Skunks for Breakfast

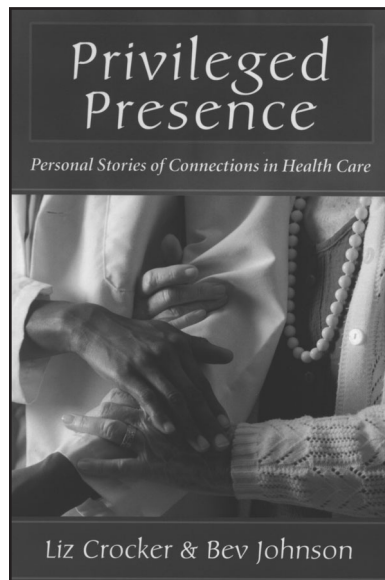
Lesley Choyce

Nimbus, 2006, \$8.95, ISBN 1551095866

Pamela is a normal girl from a normal family living a normal life, until one cold February morning when she wakes up to the awful smell of skunk. Pamela stinks, her father stinks, her sister stinks, and her mother stinks. Soon Pamela's life stinks – her friends at school won't come near her! And no matter how many skunks her father catches underneath the porch, there always seems to be another.

Join Pamela and her father as they try to get rid of the smelly pests, one after the other after the other. Brenda Jones's delightful illustrations show Pamela's reluctant warming to the unexpectedly cute creatures, and her father's helplessness in the face of such an odorous onslaught.

Lesley Choyce teaches at Dalhousie University, runs Pottersfield Press and has written nearly 60 books for adults and kids. He also hosts a nationally syndicated talk show on Vision Television. His recent novel, *Cold Clear Morning*, is currently being developed as a feature-length movie. *Skunks for Breakfast* is based on Lesley's 2002 animal epic film, *The Skunk Whisperer*, which was broadcast across Canada and heralded at the Maine International Film Festival.



Privileged Presence: Personal Stories of Connections in Health Care

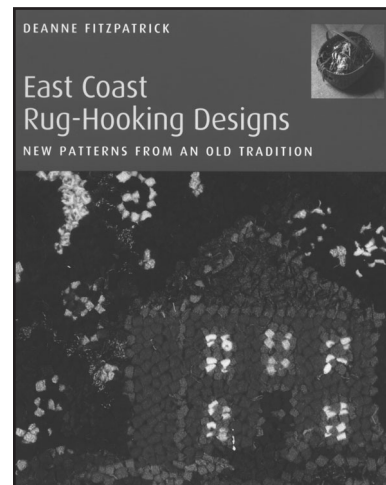
Liz Crocker and Bev Johnson

Bull Publishing, 2006, \$16.95
ISBN 0923521967

Stories can be powerful medicine. Sharing experiences and feelings helps people make sense of their lives and process trauma and loss. That's the concept behind *Privileged Presence*. This book uses real-world experiences recounted by patients, their families, and healthcare professionals to illustrate what works and what doesn't, what increases or diminishes people's sense of confidence and well-being. These stories offer new ways of dealing with some of life's most challenging times.

Liz Crocker's working career has included teaching, broadcasting, writing, and running several businesses. She has owned and run a children's bookstore and now has an environmental business with five stores across Canada. Liz is Vice President of the Institute for Family-Centered Care.

Bev Johnson is President and Chief Executive Officer of the Institute for Family-Centered Care in Bethesda, Maryland. A nurse and a trustee of several organizations, she is the co-author of several books and the producer of award-winning films in the field.



East Coast Rug-Hooking Designs

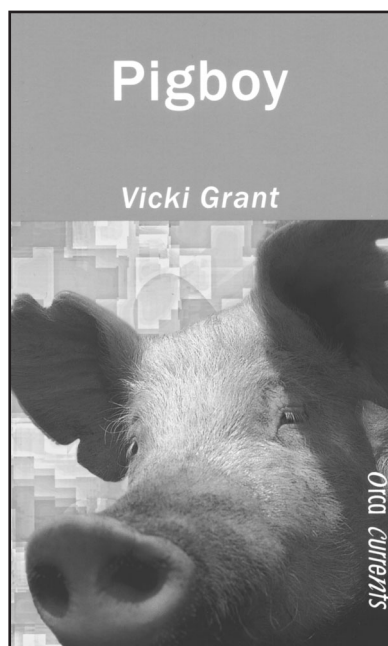
Deanne Fitzpatrick

Nimbus, 2006, \$19.95, ISBN 1551095696

East Coast Rug-Hooking Designs is filled with more than 30 patterns of coastal-inspired hooked mats, and each is accompanied by the stories that inspired them. The designs range from those suitable for beginners to those that will challenge the experienced hooker. Each design includes basic instructions, a pattern to copy, a list of necessary supplies, rug-hooking tips, a story about the design, and a photograph of the finished hooked rug.

Deanne Fitzpatrick grew up in Freshwater, Placentia Bay, Newfoundland, the youngest of seven children. Her mother and both her grandmothers hooked rugs as a pastime, and as a chore of necessity. As soon as Deanne started hooking rugs she knew it was for her. She learned that she could tell stories, and express herself through rug hooking.

Deanne works full time as a rug-hooking artist. She uses recycled cloth, gathering old wool clothing from real people in real communities. The clothes are washed, dried and torn apart, then hooked loop by loop on a backing of burlap or linen. Her work is exhibited at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and has been featured on CBC's *Land and Sea*. She lives in Amherst.



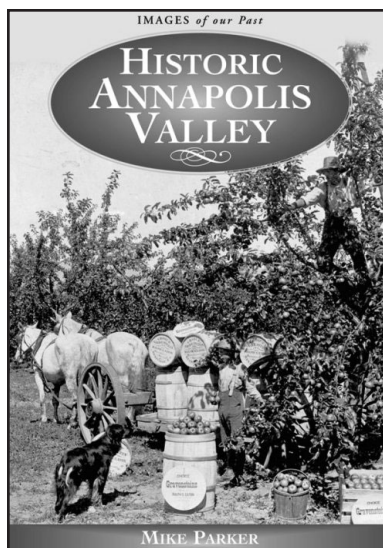
Pigboy

Vicki Grant

Orca Currents, 2006, \$9.95
ISBN 1551436663

Dan is not sure he'll survive the boring field trip to a remote heritage farm. How could a place with no telephone or electricity be anything but dull? The farmer knows nothing about farming and is angry about the tour. And what's with his tattoo? The teacher requests a private word with the farmer and then mysteriously disappears. After a messy attack of allergies, Dan sneaks back to the school bus and discovers the driver and teacher have been bound and gagged. Will Dan be able to find help in time?

Award-winning author Vicki Grant also wrote *The Puppet Wrangler* and *Quid Pro Quo*, both of which were nominated for several awards. Vicki earned numerous awards for her copy advertising work and is also a successful television scriptwriter. She created, wrote and co-produced the Gemini Award-winning *Scoop and Doozie*, a 65-episode series for CBC. She lives in Halifax with her husband and three children.



Historic Annapolis Valley

Mike Parker

Nimbus, 2006, \$21.95 ISBN 1551095831

The allure of the Annapolis Valley is its diversity – seacoast and agricultural land, ocean basins and fresh water lakes, tidal rivers and mountain streams, marshlands and meadows, fishing ports and farming hamlets, urban towns and country villages. Historically, the Valley's heritage is as rich as its soil, with roots reaching back 400 years. *Historic Annapolis Valley* is first and foremost about a region, not individual communities, although many are included as part of the overall story. The book covers the Annapolis Valley from Digby to Windsor, with an emphasis on the mid-valley, from Bridgetown to Berwick, beginning with the French in the 1600s and discussing topics relevant to the present day.

Best-selling author Mike Parker has published nine history books, including *Guides of the North Woods*, *Wood Chips & Beans*, and *Historic Digby*. Mike was born and raised in Bear River and graduated from Acadia University in Wolfville. He lives in Dartmouth.



Roman et Anna

Alain Raimbault

Les Éditions Hurtubise, 2006, \$19.95
ISBN 2894288824

Tout d'abord, deux îles. Elle se trouve laide, il considère son destin comme inachevé. D'origine micmacque, elle ne se contente plus d'être océanographe. Sportif roumain, fraîchement débarqué à Halifax, il ne sait plus qui il est. Les voici au fameux Collège des arts et du design de la Nouvelle-Écosse, lui pour poser nu, elle pour apprendre le dessin et, qui sait, trouver la beauté et l'amour.

L'art permet-il de recommencer sa vie? De la refaire? Au pays d'Alex Colville, tout peut arriver. Et les îles font parfois un archipel. *Roman et Anna*, une histoire d'amour et d'art, fragmentée comme l'expression contemporaine, rouge comme les sanguines.

Jusqu'ici connu pour ses romans jeunesse et pour sa poésie, Alain Raimbault a fait des études de lettres et de langues à l'Université de Poitiers. Il vit en Nouvelle-Écosse et enseigne à l'école francophone Rose-des-Vents, de Greenwood. *Roman et Anna* est son premier roman pour adultes.

It's about the kids

Maureen Hull

Editor's Note: The week-long Labrador Creative Arts Festival is held in November. It allows young Labradorians to discover their past and future through creative expression, particularly relevant to aboriginal culture. It now involves some 5,000 students from Mary's Harbour in the south to Nain in the north and Labrador City and Wabush in the west. The festival uses visiting artists in all genres to act as mentors, and encourages participants to creatively express themselves through plays, storytelling, dance, visual art, mime and video technology. Pictou Island writer Maureen Hull participated in the 2006 festival.

The Labrador Creative Arts Festival gives young people access to a wide variety of creative activities and fosters in them an appreciation of their environment: geographical, physical, cultural, and historical. Hundreds of people are involved, and this year it was my good fortune to be one of 26 artists invited to contribute.

Tuesday: It is spitting rain when we land. Volunteers, each with minivan and clipboard, drive us to the lower valley for lunch. We are full of questions. We'll be sent to outlying communities but have no idea where, or when. "You'll get that information tonight. There are always last minute changes. If we told you your schedules before you got here, you might not come." Laughter.

At the reception that evening there is wonderful food, wine, and pots of redberry tea. A table is covered with folders, one for each artist. We grab them and check our schedules.

5:45 a.m. pickup for Postville.

I will fly out at dawn, before I'm properly awake. At home, I'd collected information. You'll be exhausted, said Budge (Wilson), but you'll have a wonderful time; Sue (Goyette) related the tale of the visiting artist who was storm-stayed for two weeks on the coast. I leave at midnight, although the music is grand and I suspect will continue for hours. I have to sleep, and pack. I put pyjamas and toothbrush in with my books and papers.

Wednesday: More rain. I climb in the van, joining Tim and Irene who are going to Rigolet to give Shakespearean workshops. Visual artist Anna will be with me in Postville. The musicians of Port au Port are going to Hopedale, those of Contemperc (Acadian percussionists) are off to Nain. Our flight is delayed so we picnic in the waiting room on coffee, juice, and freshly baked muffins.

Finally we board a Twin Otter redolent of various petrochemicals and head for the coast. At Rigolet and Makkovic, we do a flyby, but can't land. Irene and Tim suddenly have the day off. We land at Postville where it's starting to snow. Anna and I get off anyway. I have my toothbrush.

We conduct five workshops each, primary to 12. More snow falls. At lunchtime Anna walks down to photograph the river. I learn about the Northern Games: how to leg wrestle; how to race like a seal. The kids want snow. The roads won't be plowed, the snowmobiles will come out. You can go anywhere on a snowmobile: into the bush to camp, hunt, or party, or downriver to visit.

Snow means freedom.

After school we go to the airport – in case. The plane does a flyby, and suddenly is outside the door. Everyone is amazed: we're getting out. No suave captain chats about altitude/flying time/have a pleasant flight. The pilot turns around and yells into the cabin: "We're going to try Makkovic. Be about forty minutes."

The trip seems long because it's so dark. Anna seems an old friend – we've talked of so many things. We land in Makkovic, then try for Rigolet. I can barely distinguish the different darknesses of water and land.

We're back by suppertime, but Anna's husband Peter (cinematographer) and the musicians aren't.

It will be four days before we see them again. They are stuck in a "weather hold," which I mis-hear as "weather hole," and like better.

After supper we drive to the theatre where, for seven nights, students from various communities will perform plays they have written. It's really all about the plays, I've been told. All about the kids.

Seven students from Natuashish, with a big cardboard box for a prop, perform "Let's Pretend" and charm the heck out of us. Natuashish was set up when the troubled citizens of Davis Inlet were relocated. Many problems went with them but there's something good at the heart of a community that produces such children.

"Under the Northern Lights: A Northern Version of A Midsummer Night's Dream" is set in Hopedale, in contemporary times. Seven actor-writer students, using English and Inuit languages, jokes and magical elements, perform with skill, verve, and energy. It really is about the kids.

I went home early (again!) from that night's party. It had been a long day, and there were six more to go. Altogether I gave 23 workshops, saw 12 plays, partied, and danced the samba on stage with Nain drum dancers and about 40 others, the whole thing orchestrated by Contemperc (another story). Eventually it snowed, and the skies turned brilliant blue. The best was always the plays, always the students. Of a population of 27,000, an astonishing percentage of Labradorians are actively involved in supporting the arts, in supporting their students. It was a privilege to be part of it. ■

Who's doing what

■ **Racked** – members' work appearing in the plangent panoply of journals, mags and e-signals . . . making themselves actual on your editor's desk as they head for the Fed Reference Library (open 9:30 to 4:30 Monday through Friday for your passionate perusal): Following a spate of death-dealing road mines in Afghanistan, **George Borden** wrote "On The Road To Kandahar," a poem in tribute to our fallen warriors, which was featured in the November issue of *Tour of Duty*, published and distributed in Atlantic Canada; **Katia Canciani** is basking in the glow of her first *J'Aime Lire* magazine publication which is selling comme un p'tit pain chaud! Dans chaque numéro, un nouveau roman à dévorer conçu par les meilleurs auteurs et illustrateurs de la littérature enfantine. La présentation et le format de *J'Aime Lire* encourage le jeune lecteur dans sa découverte de la lecture autonome. Tout est conçu pour que votre enfant lise sans difficulté et à son rythme; a pair of heart-breaking poems by **Wayne Curtis** appear in *The Antigonish Review*, as does **Brian Bartlett's** essaying of large and small in Travis Lane's poetry; *The Fiddlehead* is resplendent with new work from **John Barger** and **Carol Bruneau**; *Saltscapes* is making the festival season glow with **Jodi DeLong** lathering up and smelling good as she ambles down her garden path, **Elaine Ingalls Hogg** maintaining holiday traditions, **Donna D'Amour** pondering the art of clothes hanging as she reviews **Cindy Etter-Turnbull's** whimsical *Fine Lines: a celebration of clothesline culture* (Pottersfield Press), with **Harry Bruce** munching away on evocative Atlantic place names

from the back porch . . . Ecum Secum, anyone?; excerpts from **Virginia Hayden's** *Small Voices* and **Catherine Bank's** *Bitter Rose* are centre stage in *CanPlay*; don't know whether *Rural Delivery* paid him for a thousand words but **Gary Saunders'** picture of Beth digging potatoes while he stows, is certainly worth at least that; **Phil Moscovitch** parlays conversations with tv writer Bruce Smith (*Prairie Giant: The Tommy Douglas Story*) and documentary writer Barbara Doran into compelling articles for *Canadian Screenwriter*; **Magi Nams** is positively bubbly on the December pages of *Ranger Rick*, the magazine of the National Wildlife Association. From spittlebugs to poison bubbles to bubble rafts, Magi conjures iridescent magic for young readers; and **Kate Watson** writes that "thanks again to the WFNS e-news," she's found a home for her poem "Night Whispers" in *Ascent Aspirations* (complete with her photo).

■ **Racked: Metro Edition** – *The Coast*, distributed free in metro Halifax every Thursday, sparkles with the words and wit of many WFNS members: **Kyle Shaw**, a founder and the Editor often leads off issues jam-packed with good writing including insight-filled columns and features from **Stephen Kimber**, **Lezlie Lowe**, **Jane Kansas**, **Stephanie Domet**, **Lis van Burkel**, the film beat from **Mark Palermo**, and occasional theatre reviews from **Kate Watson**. Write on!

■ **On the slip . . . launched . . . or launching** – Mosaic Press is gearing up for a January launch for **Andy Wainwright's** new novel, *The Confluence*, about the French

resistance during the Second World War; **Carolyn Rose Gimian** was at the Lord Nelson Hotel recently with her co-author Diana Mukpo for the wildly applauded, well-attended launch of *Dragon Thunder: My Life with Chogyam Trungpa* (Shambhala Publications); **Deanne Fitzpatrick** is a master rug hooker who grew up in Newfoundland and now hooks storied rugs in the Amherst area. Nimbus has just released her jewel of a book, *East Coast Rug-Hooking Designs: New Patterns from an Old Tradition*. Brilliantly illustrated with Deanne's rugs, the book is a must have for would-be rug artists on your list; working overtime, Nimbus timed the release of *December 1917: Revisiting the Halifax Explosion* by Janet Kitz and **Joan Payzant** to coincide with the 89th anniversary of the explosion on December 6. A site-oriented photographic guide with stories and anecdotes, the richly illustrated book includes original research that sheds new light on aspects of the explosion; sailor **Lou Boudreau** has returned to the right hand coast after a long sojourn on the left coast, and is delighted to be accompanied by the recent release of his first novel, *Fandango's Gold*, published in the States but distributed here by Nimbus; and while we're in the water, welcome the perfect armchair sailing guide, replete with enough saltspray, sun and coral reef to set you dreaming: **Silver Donald Cameron** and his wife **Marjorie Simmins** set sail from D'Escousse on July 21, 2004, and Don tells the tale in *Sailing Away from Winter: A Cruise From Nova Scotia to Florida and Beyond*. Out in time for Christmas from the

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Douglas Gibson Books imprint of McClelland & Stewart, it's a long way from the snow and ice back home . . . a perfect gift.

■ **Anthologized:** *Arts and the Spirit: Using the Arts in Faith Formation*, to be released shortly by the United Church of Canada, includes an article by **Margo Metcalfe**.

■ **E-dition:** "Passing Through", which won **Betty Dobson** third place in the From the Asylum Hot Summer Something Contest is online at www.fromtheasylum.com and "Baby's Angels", Betty's latest short story is also online on Amazon.com via their Amazon Shorts program . . . for a mere 49¢, you can download all the twists and turns. As well, her first poetry collection, *Paper Wings*, is available online at www.lulu.com/inkspotter; head to www.scribbulations.com where you can order a hard copy of *Gratitude With Attitude*, a short story collection published by The Write Group of Montclair, New Jersey. Featured in the collection of 30 stories is **Jody Wood's** "Little Roller"; Live Travel Guides is including one of **Melanie Furlong's** stories in a new travel anthology called *The VIVA List Latin America: 333 Places and Experiences that People Love* which will be available in the spring.

■ **In the works:** **Ian Colford** has signed a contract for a collection of stories, *Evidence*, with Porcupine's Quill; **Alf Silver** has finally concluded his Red River Stories which will be published by Great Plains Publishing. Though the title's yet to be confirmed, he's fond of Red River Serial; **Shauntay Grant** has had a picture book, *Remembering Preston*, accepted by Nimbus Publishing with

illustrations taking shape under the paintbrush of **Susan Tooke**; while **Judith Meyrick's** tale is in the good hands of artist **Richard Rudnicki**, also for Nimbus; **Michelle Muldur's** second children's book, *Maggie and the Chocolate War*, has found a home with Second Story Press; there's a new novel in the works for **Douglas Arthur Brown** with Key Porter Books; it's a daunting and herculean project that would give pause to even the most brave, so it's a blessing that our own dauntless **Budge Wilson** has risen to the challenge and is currently midway in a prequel to Lucy Maude Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* for Penguin Canada.

■ **Susan Tooke** spent much of last year returning to her girlhood love of drawing horses and is about to see the results in the spring release by Red Deer Press of *Free as the Wind*, the story of the Sable Island ponies.

■ The cross-Canada flourishing of "tree" awards has begun its annual cycle of new lists, including many choices from our writers. *Eastword* highlighted the choices for our own Hackmatack readers earlier this season (www.hackmatack.ca) and we note the reappearance of many across the country. The Ontario Silver Birch Express Awards (ages 7 to 11) include **Jacqueline Halsey's** *Peggy's Letters* and *If I Had a Million Onions* by **Sheree Fitch**; The Red Maple includes *Raintree Rebellion* by **Janet McNaughton** and *Johnny Kellock Died Today* by Hadley Dyer which the Fed helped launch last spring. Manitoba's Young Readers' Choice Awards has included **Sheree Fitch's** *The Gravesavers* as has Saskatchewan's Snow Willow Awards, while the Shining Willows are featuring *Martin Bridge: Ready for Takeoff* by

Jessica Scott Kerrin in their K to 3 choices, and *Torrie and the Pirate Queen* by **K.V. Johansen** in their 4 to 6 Diamond Willow list. The Red Cedar in BC has included **Joanne Taylor's** *There You Are* and Shirley Woods' *Amber: The Story of a Red Fox* for grades 4 to 7, with the 7 to 9 Red Maples also opting for *Johnny Kellock*. Children's reading groups will be turning pages in eager anticipation of their big votes for favourites next spring. Stay turned.

■ **Canadian Bookseller** undertook a completely unscientific survey of bookstores recently, asking which books stood out from the stacks in 2006. Favourite 2006 Fiction Handsell went to **Ami McKay** for *The Birth House*. Ami's also cited in the Favourite First-Time Author of 2006 section and the most arresting cover. Proof positive that booksellers like nothing more than turning readers on to the best new novelists. Good golly Miss Molly! *Quill & Quire*, our industry's trade bible, plopped down on Fed Central editorial desk: Ami's a cover girl! It's rare that an author is accorded three pictures in this venerable journal but she and *The Birth House* (which placed in the Atlantic Writing Competition and was mentored by Richard Cumyn) make an appearance on 17% (we counted!) of the available pages of the December issue. Ami's leading a fiction workshop with the Fed in Canning this spring, working on a stage play for Two Planks and a Passion Theatre, and has started work on her next novel which is set in NYC in the 1870s and draws on the stories of her physician great-great grandmother. You go girl!

■ *Quests and Kingdoms: A Grown-Up's Guide to Children's Fantasy* earned

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K.V. Johansen a place on the 2006 shortlist for the Harvey Darton Award, sponsored by the U.K.'s Children's Book History Society. No surprise then that she was asked to appear at the Moncton Library this fall to highlight this book for her delighted audience.

■ Though she had to keep pinching herself as a quick reality check, **Linda Little** thoroughly enjoyed her treatment at the Calgary International WordFest where she read from *Scotch River* on a dazzling stage shared with Dennis Bock, Wayne Johnston, Thomas McGuane, Jean McNeil and Rachel Wyatt. She and McGuane then moseyed over to the Westward, Whoa! stage to meet up with Rudy Wiebe. By the time the dust settled she'd got quite used to the Albertan custom of not blinking as you paid \$35 for a beer and sandwich served at the bar.

■ **Katia Canciani** was thrilled to attend her first Salon du Livre in Montréal in late November. Founded in 1950, today the Salon draws more than 120,000 to Place Bonaventure. Katia participated in a round table and was signing *Un jardin en Espagne* at Les Edition David and *Princesse Pop-corn* at Bayard. Over at Booth 373, **Alain Raïmbault** was holding court, signing his new novel *Roman et Anna* for publisher Hurtubise HMH before heading off to do a writers-in-the-schools visit in Montréal.

■ A cheerful doff of the toque to CBC Radio-One in the Maritimes and beyond for all the imaginative ways in which they support, promote and highlight our writers' work: **Budge Wilson**'s nomination for a GG Award for *Friendships* (Penguin) took the edge off a morning chill as she talked with

Don Connelly on *Information Morning* and then became the mystery clip for the following week's 'Say What . . . ?' All of the nominees for this prize were reviewed for Carmen Klassen's *Mainstreet* by 13-year-old Mollie Cronin who chose Budge's story collection as her favourite although the GG was, next day, awarded to Mahone Bay writer William Gilkerson for his YA novel, *Pirate's Passage*; and over at *Maritime Noon*, Costas Halavrezos shared his Maritime-wide phone-in with **Mary Jane Copps**, whose inclusion in a new anthology, *Nobody's Mother*, sparked a region-wide conversation about the joys of both not mothering and mothering; **Donna Morrissey** is back on *Canada Reads* by popular demand, defending *The Song of Kahunsha*, Vancouver author Anosh Irani's just released second novel. Last time out, Donna's impassioned defense of Frank Parker Day's *Rockbound* generated a firestorm of royalties and reprints and recrimination and rejoicing; and we seem to be infiltrating . . . not only is our own former president **Stephanie Domet** producing *Mainstreet* but she pinch-hosts frequently from dulcet morning tone to gravelly afternoon rumble. December has been replete with Maritime voices with seven original stories featured on *Maritime Noon*'s Food Bank show, including "The Good Doctor" by **Christy Ann Conlin**, "Walking on Ice" by **Anne Simpson**, "The Window" by **Budge Wilson** and "Seal-Singer" by **Maureen Hull**.

■ Gaspereau Press originally released *August: An Anniversary Suite* by **Tonja Gunvaldsen Klaassen** in November, 2005. A collection of 14 poems that uses the vehicle of anniversary gifts to explore the

joys and chaos of marriage, *August* was part of Gaspereau's unique and innovative Devil's Whim releases. Fine ideas often take root and grow so it was a particular delight that Tonja was joined, this November, by cellist Norman Adams at The Music Room for the performance premiere of her Anniversary Suite accompanied with cello.

■ First produced by Women's Theatre and Creativity Centre in the back space of Neptune Theatre, *Bitter Rose* by **Catherine Banks** has recently enjoyed a very successful encore at the fabled LSPU Hall in St. John's. "Well-shaped and well performed, remarkably balanced and good humoured," joined the critical assessment of Catherine's "bright and lucid" play. The one-woman show also enjoyed an outing at the 2006 Winnipeg FemFest in October.

■ Not satisfied to rest on 80-some-odd years of accumulated laurels, five books, poems in 22 anthologies, a flurry of columns in the *Amherst Citizen* and *Retired Teacher*, **Hilton McCully** gathered a lifetime of reminiscences into a family "Life and Times" booklet . . . just in time for Christmas.

■ **Don Hannah** grew up in New Brunswick before seeking fame and fortune in Upper Canada. For years, he's been dividing his time between Nova Scotia's South Shore and everywhere else, and has finally made the South Shore permanent by investing in a space that will soon be home and office. Currently, he's Lee Playwright in Residence at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. His second novel, *Ragged Islands*, will be released by Knopf Canada on January 16.

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■ The InScribe Christian Writers' Fellowship 2006 Fall contest has just announced that **Elaine Ingalls Hogg** has placed third in the fiction category for her story, "A Model of Faith."

New Members

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

Lou Boudreau, Chester
Jacqueline Buckman, Margaree Harbour
Bill Chernin, Halifax
Ethel L. Clark, Cheticamp
Judith Cleveland, Port Mouton
Greg Cochkanoff, Dartmouth
Alden Faulkner, Waverley
Danny Gillis, Antigonish
Don Hannah, Canada
Terrance Keylor, Shelburne
Karen Lorraine, Halifax
Flavia Lytle, Lunenburg
Peter Mancini, Dartmouth
Shirley Marshall, Barton
Diane McCormick, Dartmouth
Carolyn Mitchell, Kentville
Jim Ruddy, Kentville
Richard Rudnicki, Halifax
Claudia Schibler, Shearwater
Jillian Shields, Halifax
Richard Tobin, Sydney
Margo Wheaton, Dartmouth
R. Lee Whitney, Kierstead Mountain, NB

Markets, etc.

■ **Libbon:** a new short story magazine in the UK is accepting submissions. For details, visit: www.libbon.co.uk

■ **Toadlily Press** of Chappaqua, NY, is seeking poetry submissions for its next book. For details, visit: www.toadlilypress.com/sub.htm

■ **Meanjin:** an Australian literary quarterly seeks poetry, fiction, reflective and scholarly essays, memoirs, commentary, review essays and interviews. Upcoming theme: Globalisation and Postcolonial Writing. Deadline: February 3. The next theme is Crime, Law and Order. Minimum fees \$50 for poetry, \$100 for prose. Guidelines on website – www.meanjin.unimelb.edu.au

■ **Our Children:** A new parenting magazine published three times a year in Halifax by Metro Guide Publishing. MGP publishes 10 other magazines including *East Coast Living* and *Business Voice* (published for the Halifax Chamber of Commerce). www.metroguidepublishing.ca

■ **Yoga Journal:** (www.yogajournal.com) covers the practice and philosophy of yoga. Welcomes articles on leaders, spokespersons and visionaries in the yoga community; the practice of hatha yoga; applications of yoga to everyday life; nutrition and diet, cooking and natural skin and body care. Pays \$800 to \$2,000 for features (3,000-5,000 words); \$400 to \$800 for departments (1,000-2,000 words); \$25 to \$100 for Om Page and Well-Being; \$200 to \$250 for book reviews. Detailed writers guidelines on their website, click on "editorial guidelines" in the right hand column.

■ **American Short Fiction:** P.O. Box 301209, Austin, TX 78703-0021 (www.americanshortfiction.org) Seeks short fiction by established, new or lesser-known writers. "Payment is competitive and upon publication."

■ **The Marlboro Review:** P.O. Box 243, Marlboro, VT 05344 (www.marlboreview.com) Publishes poetry, fiction, essays, reviews and translations twice a year.

■ **New Letters: A magazine of Writing and Art** (www.newletters.org) A quarterly publishing poetry, fiction, essays, interviews, reviews, and art. Also broadcasts **New Letters on the Air** on public radio in the U.S.

Contests

■ **The Robert Kroetsch Award for Innovative Poetry:** c/o Snare Books, #1A 4302 St. Urbain Street, Montreal QC, H2W 1V5. For info: jon.florentino@gmail.com. Awarded annually to the best poetry manuscript by an emerging Canadian writer (who has published two books or less). The winner will receive a trade paperback contract with Snare Books – publication of the manuscript and a \$500 honourarium. Deadline is January 31. Each entry must be accompanied with a business-size SASE and a \$30 entry fee. Please make all cheques payable to Livres Snare.

■ **Malahat Review – 2007 Long Poem Prize:** Two awards of \$500 each, plus payment of \$30/printed page on publication. Deadline: February 1. For details see www.malahatreview.ca/longpoemcontest.htm

The Wonderful World of WITS

The Fed started Writers in the Schools in 1982. From the beginning, with a modest budget of \$2,500, it was a roaring success. Over the years it's flourished and prospered and occasionally fallen on hard times – funding cuts in 1993 led your Executive Director to quip that it was a “half WITS program” and resulted in a letter-writing campaign that saw thousands of notes from students delivered to the provincial government, and a restoration of funding the following year.

2006-07 is a banner year. Support from the Department of Education (for the first time ever) enlarged the core investment from the Tourism & Culture Department's Culture Division and our own Federation fundraising to provide the largest budget ever – \$90,000. This translates into 184 full-days and 221 half-days with 66 different writers visiting 136 schools throughout Nova Scotia from Clark's Harbour to Louisbourg, Sandy Cove to Curry's Corner.

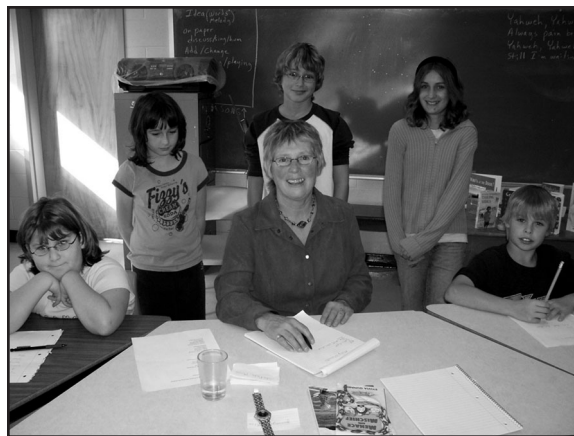
Last year Aliant joined the program, making it possible for the Fed to provide copies of the writers' books to participating schools. This

has proved so successful that Aliant has increased its support, and more than \$5,000 worth of books will join kindled imaginations, remaining behind in the schools and available to all in the library collections.

Does the program work? The feedback the Federation receives following a writer's visit tells its own story. Here, in no particular order, is an unedited sampling: “The enthusiasm and honest delivery of her thoughts and poetry were compelling and her voice mesmerizing. Her voice has such a passionate and soothing quality that the students kept asking Shauntay Grant to share more of her creative work.” “Pam Hickman's presentations were ideally suited to both grades. It fit in perfectly with the Grade 6 animal study, as well as Grade 4 science outcomes. The students were enthralled with her books and her knowledge of animals and her activity ideas.”

“I got so many positive comments from everyone after Kristen Domm's visit. She kept their attention, kept them interested, and got them excited about ‘helping’ her with her next book. Her books were a big hit with this level and the teachers would love to have her back again.”

“Lesley Choyce was just right. He started off



Sylvia Gunnery flanked by students at Cape Sable Island Elementary School.

with Grade 1 reading *Skunks for Breakfast*, and showing them a bit of a music video. He kept that at a very simple level and, of course, they were fascinated by the skunk story. He switched to Grade 6 without missing a beat. He read from a surfing work-in-progress, talked about some of his young adult works and they were mesmerized. Books that hadn't gotten noticed are now flying off the shelves.”

“This presentation was exactly appropriate. This age group (7-9) can grasp the themes, situations and characters in Vicki Grant's books and the way she wove in certain experiences in her own life really kept students interested and genuinely involved.”

“Today, during school, the author Carol Ann Cole came to give our school a talk. I really liked your presentation. It reminded me of the stories and lessons my mom and dad tell me. I've never really been able to write in a journal. I start but can't continue. I think your speech will really encourage me to write more. I loved all of your messages and your stories so thank you very much.”

And the season has only just begun. Vive la WITS. ■



Teacher Trish Rubin (left) student Shantal Hankey, and writer Vicki Grant, at West Colchester Consolidated School.

CAP sites may be axed

279 Nova Scotia public Internet sites could be unplugged if Ottawa discontinues its CAP program. The Community Access Program initiative provides Canadians with affordable public access to the Internet, and the skills they need to use it effectively. Most Nova Scotia sites are located in rural areas of the province, and in many communities CAP sites are the only source of such public access.

The Pictou Island site, which is solar-powered, is used by everyone in the community. Students use it to research homework projects, community members, to apply for licences, EI and health cards, and writer Maureen Hull would be hard-pressed to work with her various publishers without the site.

Loretta White, another Federation member, who lives in Chester, feels passionately about the situation, wondering wryly if “perhaps there just aren’t enough votes in the rural areas that will be most affected by these cuts, the rural areas that will most feel the loss of an effective program that promotes literacy, e-commerce, access to government services, and creates jobs.”

Eric Stackhouse, Chief Librarian of the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library and chair of the provincial Community Access Program describes the community access program as “the little program that could . . . but it’s on life-support.” Ottawa has cut its funding over the past three years from \$1.3 million to about \$370,000. While a one-time federal \$90,000 ‘lick-and-a-promise’ in October was added to a small increase from the province, there is no stable funding beyond March 31, 2007. Stackhouse estimates that something closer to the original \$1.3 million is required to sustain CAP.

The Communications Director for federal Industry Minister Maxime Bernier has said, “I can assure you that this government is actually working on options; we are considering all options for the future of that program.” You may wish to add your voice in support for CAP to that of Loretta White and her Chester colleagues by writing to the Minister of Industry (Minister.Industry@ic.gc.ca) with a copy to your local MP. Loretta suggests you may wish to send it from your local community access site. Do it now, while you still can. ■

TWUC workshop in Halifax

The Writers’ Union of Canada is hosting a series of day-long workshops across the country designed to enhance the careers of book writers, whether unpublished, emerging or established. “Writing as a Profession: How to Get Published and Survive as an Author, Professional Development Workshops for writers in all phases of their careers” hits HRM on Tuesday, February 13. The \$45 registration fee for the session scheduled for Room 303 of the Dalhousie Student Union Building (6136 University Ave., Halifax) includes lunch.

Topics will include: how books are made and sold; submissions: approaching agents and publishers; publishing contracts; the author/ editor relationship; marketing and publicity; making a living: royalties, readings, residencies, reviewing; staying healthy: office ergonomics; professional development (conferences and workshops); income tax for writers; writers’ organizations; Public Lending Right and Access Copyright; and the publishing landscape of the future.

Participants will receive workshop kits including handouts on office ergonomics, income tax statements, publisher and agent contracts as well as complimentary copies of the Union’s publications entitled: *Model Trade Book Contract*; *Help Yourself to a Better Contract*; *Author and Editor, Glossary of Publishing Terms*; and *Writers’ Guide to Grants*.

You’ll hear what award-winning Ken McGoogan (author of *Fatal Passage* and *Lady Franklin’s Revenge*), Marilyn Simonds (author of 12 books including *The Convict Lover*), and Deborah Windsor, Executive Director of TWUC have to say about the writing profession. With first-hand experience informed by a national membership of more than a thousand book writers, the sessions will offer participants a lively look at everything practical in a writer’s life today. Details are on TWUC’s website (www.writersunion.ca). Registration is necessary and a downloadable form is available at www.writersunion.ca/registration.pdf ■

Fiction Writing Classes (beginner & intermediate) with Russell Barton

Dartmouth: 7-9:30 p.m. Wednesdays, Jan. 31–April 4, 10 lessons, \$150
Halifax: 9-noon, Mondays, Jan. 29 – April 9 (excluding Feb. 12) 10 lessons, \$165

Topics: beginnings; basic action; tension; conflict; manuscript presentation & publishing; openings; endings; plots; truth; points of view; characterization; editing; revising; flashbacks; names; foreshadowing; narrative; setting; scene; sequel; humour & haiku.

Registration: Phone 902-463-9672 or E-mail rusbarton@eastlink.ca