

eastword

Why Bone Cage?

by Catherine Banks

On November 18, Catherine Banks was in Montréal to hear that she had won the 2008 Governor General's Literary Award for Drama for the text of her play, Bone Cage (Playwrights Canada Press). In her remarks, Her Excellency Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada said, "Reading is discovering that our roots encompass the world. It also means stepping outside of yourselves and reaching the Other. Reading allows us to find our truth and share it with all of humanity. We need to live to read and read to live." Catherine concurred with Madame Jean, when she reflected for Eastword on the reason why it was important for her to write this play:

I lived in a small rural community with a river running through it from 1984 to 1994. I loved it there. In the summer my kids took swimming lessons in the river and my friend Leah and I often made several trips a day down to the swimming hole. In the mid afternoon the teenagers who had been haying or blueberry raking would be brought down to the river by the men who employed them for a quick swim before they were delivered back home. These kids, at the point of leaving childhood behind, were at the cusp of sexual awakening and it was amazing to watch their antics in the water as the boys taunted the girls and the girls absorbed that they owned a new power in their bodies.

Late in the summer afternoons the 17- to 30-year-old crowd would arrive at the river with their beer and bravado. By the time we mothers were leaving to prepare supper the bolder guys had had enough to drink to attempt the big jump from the top frame of the bridge. Swaying slightly from drink or dizziness, they would aim for that one spot in the water that was deeper than the rest of the river, and we waited with our hearts in our mouths for them to surface again. They always did.

Behind my house was a very pretty wooded area



Catherine Banks

with a logging road where Leah and I took our small troop of kids for walks in the spring to look for mayflowers and in the fall to collect autumn leaves. One February I woke to the grinding sound of machinery.

I learned that it was a wood processor and it was working the woods behind our house. Night or day the grinding of the equipment went on and on, shaking me to my sternum as I stood in my kitchen cursing the men running the machine. Finally, after about six weeks, I watched as the machines and truck loads of logs went out the road. The kids and I walked up the logging road

WRITERS' FEDERATION OF NOVA SCOTIA

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to find, not our beautiful woods, but a kind of moonscape of broken, beaten down stumps and rutted forest floor. It was terrible – terrible.

Later Leah's husband, out of economic need, went to work clear cutting. He was put on the night shift and he lasted about two weeks. His descriptions of what it was like to run the machine in the dark, and his comment about some of the men walking the clear cut to look for injured animals at the end of their shifts, made me realize that clear cutting was not the job of choice for those men who had taken down the woods that I loved.

Much later there was a story that hit the news about an Eastern Shore man involved in a feud with another man in the community that led to him being beaten to death in jail. At the time, the media made much about the prettiness of the Eastern Shore: how could something so awful erupt in such a tranquil place?

I felt I could answer that question in a way that, if I did it well enough, people would be more compassionate towards these young men who have lost whatever dreams they might have held at the age of 12, who drink too much, who work at boring and even destructive jobs and who have a snowball's chance in hell of escaping that world.

I felt steeped in place very similar to the Eastern Shore – both beautiful and complex. The question I asked was "How do young people who work at jobs that destroy something they love treat the people they love at the end of their shift?" I hope that people who read or see *Bone Cage* feel how trapped Jamie is and have compassion for him. ■

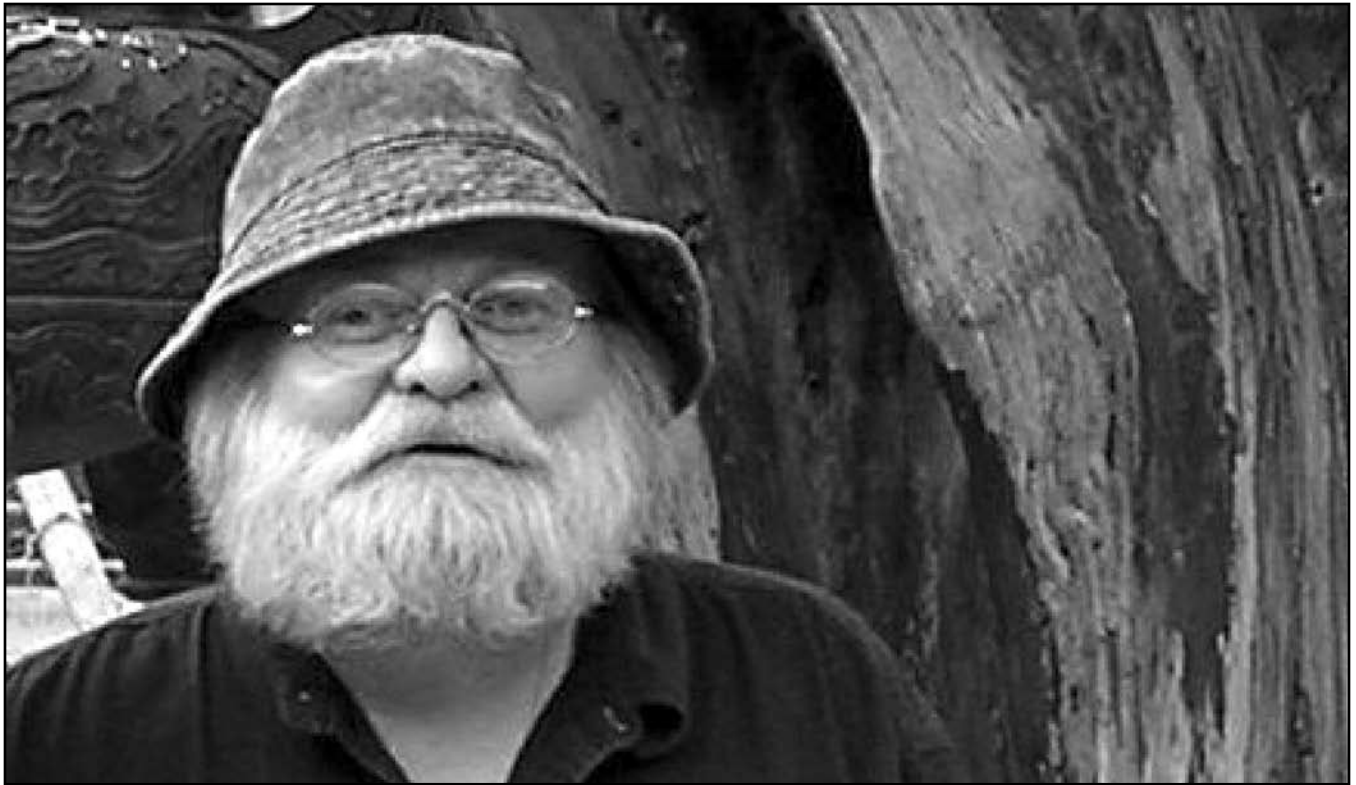
Shandi Mitchell wins Lynch-Staunton Award

"I had no idea I was being considered. It came at me out of the blue and was a complete surprise ... such an endorsement ... nothing could have been better," said Shandi Mitchell when she learned she was one of the newest winners of the Canada Council for the Arts \$15,000 Victor Martin Lynch-Staunton Awards. The prizes,



which were created using funds from a generous bequest made to the Council by the late Lynch-Staunton, recognize outstanding mid-career artists in the seven disciplines funded by the Council: dance, integrated arts, media arts, music, theatre, visual arts, and writing and publishing.

Shandi, who lives near Halifax, won the media arts prize. A writer and director, she fuses image, word and sound to create dramatic narratives that reflect the hidden, inner experience of her characters. Her work has been described as visually poetic, emotionally resonant and sublimely crafted. Her screenplay for *Baba's House* has won innumerable awards. Her experimental short, *Tell Me*, screened at major festivals and premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival. Her debut novel, *Under This Unbroken Sky*, will be published by Penguin in August. She is currently developing her first feature film, *The Disappeared*. ■



Don Domanski wins Lieutenant-Governor's Masterworks Arts Award

Don Domanski continues to garner the accolades as one of Canada's foremost poets. His latest collection *All Our Wonder Unavenged* (Brick Books) won the Governor General's Award for Poetry, the Atlantic Poetry Prize and has now received the Nova Scotia Lieutenant Governor's Masterworks Arts Award. The Masterworks Award is very special for him. "I'm very pleased because it's a local award. It's so nice to be honoured by my home province. It makes me very happy," he said in an interview with Elissa Barnard for the *Chronicle Herald*.

The Masterworks Arts Award recognizes a masterwork in any medium from dance to film by a Nova Scotia artist or group of artists. Others nominated for this year's award were: *The Colours of Citizen Arar*, an art exhibit by Garry Neill Kennedy; *God's Middle Name*, a play about autism by **Jennifer Overton**,

Scott Burke, Réjean Cournoyer, Denyse Kain, Michael Doherty and Bruce MacLennan; *Tectonic Shift*, a forged metal sculpture for musical performance by John Little; and *Within Sight of Shore*, a musical composition by Scott Macmillan.

Citing Don Domanski's eighth poetry collection as "stunningly beautiful and delicate," the Canada Council for the Arts Governor General's Award for Poetry jury described *All Our Wonder Unavenged* as a "deeply moving vision about the intricacies of the everyday world. A spiritual and metaphysical triumph."

Born in 1950 in Sydney and raised on Cape Breton Island, Don's first collection, *The Cape Breton Book of the Dead*, was published by House of Anansi Press in 1978. Two of his collections were also nominated for the GG: *Wolf Ladder* (Coach House, 1991) and *Stations of the Left Hand* (Coach House, 1994). In

1999 he won the Canadian Literary Award for Poetry, and he has been published internationally in Czech, Portuguese and Spanish. Don, who makes his home in Halifax, has participated several times in WFNS's mentorship program, and as a writer in electronic residence with the Banff Centre.

All Our Wonder Unavenged was written over a seven-year period, and continues his exploration of the ordinary and the extraordinary, and the ways in which they illuminate each other, transforming through unexpected contexts. Tim Bowling's anthology *Where Words Come From* (Harbour), captures Don in conversation concluding, "Poems continue 'becoming' through the reader ... The reader is always the second birthplace of the poem." ■

A new generation of genre films for Atlantic Canada

by Ron Foley Macdonald.

There's a change going on in East Coast filmmaking. The first rumblings came a couple of years ago when the "summer camp" comedy *Summerhood* was shot on Nova Scotia's South Shore. Then came last year's New Brunswick shoot of Nova Scotia filmmakers Thom Fitzgerald and Michael Melski's stoner comedy *Growing Op*. This summer and fall witnessed two full-length films from first-time feature-makers: Jay Dahl's Halifax-shot horror thriller *There Are Monsters* and Paul Kimball's Shelburne-filmed Vampire chiller *Eternal Kiss*.

In these films the bucolic Atlantic Canadian surroundings and lifestyle take second fiddle to established genre conventions. And these films have been made for – gasp! – audiences outside of our region. This may not seem shocking but the deliberate shift from wallowing in the old definition of "cultural product" to the more slippery slope of "commercial possibilities" is delicate.

The fact that *Summerhood* and *Eternal Kiss* contained private as well as public money might have had something to do with it. More importantly, these feature films come from a sensibility that genre films sell well beyond the tiny English-Canadian feature film ghetto.

Eternal Kiss was pre-sold to an American distributor, revealing that this new generation of filmmakers has honed their skills in the international marketplace when it comes to connecting to audiences. No longer are they simply making artisanal projects aimed at a few cultural funding agency officers. They are not content simply to expose their work on the Canadian film festival network to a few thousand viewers, to be supplemented by some late-night specialty-TV screenings six months later.

That model sustained the industry after the creation of Telefilm Canada in 1984, with Toronto's CITY-TV and The Movie Network eventually broadcasting films such as Bill MacGillivray's *Lifeclasses* and *The Vacant Lot* in the first flush of the Canuck Cinema resurgence of the 1980s. It petered out in the last year when a series of mergers and buyouts realigned Canada's media giants. Layoffs have been convulsing those newly merged companies ever since. In the last quarter, downsizing has accelerated. That corporate go-round wasn't the only catalyst for the sea-change here on the East Coast, but it was a factor.

The old cinematic image of the odd Maritimes or

Newfoundland scene is no longer attractive to outside distributors or broadcasters just for its regionality. The old system was measured by CRTC-mandated quotas. With a global corporate meltdown making almost all traditional media unprofitable, the CRTC will have almost no leverage to continue the old model through moral suasion and mandated quotas.

The new wave of East Coast filmmakers saw this coming. Having dealt with marketplaces interested in international perspectives, these filmmakers see nothing wrong with aiming at mainstream markets. Paul Kimball and Jay Dahl have extensive experience producing TV documentaries for national and international markets. Kimball has worked on three low-budget features from the production end. *Eternal Kiss* adds writing and directing duties to his chores as producer. Dahl has written and directed a string of successful short films, including *Backjumping*, a humorous piece that won last year's CBC Short Film Face Off reality TV series.

While genre film production might not have deep roots here, there's no question there's a groundswell out there awaiting these films. Dahl's *There Are Monsters*, has a 10-minute teaser on You Tube that generated more than 800,000 views by the end of November. Kimball's *Eternal Kiss* has been pre-sold to an American DVD distributor, meaning that audiences are being prepared for new East Coast features.

On the Canadian feature film production scene, the battle was usually won once you secured government funding. Getting people to actually see your film was often secondary, with exhibition control of films long ago ceded to the Hollywood juggernaut. Television broadcasts were an afterthought. The result: nobody saw the films.

With *There Are Monsters* and *Eternal Kiss*, there's a new and utterly different sensibility. These are not films for a tiny cultural elite but entertainments aimed at mass audiences. Either could be the next *Blair Witch Project* or *Twilight*. As we witness the shift from introspective stories populated with quirky characters in folkloric settings to narratives that are unafraid to grapple with the conventions of mainstream cinema, the East Coast cinema has taken some bold steps into the twenty-first century. ■

Little mag makes a big splash – thanks to a Fed member with a vision

by Sandra Phinney

Coastal Life popped into the world in November, weighing 48 pages (soon to be 60). It actually started off as *Commerce Magazine* 10 years ago. At the time, it was a voice for the business community of Yarmouth.

Earlier this year, Dane Devine (a local boat broker) purchased the company that produced the magazine. In spite of *Commerce* having a sketchy history and a dim future, he could see its potential providing he could find someone to turn it into a “real” magazine.

Enter Bruce Bishop. “I told Dane I’d be willing to change the magazine to one with a broader editorial focus – one that shows pride in our towns and villages here in Western Nova Scotia. Halifax, Lunenburg, Chester and Cape Breton have always been in the limelight; now it’s our turn,” he says.

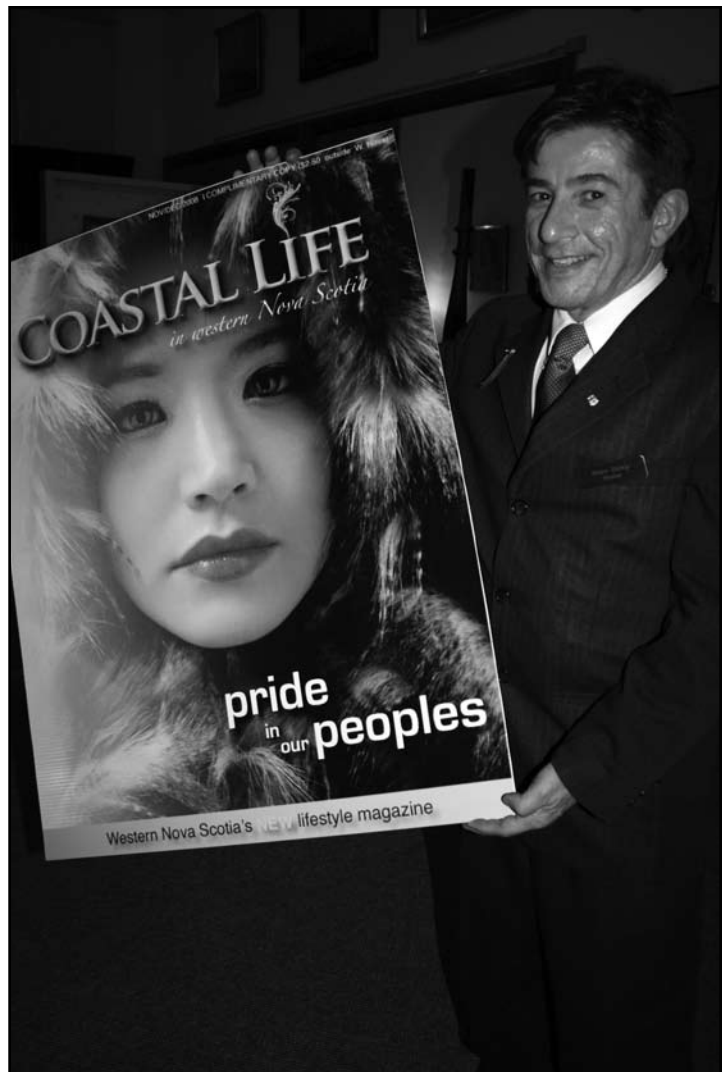
Bruce started freelance travel writing in 1994 in Toronto after his sister said one of his letters about a trip to Trinidad and Tobago was like reading a travel article. “I submitted a story about that trip to the *Chronicle Herald*, and when it was published, I was hooked.”

He later expanded into guidebook writing, mostly for Fodor’s in New York. Things tumbled along; his freelance business grew. He had frequent bylines in *The Globe and Mail*, the *Medical Post*, and the *Toronto Star* and eventually took the helm as editor of *The European Reporter*.

In 2004 his mother died and Bruce moved back to his hometown of Yarmouth to help his aging father. Last year when Dane Devine needed a writer to help him with a Request for Proposals, a colleague recommended Bruce. Shortly after, Dane asked Bruce to get involved with the magazine and come up with a new vision.

Coastal Life currently has a circulation of 6,000, is “free” and is distributed in 200 locations in Yarmouth, Shelburne and Digby counties. A stable of 17 freelance writers pen stories about art/culture, history/heritage, health/wellbeing and travel – to name a few.

The launch of *Coastal Life*, held December 3 at the Yarmouth County Museum and Archives, created a buzz.



Bruce Bishop holds the first issue of Coastal Life.

And letters are starting to float in, like this one about the cover story titled “She’s the Chief,” about Mi’kmaq chief Deborah Robinson. A reader wrote, “I am a mother of three girls. This article showcases a woman who has become a leader in her community and across the nation. She provides a positive and powerful role model to young women who may be striving to become leaders and make changes in their communities. Congratulations on a great looking magazine. I love the clean look of the pages. I can’t wait to read more!”

Bruce says, “This was like receiving an Academy Award. A local businesswoman had identified with one of the stories in the magazine and took the time to send a note to me. I was thrilled, and still am. I think *Coastal Life* will have a long life ahead of it.” ■

Short Shots — a series of single workshops at Fed Central

*Single Sessions: \$30 WFNS members/
\$45 non-members*

*The Whole Series: \$150 WFNS
members/\$180 non-members*

1. Web Present with Susan Mersereau – Developing an Author Presence on the Web

When: 7–9 p.m. Monday, January 26

This session will introduce online tools and opportunities for published writers, and will answer such questions as: How can I help my publisher promote my book online? How does Facebook work? What is a podcast? Myspace? Wikipedia? Should I have my own website? Which author sites are bogus and which ones should I join?

2. Webpage Creation with Susan Mersereau – A hands-on session for 8

When: 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Sunday February 8 (registration limited to 8)

This workshop will provide hands-on assistance in creating an author webpage using free online blogging programs. Participants will come prepared with a CD or hardcopy of photos and book covers. By the end of the two-hour session, you will have your own pages on the web and know how to maintain them from home. Requirements: internet access and a willingness to tackle technology fears head-on!

3. The Narrative Voice in Documentary Writing with Pauline Dakin

When: 7 to 9:30 p.m., Thursday, February 12

This workshop will explore storytelling through the craft of documentary-making. Through

listening examples and conversation, we'll look at the elements, and choices, that contribute to the narrative voice of a documentary, and their effect on the tone, accessibility and immediacy of a story. A group exercise will inspire new and creative approaches to finding the narrative voice.

Pauline Dakin is the award-winning National Health and Medical Reporter for CBC Radio and CBC Television.

4. Taxing Times with Jane Buss

When: 7–9 p.m., Monday, February 23

Pigs get fed; hogs get slaughtered ... but when are you being hogish? What's a reasonable business expense? Can I deduct a portion of my household expenses if I work there? What portion? What about lunch with the editor ... and do I need to pay a portion of the prize that I won for my poetry to the tax man?

This session on all things taxable is offered by the Fed's executive director just in time for you to get everything organized for Revenue Canada's immutable deadline – April 30!

5. Pitch Perfect with donalee Moulton

When: 7–9 p.m., Monday, March 9

Learn how to market your ideas to the right publications, to the right editor, at the right time, in the right way. Queries, marketing and the fine art of pitching – and the even finer art of recycling that idea and starting all over again!

As a professional writer and editor, donalee Moulton has pitched the best, and prepared everything

from brochures to booklets, newsletters to annual reports, websites to feature articles, and seen her by-line in more than 100 magazines and journals.

6. Contract Boot Camp with Jane Buss

When: 7–9 pm, Monday, March 30

All things are negotiable ... well, almost always. But what are you looking for in a reasonable publishing contract? What's a permission? Perplexed by warranties and indemnities? What does "satisfactory" mean when you deliver a manuscript? Is there a standard royalty advance, and what is "less returns"? How important is "reversion of rights"? Who has the final approval over a title? Time to get comfortable with asking for more than you may receive and explore the fine art of compromise.

7. Digging up the Dirt – Research and How To Do It with Stephen Kimber

When: 7–9 p.m., Monday, April 6,

The prospect of research is met with a collective groan by many writers, but it can be fun and the source of as many brilliant nuggets as necessary nuts and bolts. Learn where to look, how much to use and how to ask.

Stephen Kimber, the Rogers Communication Chair in Journalism at the University of King's College in Halifax, is an award-winning writer, editor and broadcaster. He is the author of one novel and six nonfiction books. ■

Rural Writes in Wolfville & Sydney

Writing for Publication, Writing for Pay! with Jodi DeLong

*A workshop on the art of freelancing in Atlantic Canada
with Jodi DeLong*

Where: Wolfville Library, 21 Elm Ave., Wolfville

When: Saturday mornings, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.,
January 31 to March 14

Cost: \$125 WFNS members; \$150 non-members (easy
payment terms available)

We all have a million ideas we'd like to share, whether personal experiences, family histories, informative "how to" pieces, essays on things that move us strongly. Maybe you've thought about writing a few articles and selling them to local magazines or newspapers. If this sounds like a challenge you'd like to explore, join this seven-week workshop led by Jodi DeLong. You'll learn about how to find and refine ideas; how to overcome the fear of the blank page or screen; the art of the query letter and how to draw up a letter of agreement. With assignments lined up, you'll tackle the art of successful interviewing, and work through an idea to produce at least one query letter and one article to send on speculation to an editor.

Editors are a writer's best friend in the market, and it's a good idea to learn what they want and give it to them. Jodi will show you guidelines on the art of developing a good relationship with an editor, how to negotiate fees and story lengths and other details. You'll learn about copyright law and about how to sell or recycle your work to get the best bang for your time and energy. If book writing is your goal, we may get a local publishing editor in to talk to the class (depending on interest and availability).

The course is limited to 12 participants. Access to a computer and email is recommended because there will be a bit of homework before the course starts. You'll want a binder or folder to keep your work in, as well as plenty of paper and pens or a laptop if you prefer, plus of course your imagination and enthusiasms. Let's see what we can create together.

Jodi DeLong is a well-respected and prolific freelancer with hundreds of articles in regional, national and international publications.

You want to write a book?? Are you nuts?? with Lesley Crewe



Beginning Fiction with Lesley Crewe

Where: Cape Breton Centre for Heritage & Science,
(Lyceum Building), 225 George St., Sydney

When: Saturday mornings, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.,
January 31 to March 14

Cost: \$125 WFNS members; \$150 non-members (easy
payment terms available)

Do your plots refuse to thicken? Do your characters lack characteristics? Does your dialogue die a lot? Does your pacing limp along? Are your conflicts conflicted? Is your major source of tension, your neck? If so, join Lesley Crewe for a seven-week writing workshop. Together, you'll explore the wonderful world of words and find out exactly what Somerset Maugham meant when he said, "There are only three rules in writing ... unfortunately no one knows what they are."

Fiction writer, magazine columnist and screenwriter, Lesley Crewe had her first novel, *Relative Happiness*, published in September 2005 by Vagrant Press. It was met with raves and was nominated for the Dartmouth Book Award. Since then, *Shoot Me* and *Ava Comes Home* have followed to warm applause. Although raised in Montreal, Lesley has lived with her family in Homeville, Cape Breton, for 30 years. She's a graduate of Concordia University. ■

Winter Works – Workshops at Fed Central

Beginning a Poem –

A poetry workshop with Carole Langille

When: Tuesday evenings, 7–9 p.m., January 27 to March 17

Cost: \$150 WFNS members; \$180 non-members (easy payment terms available)

This workshop is an opportunity to write and workshop poems. The focus will be on writing – how to begin, how to go deeper, what makes a poem powerful. Assignments will be given to work on during the week. Poems by well-known poets will be circulated each week and analyzed as part of the learning process. The goal of this workshop is to explore how poems reveal what we didn't know we knew.

Originally from New York City, Carole Langille now lives in Black Point with her family. She has taught Creative Writing at Mount Saint Vincent University, Writing for the Arts, and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, and has led poetry workshops widely. Her poetry has been shortlisted for a Governor General's Award and her most recent release, *When I Always Wanted Something* (Mercury) is a collection of short stories.

Meet Your Protagonist – Characters for Middle Readers with Jessica Scott Kerrin

When: Wednesday evenings, 7 to 9 p.m., January 28 to March 4 and Saturday, March 21, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Cost: \$150 WFNS members; \$180 non-members (easy payment terms available)

Nothing is as important as a likeable, authentic, original character, and the most interesting stories are about characters who want something badly. Characters are the link between the reader and the story, so this workshop will focus on an exploration of your middle reader protagonist. The workshop includes lectures, discussions, and writing exercises, and ends with a Saturday social featuring readings of works-in-progress. Participants must have access to email and a printer.

Pre-class assignment: Mini-essay (1 to 2 pages or 250 to 500 words double spaced). Dig deeply into your



childhood. Recall someone who affected you, good or bad. What attracted, puzzled or frightened you about them? Be specific. If you could, what would you ask them now? Submit to talk@writers.ns.ca by Friday, January 23 at noon.

Jessica Scott Kerrin lives with her family and their pet tortoise in downtown Halifax in a house so old the floors slope and all the marbles end up in one corner. In addition to writing, Jessica has managed galleries, dance schools and museums, and has worked with artists, performers and curators. Her two most recent books, *Martin Bridge: Out of Orbit* and *Martin Bridge: Sound the Alarm*, were noted as titles of exceptional calibre in the Best Books 2008 list by the Canadian Children's Book Centre.

Easy Story Building for Beginners – A Fiction Workshop with Valerie Compton

Cost: \$150 WFNS members; \$180 non-members (easy payment terms available)

When: Saturday mornings, 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon, January 31 to March 21.

Writing fiction is like building a house: you start by digging a hole in the ground – and you end by looking out a window at the world. Without knowing how to get from mud to sky, the work of building can seem mysterious and hard. But it doesn't have to be. It's possible to be in charge of your creative process – to learn openness to experience, playfulness, sensitivity, curiosity and persistence. During this workshop, participants will move together through the fiction-writing process, overcoming uncertainty by assembling tools, practicing skills and learning to see the hidden structure of the story.

Valerie Compton has been a professional writer for 18 years. Her non-fiction articles and reviews have been published in *The Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, *Gourmet* (US), *The Citizen* (Ottawa) and many other periodicals. Her award-winning short fiction has been published in *The Malahat Review*, *The New Quarterly*, *The Antigonish Review* and other magazines. ■



Writers who Feast together ...

by Mary Jane Copps, President WFNS



Left to right: Rob North, Steve Vernon, Sharon Palermo, Diane Wile-Brumm

It started as a thought – an aside really – shared across a boardroom table with Lezlie Lowe, who brought Renée Hartlieb in on the conversation and suddenly the thought was an idea. When we shared this idea with you, you embraced it fully and the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia now has an enduring Moveable Feast that, in its first year, brought in \$2,845!!

A wee bit of background:

At a board meeting in late 2007 a discussion came up about increasing the retirement fund of our highly-appreciated but always under-paid executive director. But try as we might, we couldn't find these funds within the confines of our used-to-the-last-dime budget. So we decided to do some fundraising. The Moveable Feast was born.

On three occasions in 2008 (March, June and November) a WFNS member chose a discussion topic, put together a knowledgeable panel and opened up her home for an evening or afternoon of information and camaraderie. I extend thank-yous to the year's Feast hosts Lezlie Lowe and Sharon Palermo, and Feast guest panelists Silver Donald Cameron, Don Aker, Stephen

Kimber, Sylvia Hamilton, Christina Harnett, Lesley Choyce, Karen Dahl and Vivian Howard.

There will be at least three Feasts in 2009 (three hosts have already volunteered their homes) – locations and topics to be announced beginning in February.

Because the Feasts take place in someone's home, seating is always limited. You can choose to participate with an annual subscription of \$40, (which gives you a reserved seat at every Feast – you will receive email announcements first), or wait until each Feast is announced and purchase a one-time ticket for \$20. Cheques are made out to WFNS and charitable receipts are provided.

One more thing – if you would like to host a Feast anywhere in Nova Scotia, or if you have some comments or feedback, I would love to hear from you. You can send me an email at mjcopps@eastlink.ca or call me at 404-3290.

Wishes to all of you for an inspired 2009 filled with many magnificent words as well as moments of complete bliss. ■

The Digest

Looking for a bookstore?

There's a great feature on the Canadian Booksellers Association website (www.cbabook.org) – Find a Bookstore, which can also be accessed via www.findabookstore.ca. You can locate the nearest bookstore – campus, trade, specialty or chain – by city, province, specialty or company name search, map it and get directions. In addition to information about the CBA, *Canadianbookseller Magazine*, and their Independents Matter campaign, you'll find the latest book industry news, calendar of events, and independent bestsellers list. ■

PLR = \$\$\$

The Public Lending Right program's registration period will be open from February 15 to May 1. If you're already registered and have moved in the past year, you must update your address with the PLR Commission.

If you're not registered and are an author, co-author, editor, translator, illustrator, photographer or anthology contributor, you may be eligible for a PLR payment in recognition of your books held in Canadian public libraries. For further information, visit the PLR website (www.plr-dpp.ca) or contact them at: Public Lending Right Commission, 350 Albert, P.O. Box 1047, Ottawa ON K1P 5V8. Tel: 1-800-521-5721 (toll free) Fax: (613) 566-4418. Email: plr@canadacouncil.ca ■

Google settles © infringement lawsuit

It took a multi-million dollar lawsuit and two years of fractious negotiations but on October 28 an agreement was reached between Google and an industry group comprised of the U.S. Authors Guild, the American Association of Publishers and several large publishing companies. The \$125 million settlement will allow Google to scan millions of out-of-print books and to sell downloads. Google will pay at least \$60 US per title and authors will receive a royalty. Industry insiders concur that this will create a template for similar deals around the world.

The case arose with the Google Library Project. Google made deals with several public and university libraries in the U.S. to scan and copy their collections, creating digital or electronic archives. In return, Google could reproduce and retain for its own commercial use a digital copy of the libraries' collections. Writers and publishers viewed this as a massive copyright grab and infringement of copyright.

Google co-founder Sergey Brin heralded the deal as a "great leap," while the Authors Guild executive director Paul Aiken called it "the biggest book deal in US publishing history." When approved by a federal court, the arrangement will offer access to millions of titles. The agreement mirrors Apple's iTunes music store. Initially, the scheme will focus on universities and organizations able to pay large institutional subscriptions on behalf of students and researchers, but ultimately the goal is to enable general customers to download any of the 7 million books already scanned into Google's database.

Details on the settlement and how it will work can be found at the Authors Guild website – www.authorsguild.org ■

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www.synergybooks.com

eBook: \$5.98 / CD-ROM: \$6.50

Joe searches for the son he didn't know he had, after receiving a letter from the boy's mother. In the letter, she describes how she is no longer able to care for her son and that she hopes Joe will be able to find him and be a father to him.

Esther and Richard Provencher enjoy writing as a team. They started by writing stories for their children and grandchildren. They live in Truro.



Star Crossed

Margaret Hastings-James

www.comfortpublishing.com

Perfect bound: \$15.99 US

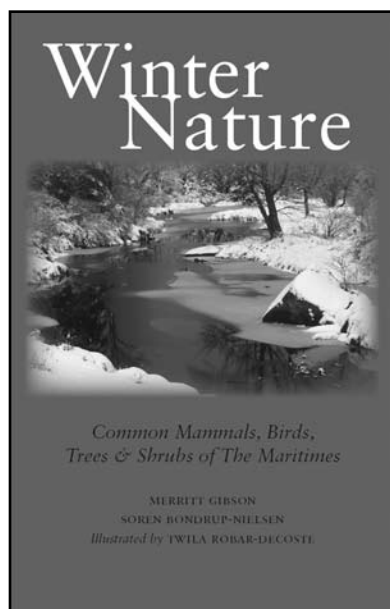
ISBN 978-0-9802051-4-5

Left at the altar, Teddy Richmond goes on the Greek island honeymoon alone and decides to stay in Greece and rebuild a perfect life in which she has no responsibilities, no commitments, and no heartbreak – until, that is, movie star Nick Chandler shows up.

Margaret Hastings-James lives in Halifax with her two children and their many pets.



imPRESSed — new titles by WFNS members



Winter Nature: Common Mammals, Birds, Trees and Shrubs of the Maritimes

Merritt Gibson & Soren Bondrup-Nielsen,
illustrated by Twila Robar-DeCoste
Gaspereau, 2008, \$27.95
ISBN 9781554470594

Winter Nature provides the walker, skier or snowshoer with a guide to the mammals, birds, trees and shrubs found in the Maritimes during the winter. With an overview on temperature, sunlight, snowfall and seasonal adaptations, notes toward identification, and tips for differentiating between similar species, biologists Merritt Gibson and Soren Bondrup-Nielsen share their passion for the outdoors and biodiversity.

Merritt Gibson is the author of *Seashores of the Maritimes*, *The Old Place* and *Gibson's Guide to Bird-watching*. Soren Bondrup-Nielsen is a professor at Acadia where he teaches Ecology and Conservation Biology. He is the author of a memoir, *Winter On Diamond*. Twila Robar-DeCoste lives in Aylesford and has illustrated numerous books of natural history.

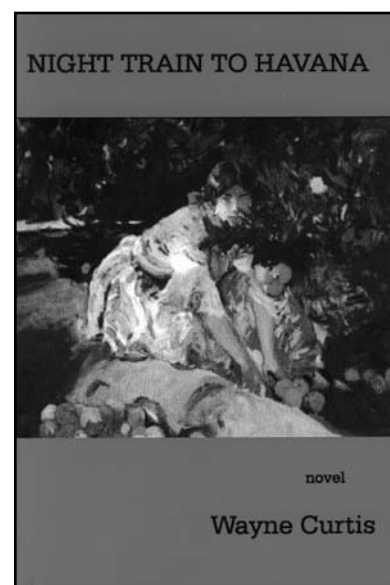


Sociable! The Elbow Bender's Guide to Maritime Pubs

Bob Connon
SSP Publications, 2008, \$19.95
ISBN 978-0-9686803-9-1

Bob Connon's tour through 45 of the best pubs in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and PEI is a delightful celebration of the emerging pub culture in the Maritimes. It also tells us exactly what a pub is, how to correctly pour a pint of Guinness, what "real ale" and "beer cuisine" are and where the best microbreweries, pub food and live music can be found in the Maritimes.

Bob Connon lives in Wolfville, where he writes, plays traditional Irish music every Sunday in Paddy's Brewpub (his local), and operates a recording studio.

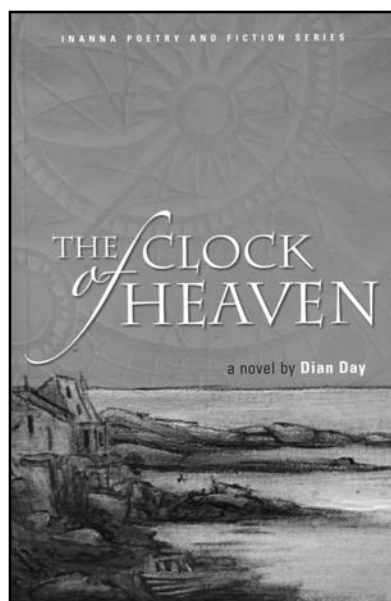


Night Train to Havana

Wayne Curtis
Lion's Head Press, 2008, \$24.95
ISBN 978-0-9686034-7-5

Night Train to Havana is a riveting story of love and deception set in a land still scarred by the hardships of a 40-year revolution. Part travelogue, part love story, it follows one man's journey into the clutches of seduction, revealing much about the collision of global politics and human desire.

Wayne Curtis has travelled frequently to Cuba to observe firsthand the struggles and triumphs of the Cuban people. He has written 12 books, including *Wild Apples* and *Monkeys in a Looking Glass*. The recipient of several awards for his writing, he divides his time between Fredericton and his cabin near Blackville, New Brunswick.



The Clock of Heaven

Dian Day

Inanna Press, 2008, \$22.95

ISBN 978-0-9808822-2-3

Esa Withrod, an intelligent, educated young woman, is the unwanted child of dysfunctional parents. The only bright spot in Esa's childhood was the three months she spent in a house by the sea with her grandmother in the Maritimes when she was seven. Now she is a young woman struggling with a failed first relationship and resulting pregnancy, and the legacy of her desolate upbringing. Through a spring and summer of traumatic events in her family's homestead, she discovers the love of family, friendship and the best of what people in a small community have to offer each other in times of difficulty.

Dian Day has worked as a reporter, counsellor, researcher, teacher, and artist. She lives in Halifax.



The Poetry Experience:

Choosing and Using Poetry in the Classroom

Sheree Fitch and Larry Swartz

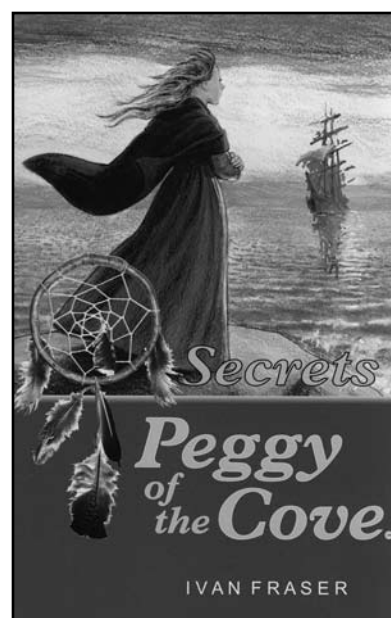
Pembroke, 2008, \$13.29

ISBN 978-1551382234

This playful 32-page flip book explores all aspects of poetry – from guidelines and an overview of poetic forms to the Top 10 lists of various poetry favorites. Handy reproducible masters are provided, which include a poetry timetable, 10 questions to ask about any poem, an observation checklist for teachers, and a personal poetry inventory for students.

Larry Swartz has been a teacher, literacy consultant, and drama consultant for 25 years in Ontario.

Sheree Fitch is an award-winning writer, speaker, and educator and the author of many books in a variety of genres. She has received the Vicky Metcalf Award for a body of work inspirational to Canadian children and two honorary doctorates for her contribution to Canadian literature and issues affecting women and children. She lives in Washington, D.C.



Peggy of the Cove: Secrets

Ivan Fraser

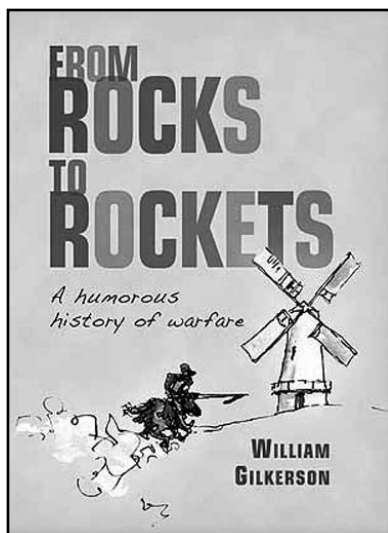
Available at: peggyofthecove.com, 2008,

\$30 hard cover; \$15 paperback

ISBN 9780973687266

Secrets is the second book in Ivan Fraser's *Peggy of the Cove* series. From a time of adventure and a place of mystery comes a larger-than-life legend of a Nova Scotia heroine who arrives as the lone survivor of a shipwreck. Plucked from the sea and stricken by memory loss, the girl is taken in by her rescuers and given the name Peggy. In the dramatic setting of the famous seafaring village, Peggy finds a new life, until it becomes clear she must reclaim her lost identity. As dark adversaries threaten to destroy her, Peggy is forced to make a choice that could cost her the only life she knows.

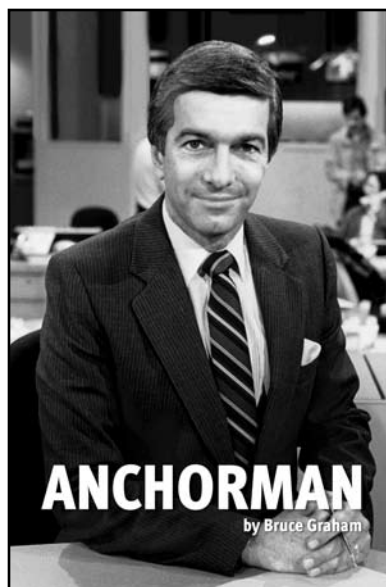
Ivan Fraser is an artist and photographer, born and raised in Nova Scotia. He uses watercolours and photography to express the awesome power and majesty of the sea. Fishing villages and abandoned buildings are some of his favourite subjects. His work has been shown extensively in Atlantic Canada and Ontario.



From Rocks to Rockets:
A humorous history of warfare
William Gilkerson
Osprey, 2008, \$15.95
ISBN 9781846034237

William Gilkerson takes the broad, sweeping history of the human race and puts it in story and pictures that are at once meaningful, sometimes profound, and always funny. His pen takes us from cave men with rocks, to modern bombs and rockets, and depicts the chaos throughout. First published in 1963, Osprey now brings this amusing and glorious look at arms and armies through the ages to a new audience. There are laughs on every page, but also wry, thought-provoking observations, all expressed through Gilkerson's wonderfully detailed drawings.

William Gilkerson is an internationally recognized marine artist, author and historian. He is the author of the bestselling *Pirate's Passage*, for which he won the Governor General's Award for Children's Literature. He lives in Mahone Bay.



Anchorman
Bruce Graham
Pottersfield Press, 2008, \$19.95
ISBN 9781897426036

Bruce Graham started his television career working on *Romper Room*, with excitable five-year-olds and near daily on-air disasters. Undaunted, he moved on to other forms of mayhem with excitable, ambitious politicians. Police stories, pumpkin stories – he reported it all. *Anchorman* is filled with Bruce's experiences, observations, commentaries and occasional letters from viewers who took it upon themselves to correct, compliment or contradict him.

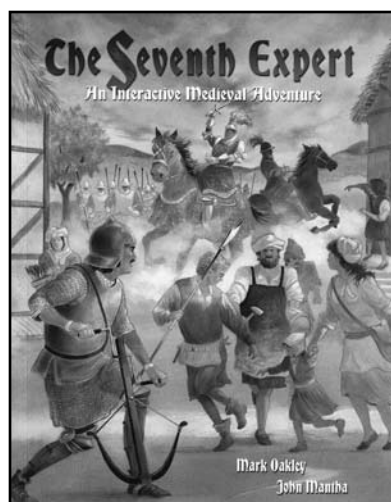
Bruce Graham had a long and distinguished career in broadcasting. He is a recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Canadian Radio & Television News Directors Association. *Anchorman* is his fourth book, joining his three novels – *Ivor Johnson's Neighbours*, *The Parrsboro Boxing Club*, and *Dream of the Dove* – also published by Pottersfield Press. He lives in Parrsboro.



When I Always Wanted Something
Carole Langille
The Mercury Press, 2008, \$17.95
ISBN 978-1551281377

When I Always Wanted Something is a collection of stories about our inability to see what is right in front of us or deep within us, yet how, despite these blind spots, we try again and again to connect with each other. In these stories – a woman who has a strange bond with the Rosenbergs, an old man in a hospital who shares his secrets with a visitor, a woman whose husband dies brutally, a teenage boy lonely for his father – the yearning is endless. But so are the glimmers of unexpected joy.

Originally from New York City, where she studied with poets John Ashbery and Carolyn Forché, among others, Carole Langille now lives in Black Point, Nova Scotia, with her family. Her books include *Late in a Slow Time* (Mansfield Press) and *In Cannon Cave* (Brick Books).



The Seventh Expert:
An Interactive Medieval Adventure
 Mark Oakley
 illustrated by John Mantha
 Annick Press, 2008, \$14.95(pb); 24.95(hc)
 ISBN 978-1-55451-065-8

Medieval history meets interactive storytelling. In 1362, violent storms pounded Europe, wiping out coastal settlements. *The Seventh Expert* is a compelling mix of history, storytelling and interactive fun and puts the reader in charge of rebuilding a medieval village. Through seven action-filled chapters, each representing a year of rebuilding, the reader faces the struggles of the emerging community. Six village experts are available to offer advice along with a wide range of medieval tools and implements. The reader is the “seventh expert,” responsible for deciding which resources best suit each year’s challenges. From finding food to fending off warlords, success depends on making the wisest choices.

Originally from Montreal, Mark Oakley is the author of the long-running comic book series *Thieves and Kings*. He lives in Halifax. John Mantha is the award-winning illustrator of more than a dozen books for young readers.



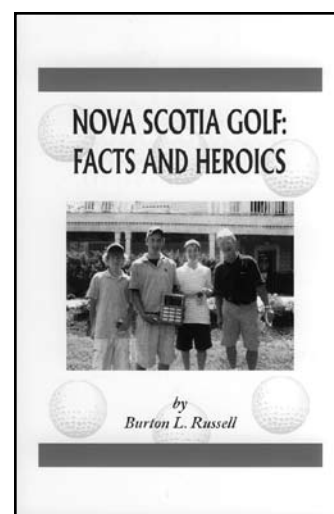
La jeune lectrice
 Alain Rimbault
 illustrated by Réjean Roy
 Bouton d’or Acadie, 2008, \$7.95
 ISBN 978-2-923518-33-6

Pour savoir si lire change vraiment le monde, comme le lui avait affirmé sa maîtresse à l’école, une petite fille décide de lire ses livres préférés à des tomates, à des animaux, à des objets de la cuisine. Un peu déçue par la réaction de ses auditeurs, elle choisit un nouveau public, les gens de la rue. Le miracle se produira-t-il?

La jeune lectrice est un conte pour les amoureux des livres et de la lecture.

Alain Rimbault est né à Paris en 1966. Il émigre en Nouvelle-Écosse en 1998. Il enseigne actuellement à l’école francophone Rose-des-Vents dans la vallée d’Annapolis. Il écrit de la poésie depuis toujours et de la littérature jeunesse depuis la naissance de sa fille en 1996.

Réjean Roy a grandi à Petit-Rocher, au Nouveau-Brunswick. Il a également suivi des cours d’estampe à l’Université de Moncton. Après avoir vécu une dizaine d’années en Gaspésie, il est revenu vivre au Nouveau-Brunswick en l’an 2000.



Nova Scotia Golf: Facts and Heroics
 Burton L. Russell
 2007, \$24.95
 ISBN 978-0978353803

Nova Scotia Golf is Burton Russell’s tenth book dealing with Nova Scotia sports events, figures, and accomplishments. It outlines the history of golf in Nova Scotia by examining the lives and careers of its most successful players. The troubadours of old travelled from village to hamlet to town telling stories and keeping traditions alive. Similarly, Russell has made it his concern to chronicle the people, places and events of Nova Scotia sports history.

Kentville native Burton Russell, a graduate of Kings County Academy and Acadia University, spent 35 years as a teacher and athletic coach in the Kings County school system. He now spends a considerable amount of his leisure time on the golf links, and is a member of various golf clubs.

Markets, etc.

The Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia does not necessarily endorse the markets or competitions listed here. Please make every effort to check any market or competition before submitting material. Read several issues of the magazine first. Publishers usually sell single, sample copies and you can check their websites for back issues and writers' guidelines. Your local library has public access computers.

■ **Hockey Mad:** Nimbus Publishing is seeking submissions for a collection of hockey-related stories with the working title *Hockey Mad: Memories of the Game from Atlantic Canada*, to be published in October. Deadline is February 23. Possible themes might include: extraordinary achievements and experiences of "ordinary" people; overcoming adversity or tough situations; examples of true sportsmanship and goodwill; special relationships or friendships; experiences that revealed a life lesson; humorous or light-hearted moments; the places we play: the backyard rinks, ponds, small-town arenas, etc. Particularly interested in submissions that reflect the game in Atlantic Canada, so contributors from Atlantic Canada will be given first priority for inclusion. Send submissions as Word attachments to: editorial@nimbus.ca. Include a cover letter with your name, mailing and email addresses, and a brief bio. Word count: between 500 and 2,000 words. Multiple submissions ok. Preference will be given to new submissions, but previously published material will be considered. Nimbus can confirm receipt of submission only but cannot respond to requests for feedback or on the status of a submission. The final list of contributors will be announced by March 31. Payment: Prizes for best submis-

sions will be awarded as follows: \$500 for best submission and \$100 for honourable mention, as judged by an editorial panel (to be determined by the publisher). \$50 will be awarded to all other authors whose stories are included in the book. All accepted authors are eligible to receive two free copies of the book. A publishing agreement will be forwarded to all final contributors.

■ **Vallum:** P.O. Box 326, Westmount Stn., Montreal, QC H3Z 2T5 (www.vallummag.com) The theme of Vallum 7.1 is Luck. Deadline: March 1 for poetry, April 15 for essays, reviews, art and interviews. "Taking chances can leave us victorious or doomed. How much of life is happenstance, akin to spinning a wheel or rolling a die? Even when every detail is calculated and the future is anticipated, serendipity governs the unfortunate and prosperous alike. Is it kismet or the toss of a coin? For even Stevens or those cursed by Murphy's Law, this issue investigates that elusive, but ever prevalent, part of life – luck." Publishes twice a year. Guidelines on website. "Looking for poetry that's fresh and edgy, something that reflects contemporary experience and is also well-crafted. Open to most styles – experimental and traditional."

■ **Inanna Publications:** 210 Founders College, York University, 4700 Keele St., Toronto, ON M3J 1P3 (www.yorku.ca/inanna) "Committed to publishing the finest feminist writing by academics and community workers, by well-known feminists and from emerging young women writers, that brings new, innovative and diverse perspectives with the potential to change and

enhance women's lives everywhere." Its mandate "is to make current writing and research on a wide variety of feminist topics accessible to the largest possible community of women, and to serve as a middle ground between the scholarly and the popular, between theory and activism." Welcomes fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction and essays on ideas, society, politics, culture and the arts that speak to the diverse lives of women around the world. Also publishes one of Canada's oldest feminist academic journals, *Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme*.

■ **Witness: The modern writer as witness:** Black Mountain Institute, University of Nevada Las Vegas, Box 455085, Las Vegas, NV 89154-5085 (<http://Witnessmagazine.org>) Reads manuscripts between September 1 and May 1. Detailed guidelines on website. An annual published in December. Welcomes submissions for 2010 issue, which will feature a special portfolio focusing on literature and film. In addition to general submissions, welcomes work that addresses any intersection between these two genres. Pays \$10/printed page. Known for showcasing work that defines its historical moment. It increasingly features writing that ventures away from the American experience and into international terrain. Values the insights of authors everywhere who illuminate their circumstances in unique and startling ways. It invites stories, poems, memoir and literary essays that promote the modern writer as witness to his or her times.

continued on page 16

■ **turnrow:** English Department, The University of Louisiana at Monroe, 700 University Ave., Monroe, LA 71209 (<http://turnrow.ulm.edu>). Detailed guidelines on website. Publishes nonfiction of general interest, short fiction, poetry, visual art, and interviews twice a year. Each issue contains a 16- to 24-page colour insert of visual art. Also seeks nonfiction by people who are not primarily writers, work by writers writing out of their usual genre, and nonfiction that concerns an intersection between science and humanities. Pays \$50/poem, \$15/page of prose, \$150 to \$250 for a feature, \$100 for cover art.

■ **WLT: World Literature Today,** 630 Parrington Oval, Suite 110, Norman, OK 73019-4033 (www.worldliteraturetoday.com) "The award-winning magazine has served as a window to world literature and culture for over 80 years. Each issue features commentary on literature, politics, and culture, interviews, and original poetry and fiction from the world's best writers." Usually does not accept unsolicited fiction and poetry.

■ **THEMA** many plots/one premise: Box 8747, Metairie, LA 70011-8747 (<http://members.cox.net/thema>) Payment: short story \$25; short-short/poem/artwork \$10. 3 issues a year. All short stories, poems, and art must relate to the specified premise or theme – Put it in your pocket, Lillian (March 1) The dean's cat (July 1). The target theme must be an integral part of the plot, not necessarily the central theme but not merely incidental. Fewer than 20 double spaced pages preferred. Indicate premise (target theme) on title page. Guidelines on website.

■ **Subtropics:** PO Box 112075, 4008 Turlington Hall, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611-2075 (www.english.ufl.edu/subtropics) Reading period: August 31 to May 1. Founded 2006. 3 issues a year. Average pages: 160. New fiction, poetry, literary nonfiction, and translation by emerging and established writers. Considers works of fiction of any length, from short shorts to novellas and self-contained novel excerpts. Gives the same latitude to essays. For stories and essays, pays \$1,000 (\$500 for a short short). Poets are paid \$100 per poem. Doesn't publish science fiction, fantasy, genre fiction, or anything with talking animals.

■ **Short Story:** P.O. Box 50567, Columbia, SC 29250 (www.shortstoryreview.org) Reading period: August 1 to February 28. A biannual literary review founded in 2006 with the goal of publishing short fiction (1,000 to 7,000 words) that is both accessible and affecting. Does not accept personal essays, poetry or literary criticisms.

■ **MTLS – Maple Tree Literary Supplement:** (www.mtls.ca) A new quarterly literary journal with 75% Canadian content. Mainly an online journal. Its goal is to promote Canadian writing, both mainstream and from the fringes (such as new, black, immigrant or first nation); to provide a platform for dialogue or interviews on any topic amongst Canadian writers, while featuring their work and, reporting on literary events, landmarks or festivals in Canada and around the world with an emphasis on their Canadian composition. The editorial advisory board includes George Elliott Clarke, Olive Senior, John Ralston Saul, and Stephen Brockwell. Prospective contributors should

browse the site and target their submissions to specific sections of the journal – Poetry, Essays, Creative Non-Fiction, Reviews, Roundtable, Impressions, Festival of Life and Drama.

■ **The New Quarterly:** c/o St. Jerome's University, 290 Westmount Road North, Waterloo, ON, N2L 3G3 (www.tnq.ca) Founded in 1981 to celebrate Canadian writers and writing by publishing the best in new fiction and poetry: writing that reminds people why they love to read and write. Pays on publication, \$200 for a short story, \$200 for an essay, \$30 per poem or "postscript" story. "Response time is slow in deference to our day jobs, but our editors read everything that comes across their desks and are always on the look-out for talented newcomers." Guidelines on website.

■ **New England Review:** Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT 05753 (www.nereview.com) Reading period: September 1 to May 31. A quarterly founded in 1978. Publishes fiction, poetry, and nonfiction that presents a broad spectrum of viewpoints and genres, including traditional and experimental fiction, translations in poetry and prose, criticism, letters from abroad, reviews in arts and literature, and rediscoveries. Considers short stories, short-shorts, novellas, and self-contained extracts from novels; long and short poems; interpretive and personal essays; book reviews, screenplays, dramatic works, translations, critical reassessments, interviews, cultural criticism, and letters from abroad. A contract is sent on acceptance, and payment is \$10 per page, \$20 minimum, upon publication. Authors receive pre-publication galleys.

■ **Diabetic Gourmet magazine:** (<http://diabeticgourmet.com>) Since 1995 “the premiere online magazine dedicated to diabetes-related health issues as well as diabetic dining and cooking information.” Open to freelance writers.

■ **History Net and Weider History Group:** (www.historynet.com) Weider says it's the world's largest publisher of history magazines. Publishes *American History*, *America's Civil War*, *Aviation History*, *British Heritage*, *Civil War Times*, *Military History*, *Military History Quarterly*, *Vietnam*, *Wild West*, and *World War II*. Query by e-mail. No writers guidelines, advises reading several past issues to get an idea of the type of writing they're looking for.

■ **Rattling Books:** (www.rattlingbooks.com) A Canadian audio book publisher based in Newfoundland and Labrador. Produces poetry, fiction and historical outdoor adventure titles as audio and mp3 cds and downloadable mp3 audiobooks in the style of a small literary press, paying special attention to the selection of titles for their literary merit. Great pains are taken to select appropriate voices and to produce an elegantly simple product. Focuses on Canadian literary fiction and poetry and outdoor adventure-based non-fiction. Rattling Books has a fondness for work with links, however tenuous, to Newfoundland and Labrador.

■ **Ravenstone Books:** c/o Turnstone Press, 607 – 100 Arthur Street, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 1H3 (www.ravenstonebooks.com) An imprint of Turnstone Press, Ravenstone is devoted to literary and experimental mysteries. Interested in tightly written, well-plotted manuscripts in

the sub-genres of hardboiled, neo-noir, police procedural, private eye, suspense, and thriller. At this time not considering cozies or “special knowledge” manuscripts. Will review unsolicited manuscripts, but prefers a query first, accompanied by a sample of 20 to 40 pages. Guidelines on website.

■ **Biblioasis:** PO Box 92, Emeryville, ON, N0R 1C0 (www.biblioasis.com) “Committed to publishing the best fiction, poetry, criticism and non-fiction in beautiful editions. We are committed to publishing works in translation – by Canadians, and other writers abroad whose work deserves to be heard by an English speaking audience. Additionally, Biblioasis intends to begin republishing important Canadian books which have been allowed to go out of print. We intend, as our name suggests, to be an oasis for booklovers, a centre for a community of writers and readers.”

■ **Sono Nis:** PO Box 160, Winlaw, BC, V0G 2J0 (www.sononis.com) Accepts unsolicited manuscripts, but prefers initial inquiries consisting of cover letter, outline, a sample chapter or two, and a brief author bio. Prefers not to receive multiple submissions and do not accept or consider email submissions. Areas of interest are Juvenile Fiction for ages 9 to 14 (not picture books or young adult fiction), Regional (British Columbian) History, First Nations, Transportation History (Railway, Nautical, Aviation), Historical Biography, and Pioneer Autobiography. Does not publish adult fiction, poetry, political, self-help.

■ **Anvil Press Publishers:** 278 East First Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5T 1A6 (www.anvilpress.com)

A literary publisher interested in contemporary, progressive literature in all genres. Publishes 8 to 10 titles per year. In general, plans at least 12 months in advance. Not interested in formulaic genre novels such as Sci-Fi, Horror, Romance etc.

■ **ECW Press:** 2120 Queen Street East Suite 200, Toronto, ON M4E 1E2 (www.ecwpress.com) Publishes 50 to 60 titles a year, (4 to 8 are poetry or fiction) on business, sports, mysteries, true crime, biography, pop culture, fiction, literary fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry, sci-fi/fantasy, graphic novels, history, and corporate books. Detailed guidelines on website.

■ **Signature Press:** P.O. Box 206, RPO Corydon, Winnipeg, MB R3M 3S7 (www.signature-editions.com) A literary press with an eclectic list of quality fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama. Publishes six to nine titles a year. “Committed to discovering and developing new Canadian writing of literary merit, regardless of genre. We publish many first-book authors and work with them to develop their craft. The first thing to remember is that we receive over 200 unsolicited manuscripts a year and can publish only seven or eight. And because most of our time is spent on the books and authors we're already committed to publishing, it usually takes six months or more for us to evaluate unsolicited submissions. So please be patient.” Details on website.

■ **Wolsak and Wynn:** Suite 102, 69 Hughson St., North Hamilton, ON, L8R 1G5 (www.wolsakandwynn.ca) “A literary press dedicated to publishing clear, passionate Canadian voices in poetry and non-fiction and anthologies

of these two genres. Believes that poetry has the power to crystallise and express the diverse life of this country in the most concentrated form, while non-fiction unfurls experiences for the reader."

Considers unsolicited manuscripts, but strongly encourages authors to send a query letter with a small sample of the work. If interested, they will ask to see more. Detailed guidelines on website.

■ **Eating Well**, 823A Ferry Road, P.O. Box 1010, Charlotte, VT 05445. (www.eatingwell.com) Bimonthly US mag that focuses exclusively on eating healthfully. Its motto is "Where good taste meets good health." "Readers are interested not only in cooking and nutrition science but also in the origins of food and social issues related to food networks." Welcomes ideas from new writers. Pays up to \$1 a word. Detailed guidelines on website (www.eatingwell.com/about/guidelines.php)

■ **Brick**: Box 609, Station P Toronto, ON M5S 2Y4 (www.brickmag.com) Publishes outstanding literary essays. In its pages, novelists and poets share their thoughts about their own work and the work of other writers. Also a forum for interviews with writers, excerpts and "found" treasures. Focusing on Canadian authors, *Brick* places them in an international context, where they receive the attention they deserve. The poetry and fiction that appear in *Brick* are solicited by the editorial board, so do not send such manuscripts. "Brick is one of the best, if not the best, journals of ideas published in the English-speaking world – a gathering of ideas from writers who think, and thinkers who write, in familiar and popular genres: the old-fashioned book-review, the personal essay and

memoir, the interview, letters, even the obituary."

Awards

■ **The Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards**: Deadline January 20. Open to books by Canadian citizens, or permanent residents of Canada written on subjects with Jewish themes or with significant Jewish content published between January 1 and December 31, 2008. Award categories: Fiction; Scholarship on a Jewish Subject; Biography/Memoir; History; Children's or Young Adult Literature; Poetry; Holocaust-themed; Yiddish, Translation from Yiddish, or Yiddish-themed. For more information, contact: Itamar Stern, Koffler Centre of the Arts (416) 636 1889, extension 352; Fax 416-636-5813 or email: istern@kofflerarts.org

■ **Danuta Gleed Literary Award**: The Writers' Union of Canada, 90 Richmond St. East, Suite 200, Toronto, ON M5C 1P1. (www.writersunion.ca). Deadline: February 2. A \$10,000 prize will be awarded to a Canadian writer, for the best first collection of published short fiction in English. The award also carries second and third prizes in the amount of \$500 each. To be eligible, submissions must be a first collection of short fiction, written by a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant, and published in the 2008 calendar year. Send 4 copies of each eligible title.

Contests

■ **PRISM international**: UBC Vancouver BC. (<http://prism.arts.ubc.ca>) **Poetry Contest** deadline January 30. 1st \$1,000; 2nd \$300; 3rd \$200. **Short fiction** deadline January 30. \$2,000 first prize and 3 runner-up

prizes of \$200. Details on website.

■ **The Malahat Review**: University of Victoria, P.O. Box 1700 Stn CSC, Victoria, B.C. V8W 2Y2 (<http://web.uvic.ca/malahat/>) has 3 contests on the horizon – Long Poem Prize deadline February 1; Far Horizons Award (Fiction) deadline May 1; and Creative Non-fiction Prize deadline August 1. Guidelines and details on website.

■ **The Writers Union of Canada writing competitions**: 90 Richmond St. East, Suite 200, Toronto, ON M5C 1P1 (www.writersunion.ca). **Postcard Story**: deadline February 14 postmark. \$500 prize. Entry fee: \$5 per entry. The challenge is to create a dramatic, short, snappy piece in 250 words. You can use humour, poetry, dialogue ... anything goes. Fiction or non-fiction. Publication – winning entry will be published in postcard format. **Writing for Children**: deadline April 24. Entry fee \$15 per entry. Prize \$1,500. Entries of the winner and finalists will be submitted to three publishers of children's books. Any writing for children up to 1,500 words. Open to writers who have not been published in book format in any genre and who do not have a contract with a book publisher.

■ **Event Non-Fiction Contest #22**: Event, The Douglas College Review, PO Box 2503, New Westminster, BC V3L 5B2. (<http://event.douglas.bc.ca>) Deadline April 15 postmark. Three winners will each receive \$500 plus payment for publication in *Event* 38/3. Other manuscripts may be published. Previously published material, or material accepted elsewhere for publication, cannot be considered. Maximum length is 5,000 words.

Journaling ...

Maisonneuve: eclectic curiosity

Launched in 2002, *Maisonneuve* (translated “new house”) is an award-winning English-language quarterly magazine based in Montreal. A uniquely Canadian cross between a *Harper’s* or *New Yorker* and *Details*, *Maisonneuve* is a fascinating blend of the arts, sciences, daily and social life, with a reading demographic of educated urbanites, 25 to 50 years old. In the Fall 2008 issue, articles span from a reporter’s account of his experiences in Mao’s China in the 1970s, to Israel’s quest for an appropriate national bird, to a piece on the pagan practice of Hexennacht, to an “investigative” story on extreme grooming, with book reviews, poetry, and photo essays throughout.

Maisonneuve considers literary work (poetry, short and long fiction, humour) as well as journalistic or other non-fiction pieces (essays and reviews on any aspect of the arts or sciences) and visual art (illustration, drawing, painting, photography, animation, cartoons, comics, graphics, web-based, design, etc.). Interesting submissions are encouraged in any genre:

“Sky’s the limit – hell, what’s in a sky? Poems about nothing? Love ‘em. Got a cousin who writes long diatribes against houseflies? How about a really good vignette on the way people walk? Photocopies of your childhood collection of gum-wrappers. Audiofiles of people talking at the Jackson Pollock retrospective. Sonnets to your beloved – they better be good.”

Writers are welcome to email the editors with questions and pitches, and can also sign up to an occasional e-newsletter, “Maisonneuve Memos,” which includes calls for pieces with specific themes.

Manuscripts may be submitted electronically to: submissions@maisonneuve.org (pdf or Word files, and only one attachment for multiple materials) or by post to: 4413 Harvard Ave, Montreal, QC H4A 2W9. Include all relevant information (bio, contact info) on the first page of your document. Ensure that your pages are numbered and that your submission is smaller than 2 MB (if larger, query in advance). No submission should be more than 12 pages. Payment is 10 cents a word (occasionally higher). Editors do not reply to all submissions and advise that if you have not received any correspondence from them within six to eight weeks of submitting, you can assume (sadly) that your submission has not been accepted.

For more information and to read articles available online, visit their snappy website at www.maisonneuve.org/ ■



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Who's doing what

■ **Racked** — *Plucked from the ether, scooped from the mad miscellany of mags, journals and papers that cross your editor's desk en route to a cherished home in the Federation library, open 9 to 5, Monday to Friday for your erudition and entertainment:* Still putting pen to paper south of the 49th parallel, **Joanne Merriam** saw her haiku in *Roadrunner Haiku Journal* in November and looks forward to two in the February *Scifaikuest*. Her poetry was featured in *Big Toe Review* in December and she'll celebrate the new year with work in *Alba*, *Clockwise Cat* and *Concelebratory Shoehorn Review*; **Sarah Mian's** recent work appears in *Galleon Journal*; the November/December issue of *Atlantic Business* shone with **Eleanor Beaton's** features on business coaching and blueberry magnate/compulsive reader John Bragg; **John Barger** leads off *Grain's* 'after summer' issue with his poem, 'Patronymics of His Bike', a genealogy of all that's engendered by Halifax school-yard bike wars; the holiday issue of *Saltsapes* is always a seasonal treat made even more luminous with contributions from **Darcy Rhyno** who talks with iconic printmaker David Blackwood and teenaged Truro activist Brendan Yorke, **Eleonor Beaton** considering the threat to Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley 'farming triangle', while **Jodi DeLong** prolongs the growing season with festive indoor plants providing an answer to the eternal question of just what to do with that persistent poinsettia; **Mary Jane Copps** keeps the work force happy in *Progress* as **Peter Moreira** considers why pension pooling makes sense; "Cherry Pits", a new story from **Binnie Brennan** takes

the cake in *All Rights Reserved*; *The Nashwaak Review* featured new poetry from **Kathryn Bjornson**; **Brenda Tate**, who won the Atlantic Writing Competition's Joyce Barkhouse Award this past year for her YA novel, has crossed over into the land of poetry with her work featured among the winning poems at <http://ibpc.webdelsol.com/best2007.html>; apart from ongoing kudos for her contagiously warm first book, *Gracie the Public Gardens Duck* (Nimbus), **Judith Meyrick** is garnering praise for the warmth and insight of her regular book reviews featured every Sunday in *The Nova Scotian* section of the *Chronicle Herald*.

■ **Embarqued on the Launch Lurch** — *after all those years of writing, scouting the right publisher, pondering contract clauses, parsing editor's peccadilloes, you're finally pinching yourself and hoping:* After writing several story collections, **Susan Zettell** found herself surrounded by listeners and well-wishers at the Baddeck Library, as she read from her first novel, *The Checkout Girl* (Signature); **Wanda Campbell**, author of poetry collections *Sky Fishing*, *Haw [Thorn]* and *Hidden Rooms*, welcomed her latest arrival, *Looking for Lucy* (Wolsak & Wynn), with an animated audience at the K.C. Irving Centre Auditorium in Wolfville. The collection draws inspiration from the life of Lucy Adeline Van Horne, wife of the builder of Canada's fabled railway; the Women's Council House in Halifax was a fitting setting for the launch of *Res Judicata* (Orca) by **Vicki Grant**. The sequel to Vicki's best-selling, award-winning *Quid Pro Quo*, the book again pairs 15-year-old sleuth Cyril with his

firebrand lawyer mom, Andy, on the trail of something fishy; just in time for the season, *Winter Nature: Common Mammals, Birds, Trees & Shrubs of the Maritimes* (Gaspereau Press) by Merritt Gibson and **Soren Bondrup-Nielsen** arrived with the snow and a festive lifting of glasses at the Irving Environmental Science Centre at Acadia University; it was almost 12 years in the writing and included a wrenching AA-supported period for Billy, but Billy Taylor and **Andrew Safer**, surrounded by a throng of supporters, lifted a coffee cup at the Sackville Heights Community Centre to toast the launch of *Cracking the Theft Rings: The Story of a Cop at the Port of Halifax* (Frontlist Publishing).

■ **Signed, Sealed & Soon-to-be-delivered** — the ink is drying on **Kathy Mac's** Fernwood contract for a new collection of poems, *The Hundefräulein Papers*, revised during a residency at Scotland's Hawthornden Castle. The collection will be Kathy's second, after her GG Award-nominated *Nail Builders Plan for Strength and Growth* (Roseway); Gaspereau Press will be bringing out a reverie-cum-poetry reflection from GG winner **Anne Simpson**: *The Marram Grass and Otherness* is slated for April so readers may accompany Anne as she walks the beaches and trails, in thought, near her Antigonish home; she was rattled when she got the news ... and that is the working title for **Lisa Harrington's** first novel for young adults due out from Nimbus Publishing; after research journeys that took her to Ireland and Quebec, **Dorothy Perkyns** has signed with Dundurn Press for the delivery of *Bridget's Black '47* which

will chronicle the story of Bridgit's flight from the potato famine in Ireland to a life in the new world; **Tonja Gunvaldsen Klaassen** will welcome her third collection of poetry next April with the release of *Lean-To* from Gaspereau Press. A transplant from Saskatoon, where her first collection, *Clay Birds*, won the Saskatchewan Book Award for Poetry, *Lean-To* looks at places made home and navigating between points of origin; **Alice Walsh** was dancing a jig on receipt of news that Creative Publishing in St. John's will be releasing her book, *A Gift of Music*, about the life of Emile Benoit; while down the street, Breakwater Books was sending **Sirje Ruus** into orbit – they've scheduled 2009 publication for *Lovesongs of Emmanuel Taggart*, the winner of the 2006 Bill Percy Novel Prize at the Atlantic Writing Competition; though he was initially dissuaded by his supervisors, young graduate student **Soren Bondrup-Nielsen** followed his fascination with recording the elusive call of the boreal owl. The story will be recounted in the Gaspereau publication next May of *A Sound Like Water Dripping: In Search of the Boreal Owl*; having achieved glowing success with her YA novel, *Chasing the Raven*, at the 2006 Atlantic Writing Competition, **Jo Ann Yhard** was hyperventilating with news from Nimbus that her first book had found a good home and will be on store shelves next year; it took a mere two decades (meanwhile back at home, a bevy of beautiful babies, a career as a gallery/shop owner, and countless freelance contracts), but **Jocelyn Bethune** was ecstatic, bragging about her latest ISBN number: *Historic Baddeck* is now history indeed and will be published by Nimbus this spring; with lots of support from her writing pals and

family, **Margaret Hastings-James** was thrilled to welcome the pre-Christmas arrival of her first book, *StarCrossed* (Comfort Publishing).

■ **Kudos and break open a bottle of bubbly best** — *The View from a Kite* (Vagrant), **Maureen Hull**'s story of a teenager stuck in one of the last TB sanatoria in Canada, has been nominated for a Stellar Award, the BC Teen Choice Readers' prizes; Cape Breton writer **Julie Curwin** has won the 2008 Commonwealth Short Story Competition. Administered by the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association on behalf of the Commonwealth Foundation, the competition exists to increase understanding between and appreciation of different Commonwealth cultures, to showcase the rich diversity of the Commonwealth and to support literary talents. Each year the competition identifies 25 outstanding short stories, which are recorded and broadcast around the Commonwealth. The overall winner receives £2,000 at an awards ceremony in London ... which Julie did on November 13; the InScribe Christian Writers' Fellowship awarded **Elaine Ingalls Hogg** a Barnabas Fellowship. Named for a co-worker of the apostle Paul, the grant is awarded to help InScribe members further their writing; **Sandra and Ron Lightburn** are not only earning raves and starred notices in *Quill & Quire* for their picture book *Pumpkin People* (Nimbus) but the town of Kentville and the Province of Nova Scotia are also taking note: the Town Council presented the Lightburns with a Certificate of Recognition and the Province noted the book in Hansard; though **Jennifer Stone** didn't take top prize, she received a personal note from the producer of Short Story Radio informing her the judges had thought so highly of her work they

were awarding a special Honourable Mention; Nova Scotia must-reads in *The Globe and Mail*'s Top 100 included **Donna Morrissey**'s *What They Wanted* (Penguin), **Anne Simpson**'s *Falling* (McClelland & Stewart) and **Beatrice MacNeil**'s *Where White Horses Gallop* (Key Porter) which is also on the 2009 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award long-list; **George Elliott Clarke** received the William P. Hubbard Award for race relations in a stirring ceremony at Toronto City Hall in November; meanwhile the Toronto Public Library – the largest system in the country – was checking its lists and including *It's Moving Day* (Kids Can Press) by **Pamela Hickman** (illustration, Gerald Valério) as one of the First & Best '08 books, their top picks for kids under five because the first books you share with your child should also be the best!

■ Writing may be a lonely pursuit, but there'd be no telling that from **Martine Jacquot**'s peripatetic ways. She spent a month this winter in Cameroon at the invitation of Prince Kum'a Numbe III. While there she visited schools, universities, cultural centres ... all the while in residence at the home of the royal family, where luncheon with the minister of culture was as commonplace as cooking on an open fire with village women, or discussing politics with a king. She also recently served as a juror for French-language poetry for the Governor General's Award.

■ **Josh MacDonald** may have to cope with shovelling snow and dealing with cold like the rest of us but he's been basking in the warm reviews that have greeted the five-week run of his play, *Halo*, at Theatre 40 in Los Angeles this fall. The dramatic comedy about the appearance of an image of Jesus

Christ on the side of a Tim Horton's in the week leading up to Christmas was initially commissioned by Two Planks and a Passion Theatre and has enjoyed many productions across the country. A film version is in the works as a co-production of Moving Films and Les Productions Colin Neal, with George Mihalka slated to direct.

■ Over at Bus Stop Theatre on Gottingen Street in Halifax, **Carol Sinclair** and friends have been workshoping the most recent draft of *Ferry Tales*, which is slated for production next summer at Ship's Company Theatre in Parrsboro. With David Sereda on board as composer and an assembly of singer/actors such as Margot Sampson, Frank Mackay, Heather Rankin, Deb Allen, Gord White, Paul Jennings and Bill Forbes, the bus rocked ... as will the boat.

■ Also slated for Ship's Company next summer is an adaptation of **Bruce Graham's** third novel, *Ivor Johnson's Neighbours* (Pottersfield Press). Bruce has been on the road this fall for signings and appearances for his latest book, *Anchorman* (Pottersfield), his recounting of his life as a broadcaster. His rare idle moments are filled with work on a new novel that tells the story of a young Nova Scotia woman during the First World War.

■ Although fully engaged as a teacher at Ecole de Rose-des-Vents in the Annapolis Valley, **Alain Raimbault** has worked the miracle of publishing three books this year. He was a finalist for the 2008 Antonine-Maillet-Acadie Vie Prix, participated in the Festival de Poésie Acadien in Caraquet, and is off to Switzerland in January to be part of the Bataille des livres. His early

reader *Le ciel en face* has recently been sold in Spain, where it will appear in a bilingual Spanish-Catalan edition. Olé, Alain!

■ Check out www.parl.ns.ca/ebooks/ebooks.htm, The good folks at the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library are at it again! Not only do they have a long standing program that supports a writer-in-residence in their library system (currently **Norene Smiley**), but they've just released their own literacy e-book! With **Maureen Hull** providing the text for *Lobster Fishing on the Susan B.* and Brenda Jones, the illustrations, David Carlson and Fern MacDonald magicked up an animated package, narrated by Joan MacKeigan. Have a look. The Susan B. will be launched – with lobster chowder – at noon on Friday, January 16 at the River John Library.

■ Ma Fed's been observing the regularity of **Ryan Turner's** story publication in this column for months now, and wondering when an astute publisher would be nudged to collect such golden opportunities. Ryan says *filling station* has accepted his story "Love Long," making a sixth serial publication. Then the news grew simply giddy: Oberon Press expressed interest in a collection, but was uncertain whether finances would allow them to include it in the current fiscal year: could Ryan see his way clear to providing them with a period of exclusivity? At the same moment, Ryan learned from Biblioasis that he'd been shortlisted for the second annual Metcalf-Rooke Award which offers the winner a publishing contract with Biblioasis! What to do? 'Fess up ... or temporize ... Ryan's characteristically charming subsequent conversation with Oberon assures us that honesty's not a bad policy and that, no matter

what, Ma Fed will see the release of his first fiction collection in the new year.

New Members

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

Mona Anderson, Wagmatcook
 Lou Boudreau, Chester
 Virginia Boudreau, Yarmouth
 Patricia Cress, Bridgetown
 Meredith Dault, Halifax
 Dian Day, Wolfville
 Susan Garcia, Halifax
 Lily Garson, Halifax
 Nicholas Graham, Halifax
 Daniel D. Gray, Wolfville
 Belinda Hart, Mineville
 Lara Hazelton, Halifax
 Kathy Mac, Fredericton, NB
 Paul MacDonald, Dartmouth
 Abigail McInnis, Halifax
 Karen McKenzie, Halifax
 Crystal J.A. Melanson, Parrsboro
 Mark Oakley, Halifax
 Fred Phillips, Dartmouth
 Karen Roy, Halifax
 James Ryan, Halifax
 Belinda Seagram, Windsor
 Julie A. Serroul, Georges River
 Theresa Smart, Lawrencetown
 Linda M. Smith, Bedford
 Evelyn Sutton, Halifax
 Anne van Dusen, Lower Sackville
 Anne Wentzell, Western Shore
 Jim Williams, Halifax

Collecting my WITS: a newbie's experience

by Jodi DeLong

Our beloved Ma Fed knows I am incapable of saying no to her. That's not a bad thing or something she takes advantage of, let me assure you. As soon as cloning becomes more routine, we should replicate our beloved leader and share her wisdom and warm-heartedness around to other organizations. At this point, I'd vote her prime minister of Canada.

So when she called me in early summer to see if I'd be interested in doing a term of Writers-in-the-Schools, I said yes after only a little hesitation. The hesitation came about only because I wasn't sure how well I'd connect with students. My son is grown, and it's been years since I was a Cub leader or did Fire Prevention visits to schools. I write nonfiction, and not necessarily about the sexy stuff. These are all grumbles that came from the censor that sits on most every writer's shoulder; the one who tells us we won't be good enough, sell often enough, get repeat gigs, will lose our inspiration.

I tend to feed my critic chocolate chip oatmeal cookies when he starts in on me, and love to take on new challenges. I wrote up a profile of experience, what I offered to do and for what grades, sent it in to Jane and Susan, and promptly forgot about it until the package from Ma Fed arrived with a list of schools that wanted me to visit.

Interestingly, all but one of the schools was for elementary children; the exception was to speak to grade 10 science students. That one was easy: a presentation on being an organic gardener/garden communicator and how I use my knowledge to gently teach readers about being as green as possible.

For the rest, we focused on the art of asking open-ended questions. I've seen interviewers fall flat on their faces by asking questions that can be answered "yes" or "no." I got the kids to ask questions of pets, (imaginary or otherwise), sometimes of each other, and for pure amusement, of me. They learned that I would answer any question, whether about writing or my personal life, except how old I am. And that even the smartest of grade 6 students – and they were *smart* – couldn't trick me into divulging the 'sekrít'. I scored major points with some when I confessed my great fandom for musician David Cook, though I took a bit of a hit when I said that I just wasn't into Miley Cyrus. And of course everyone was fascinated with "The Naming of Cats of Sunflower Hill".

There were a few moments of temporary panic, when I arrived at a school expecting to have upper grades and found that all but one class was to be primary, ones and twos. However, the art of freelancing has taught me about improvisation. Reading a story or two and asking the students questions – or getting them to think up questions about the story – showed us all just how well most of them listen.

We had some moments of high hilarity. I left it with the teachers whether they wanted to have the class email me something later on based on our day together. The highlight of one session was getting email from a class in Middleton, who had come up with some awesome ideas on how to keep my idiot-donkey from getting lost between the pasture and the barn.

The best experiences for this writer were the moments where what I was telling the students really connected with them, be it the whole class or just one or two. In a class on Long Island (Digby Neck), we did a clustering exercise that I then turned into an exercise on free-writing. One young boy, who had told me up front that he likes to read but not so much to write, lit up like a Christmas tree doing his piece. He proudly read it out to the class and announced, "it was a blast" doing this writing assignment. "Could we do it again?" he asked his teacher. Dumbfounded, she said yes. That little interchange made all our day.

I have to say my admiration for teachers is even higher than before I visited the schools, especially those who work with younger students. They are called upon to do and be so much, with limited resources and time. The teachers I met, from the two who look after the 16 students in 7 grades in Westport school on Brier Island, to the science teacher at a bustling city high school, are absolutely dedicated to teaching and to being supportive of their students. It's not a job I could do daily, but I do treasure that others can.

Will I do Writers in the Schools again? Absolutely. Showing children that writing can be a lot of fun and a fun way to make a living was a terrific experience. Seeing them actually believe my words and try their hands at creating for themselves was definitely a gift I'll carry forward. ■

BusStop

by Jane Buss, Executive Director WFNS

It was 1969. The Nixon inauguration, raids on Black Panthers, Golda Meir, “The Eagle has landed,” Woodstock, Charlie Manson, ‘Honkey Tonk Woman’, *Easy Rider* and *Midnight Cowboy*, *The Edible Woman*, *Slaughter House Five* and *Travels with my Aunt*. I got my Canadian Actors’ Equity card and was instantly transformed into a Canadian “Professional” working in the arts! And 40 years later, here I am still, working professionally in the arts.

It’s been a very good run. I count myself blessed at being a member of the first generation in this country who could actually have the temerity and foolishness to think we could support ourselves in such a fashion. My family discouraged such lunatic behaviour but have had deliciously covert ways of beaming their pride at my bumptious path over the years. My luck has held. I’ve been able to support myself by cobbling together this and that and now head into the neighbourhood of retirement. I’m not rich in much beyond experience, but I am fine.

Others of my generation – writers and artists – have not been so lucky. There’s no employment insurance, company medical benefits or company pension for freelance artists in this young country, and the government pension plan is based on what you’ve earned over a working lifetime ... which, as you know for a writer, is feast or famine, accent on the latter. There’s no guarantee, even when your book is published that it will generate enough income to provide a decent living. When luck doesn’t hold or the cold wind of medical emergency blows, many writers are felled. There’s no financial wiggle room. This kind of catastrophic situation can easily strike writers in their thirties and forties – and now with a first generation of working writers in Nova Scotia approaching retirement age, cracks and fissures are more frequent.

Your prescient Board has been looking at this issue for some time as Federation members have encountered unexpected emergencies. In the past year, one of their/your colleagues, Joanne Taylor, has been meeting the challenge of a diagnosis of ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease). In addition to giving us such treasures as *Full Moon Rising* (illustrated by Susan Tooke), *Making Room* (illustrated by Peter Rankin) and *There You Are* (all from Tundra), Joanne has always been the first to volunteer to help at any Federation event, a stalwart of the Nova Scotia Children’s Literature Roundtable, and is now serving her fourth year on the WFNS Board. Today Joanne and her family –

Robin, Jeannie and Anna – are cheerfully (well, they put on a very good face in the midst of abject chaos) enduring the upheaval of a massive renovation of their home that will deliver Joanne from her upstairs bedroom prison. The expense has been monumental but the outcome will reunite Joanne with an office and her determination to finish *Angeline’s Wedding Dress*, her manuscript in progress.

The Writers Trust, through The Woodcock Fund, has most generously provided some instant emergency assistance in this crisis, and the WFNS Board will host a Valentine’s Day Celebration to benefit Joanne. By mid-February, we’ll all be aching for a celebration and what could be warmer than jiggling for Joanne and her ebullient energies and spirit? There’ll be more news in Ma Fed’s eNotes and we encourage any of you who’d like to help with this to give the office a call, or send us an ‘e’.

The Board is evolving a plan to help writers help themselves when dire situations arise – an emergency fund that could almost instantly provide a short-term loan or cash solution to a crisis. Over the years, the Board has overseen the building of funds to support our book prizes, Writers in the Schools, some of our programs (mentorships, etc.) as well as the Federation’s modest operating costs. The Board is now looking at the creation of an Emergency Fund. Many members have provided gifts, large and small, to build these funds. The Directors are hoping that we may, in part, find a grass roots approach to this fund by encouraging WFNS members to think about leaving a legacy, and making the Emergency Fund part of your estate-planning process. We welcome your thoughts and input on this conversation and will keep you posted as it develops.

Thank you all. Though prone to mush on a year-round basis, December always reduces me to a puddle of inchoate benevolence and gratitude. The mail is filled with your greetings and thoughtful notes thanking staff (and you have a brilliant team in Susan Mersereau, Sue Goyette and Peggy Amirault), giving contributions to support WITS, mentorship, prizes or just for a friendly voice at the other end of the phone, paying your dues ... which is perhaps the strongest endorsement a membership organization can receive. The amount of energy generated by an active membership of more than 900 is astonishing, and thanks are due to many. Thank you and all the best in 2009. ■