

# east word



The short lists of the 11 awards that make up the 2011 Atlantic Book Awards were announced on March 22. WFNS can boast at least one member among every award's nominees. Of the 33 nominated spots, Fed members take up 14, with Alexander MacLeod and Jerry Lockett celebrating two nominations each.

The following members are nominated for the following awards: **Jan L. Coates** and **Shauntay Grant**, both for the Ann Connor Brimer Award for Children's Literature; **Elizabeth Peirce** for the APMA Best-Published Book Award; **Sheree Fitch** for the Atlantic Independent Booksellers' Choice Award; **Douglas Burnet Smith** for the Atlantic Poetry Prize; **Lesley Choyce**; **Sheldon Currie** and **Anne Emery** for the Dartmouth Book Award (Fiction); **Jerry Lockett** for a Dartmouth Book Award (Non-Fiction); **Jon Tattrie** for the Democracy 250 Award for Historical Writing; **J.A. Wainwright** for The Evelyn Richardson Memorial Literary Prize for Non-Fiction; **Doretta Groenendyk** and **Susan Tooke** for the Lillian Shepherd Memorial Award for Illustration;

**Jerry Lockett** and **Alexander MacLeod** for the John and Margaret Savage First Book Award; and **Alexander MacLeod** for the Thomas Head Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award.

The Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia administers three of the awards: the Atlantic Poetry Prize, the Evelyn Richardson Memorial Literary Prize for Non-Fiction and the Thomas Head Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award. For these awards, this year's crop of shortlisted authors includes some of the brightest lights in Canadian literature, with Johanna Skibsrud, Kathleen Winter, Laura Penny, John Steffler and Beth Powning all claiming spots.

The 2011 Atlantic Book Awards and Festival runs May 12 to 19 with free literary events taking place in all four Atlantic provinces. The prizes will be awarded at the Atlantic Book Awards gala celebration on May 19 at 7 p.m. at Alderney Landing Theatre in Dartmouth and tickets are \$10. Festival details and ticket information can be found at [www.atlanticbookawards.ca](http://www.atlanticbookawards.ca). ■

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## Short interviews with the shortlist

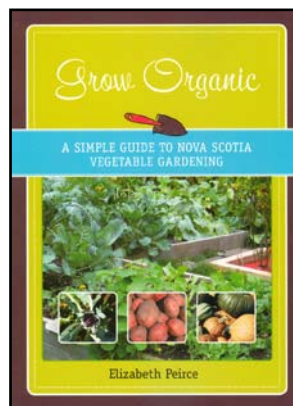
This issue of *Eastword* features brief interviews with some of the authors of books shortlisted for the Atlantic Book Awards. See pages 2 through 11.

### Elizabeth Peirce

#### Grow Organic A Simple Guide to Nova Scotia Vegetable Gardening

Nimbus, \$19.95, ISBN: 978-155109-750-3

Shortlisted for the APMA Best-Published Book Award



*Grow Organic deals with specifically Nova Scotian issues, giving advice about our growing season, which types of vegetables grow best here, and where to get local organic seeds. There is a chapter of profiles of specific gardeners and farmers from around the province. Written in a friendly, straightforward manner, it includes many photographs and recipes.*

**Q:** Many writers roll their eyes or give a grim stare if you suggest that writing might be “fun.” But it seems like this was a fun book to write – was it? Is there a particular experience or anecdote you’d like to share about the creation of the book?

It *was* a blast to write – almost as good as actually getting my hands in the dirt, which I couldn’t do during the winter the book was written. Like many gardeners, I love to read gardening books but was frustrated by their evident Californian provenance – too many lush descriptions of eggplants, fig trees and lavender hedges. I had been thinking it was a shame there weren’t many books about growing vegetables in a cool, wet climate such as ours, with unpredictable growing weather. Then a friend and editor from Nimbus Publishing, Penelope Jackson, asked me if I would like to write a book for beginning gardeners, and I was delighted. I’ve kept a garden journal since 1994, and a garden photo archive since the 1970s, so I had a built-in resource at my disposal. The rest was a form of autobiography of how I spent my summer holidays since I was old enough to hold a watering can. That’s how *Grow Organic* came to be. ■

## Alexander MacLeod

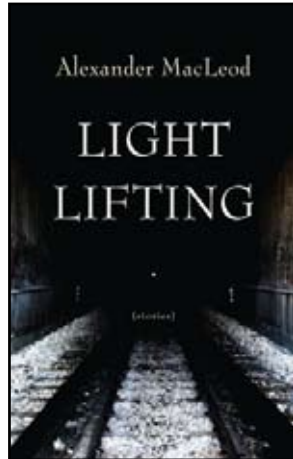
### *Light Lifting*

Biblioasis, \$19.95, ISBN: 978-1-89723-194-4

Shortlisted for the Thomas Head Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award

Shortlisted for the Margaret and John Savage First Book Award

*Alexander MacLeod's first collection of short fiction, offers us a suite of darkly urban and unflinching elegies. These are elemental stories of work and its bonds, of tragedy and tragedy barely averted, but also of beauty, love and fragile understanding.*



**Q:** *Light Lifting* is packed with visual and auditory imagery, images and character actions that overlay ideas of belonging, of survival, of competition, of masculinity, of familial and friendship love, of work and home. Do you start thinking about a story with an idea or image in mind?

Definitely I start with the image and I try to figure out the story that goes with it or around it or inside it. The girl jumping off the roof, the runners in the tunnel, the kid washing his face in the puddle: I started with those and worked back, trying to connect the dots and write the scenes that pulled maybe six or seven clear images together.

I was trying to make the reader look at something they remember seeing. And I tried to whittle and whittle and make that one sharp thing enough so it would penetrate deep and stick for a while – so that even if it was the only thing a person could recall a month or a year after reading, then the whole story would still be inside of the image.

Lear in the storm. The boy at the end of “Araby.” The woman driving on the 401 at the end of Munro’s “Child’s Play.” Those are masterpiece moments where the whole story sits and waits for you inside the image and when you come back to it, the whole thing – the characters and the situations and the stakes, even the style of the language itself – rests inside that image. ■

## Beth Powning

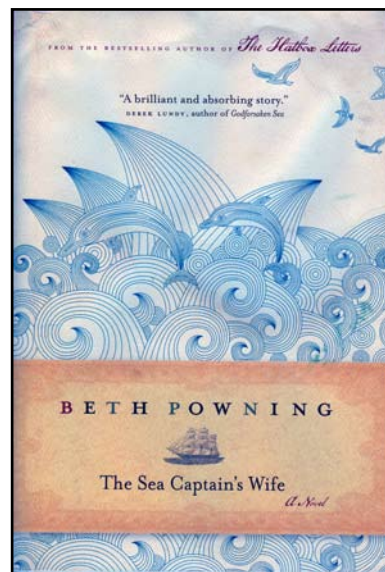
### *The Sea Captain’s Wife*

Alfred A. Knopf Canada, \$22, ISBN: 978-0-307-39711-9

eBook, \$22, ISBN: 978-0-307-37407-3

Shortlisted for the Thomas Head Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award

*Azuba Bradstock yearns to join her sea captain husband, Nathaniel, on his long and exotic journeys around the world commanding a merchant sailing ship. When she gets the chance, however, it is bittersweet. Nathaniel is forced to take her and their daughter on board to retreat from a damaging scandal at home that Azuba is the centre of. Their voyage together is often a struggle to keep their family and their lives intact.*



**Q:** *The authentic period details, the episodic plot and the formal language and emotionality* make *The Sea Captain’s Wife* very reminiscent of the novels of the 1800s – the very century your novel is set in. Was reflecting the literature of that time period a goal for you when writing the book?

Reflecting the literature of the time period was never a goal as I wrote *The Sea Captain’s Wife*. I think that subject matter finds the form that best suits it. There is much about writing that is mysterious, that requires the writer to wait, to be patient, and to see what makes the work come alive. I’m sure that I was attracted to both the subject matter and the form by my love of nineteenth century literature. But I also read hundreds of family letters from the 1800s during my research for *The Hatbox Letters*, my last novel. The voices of the period inhabit my mind like music. I tapped into their rhythm, hardly realizing it. ■



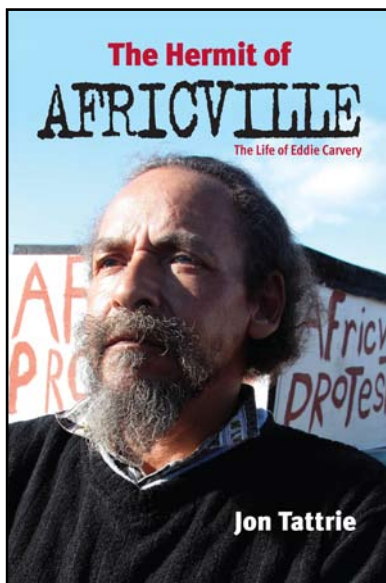
## Jon Tattrie

### ***The Hermit of Africville* *The Life of Eddie Carvery***

Pottersfield Press, \$19.95, ISBN: 978-1-897426-18-0

Shortlisted for the D250 Atlantic Book Award for Historical Writing

*Eddie Carvery was born in Africville, but his world was destroyed when the City of Halifax bulldozed Africville in the 1960s in an attempt at "urban renewal." He returned to the site in 1970 and pitched a tent to start his protest for the reclamation of his people's land and history. Forty years later, he's still there. In this rivetting account Jon Tattrie captures the story of Eddie Carvery and his struggle for survival and justice.*



**Q: The afterword to *The Hermit of Africville* details what led you to tell the story of Eddie Carvery. Is there a particularly striking experience you've had while promoting the book, or as a result of your continuing relationship with Eddie?**

In the fall and winter of 2009, I spent more than 40 hours interviewing Eddie Carvery for *The Hermit of Africville*. Most of that time was sitting knee-to-knee in the small camper at his Africville protest. The windows were blocked off to keep in what heat his little stove could generate. As he talked through his darkest moments, it was a very intimate experience.

That all changed when we launched the book in the summer of 2010 at the annual Africville reunion, where he spoke to hundreds of his friends, family and perhaps even former enemies. Since then, I've told Eddie's

story dozens of times at schools, prisons and churches, and each time I marvel at the magic. Whether they're elementary school students, middle-aged prisoners or elderly churchgoers, they're captivated by this strange, otherworldly man living in a trailer for 40 years to protest the destruction of his community. Restlessness yields to rapt attention as I tell how he went from innocent child to drug-addicted criminal to wise elder.

The impact is magnified when Eddie speaks in person. As his biographer and now friend, I often arrange these visits and introduce him. He's talked to teenagers at Graham Creighton Junior High, young adults at Dalhousie University's Transition Year Program, and divinity students at the Atlantic School of Theology.

He tells the same stories, stories I've heard many times before, but it's different every time. As he talks – slowly, quietly, wanderingly – he also listens, taking the spiritual temperature of the room. Sometimes he senses his audience tuning into his drug years, and the story lands with a potent message about why you might find speed or heroin or alcohol attractive, how the illusion works, and what it might cost you. Sometimes, he feels them drawn to his discovery of Africville's long, proud and hidden history, and the same tale lands with a message about Canada's shrinking Black space. Sometimes, he hears them listening to the strength he's drawn from his God in the struggle, and the exact same story comes down as a parable about the power of the divine.

He's like Saint Paul – all things to all people, without changing the core of his message. A repentant sinner preaching a new gospel. People hear him deeply – and seem to vibrate with his emotion. A few people always end up in tears, hugging Eddie and thanking him. Some start to come out to Africville to sit with him.

It has shown me that while Eddie's story and struggle is very specific – he wants a public inquiry into the destruction of Africville and compensation for the people who lost so much – it is bigger than that. He's a universal rebel, a global combatant against the darker drivers of humanity and for the light. He doesn't do it out of high-mindedness, or boastful ambitions, but because he's tried every other option, been down every dark path, and knows where they lead. He knows how warm the light is and wants to help others find it.

He's still fighting for Africville, but on the way he won an unexpected victory for everybody. ■

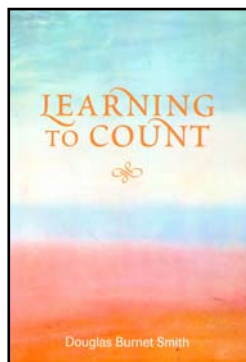
## Douglas Burnet Smith

### Learning to Count

Frontenac House, \$15.95, ISBN: 978-1-897181-37-9

Shortlisted for the Atlantic Poetry Prize

*Douglas Burnet Smith explores the counterpoint between everyday, often innocent, experiences and the darker elegiac tones of history. The lyricism of Tuscany's sublime skies merges into J.M.W. Turner's obsession with clouds and the author's retracing of Turner's sources of inspiration. Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, Louis Riel, Giuseppe Garibaldi, Benito Mussolini, Robert Desnos, Napoleon, and a contemplative lizard on a Corsican mountainside all have their roles to play. Smith measures the impact of his encounters with distinctly Canadian insight and awareness. Finally the journey returns home, to Halifax, Nova Scotia.*



**Q: Where did your title come from?**

From the first poem in the book, a poem about taking my son Theo, then four years old, to school every morning in the 4th arrondissement of Paris, where we were living for a year. He attended a school which, like so many others in Paris and elsewhere in France, has a plaque on it that identifies the school as one where Jewish children were rounded up by the Nazis during World War II and sent off to the camps, never to return. Inside his school there is a list of 18 children's names. This hit me pretty hard. I tried to imagine my child going to school one morning and not coming home.

Theo was still learning to count in French and he would count everything on the way to school. In the context of where he spent his days, in a place with a terrible stain of prejudice and murder attached to it, it struck me that the phrase learning to count had taken on a whole new meaning for me, and for Theo, even if he didn't realize it. It meant not just learning to count – un, deux, trois, etc. – but learning to count as a human being, one who is aware of history and makes sure that those who were silenced, who didn't count, as it were, are not forgotten, and do count, now more than ever.

**Q: Why are the European artists and locations that the book centres itself around so compelling to you?**

As for why I am drawn to the European artists and locations that constellate the book, I spend much of my time in Europe, in France and Spain and Italy. It's impossible to avoid the fact that artists there are perceived and treated differently from the way they are here – they are part of people's lives on a daily basis, and their work is encouraged, accepted and celebrated there in a way that it is not in North America. ■

## Doretta Groenendyk

### Snow for Christmas

Acorn Press, \$12.95, ISBN: 978-1894838-49-8

Shortlisted for the Lillian Shepherd Memorial Award for Illustration

*Doretta Groenendyk's fourth book combines the whimsy and cheer of her vivid oil paintings with the magic of a snowy Christmas to create this beautiful ode to storytelling. Prompted simply by her Christmas wish for snow, a child sits with her family, conjuring up their favourite snow-filled memories.*



**Q: You're both the writer and illustrator of I'm Writing a Story and Snow for Christmas. As an illustrator, how difficult was it to work with the author? Did the writer ever want to fire the illustrator? Any lasting disagreements?**

In both projects, the author felt the illustrator was always on her back, a real pain in the neck. While the writer could go off and work in the comforts of a local café, with a steaming cappuccino, the artist felt confined to her crooked house, evil cat and lukewarm tea. Often author and illustrator were heard arguing on the ski trail over creating a more lyrical text, a more playful image, a simplified design. We tried putting ourselves in each other's shoes, and compromised more than once – but only after several glasses of wine and mediation by a five-year-old. Both say: keep your friends close, and enemies even closer ... We'll see what the next project holds ...

**Could you comment on your school visits ?**

I had many great experiences. The students were ready for fun stories, crazy tales and a chance to try their hands at illustrating their warped and nutty ideas. To

share the belief that “Your Story Counts” is awesome. A day after I’d visited her elementary school, a librarian told me she bumped into a student from my WITS visit who had a notebook and pen ready to go. “What are the notebook and pen for?” the librarian asked. The student answered, “I’m gonna collect stories throughout my day, just like that author.” It was probably the first time the students in her class drew raining bagels on a skateboarding frog chased by killer bees ... ■

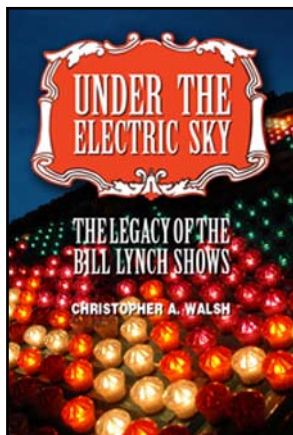
## Christopher A. Walsh

### ***Under the Electric Sky* *The Legacy of the Bill Lynch Shows***

Pottersfield Press, \$19.95, ISBN: 978-1-897426-17-3

Shortlisted for the Evelyn Richardson Memorial Literary Prize for Non-fiction

*Chris Walsh chronicles the true story of the Maritime carnival with unflinching detail, weaving flashes of its captivating past with his first-hand account of life on the carnival lot today. Follow it from its modest beginnings to the successful, tumultuous years to its current incarnation struggling along dark Maritime highways.*



#### ***Q: So, why a book on the Bill Lynch Carnival?***

I never thought I’d write my first book on the topic of carnivals. I really didn’t know anything about them when I started it. I just remembered the Bill Lynch Shows as a kid and thought it might be a way of life worthy of exploring. It certainly is a different world and I’m surprised more writers haven’t written about the carnival in this country. It was a rich and challenging subject. I’ve always loved books where the writer goes out and immerses himself in a part of the world he knows nothing about and comes back with a story. Maybe that’s the old fashioned journalist in me, but if the old cliché is to write about what you know, I figure the writer needs to go out and research until he knows something.

***Q: You quit a full-time newspaper job to research and write the book, and went on the road with the carnival for a few weeks. What led you to the decision? Any regrets?***

I was bored and writing the same stuff at a newspaper everyday was becoming a drain on me. I’d always wanted to write this magazine article about the life of carnies, so I decided it was the time to do it.

The more I think of it now, it doesn’t make much sense. What the hell was I going to do with a few hundred bucks for an article that cost me five times that much to do? And what was I going to do for money afterwards? Yes, the more I think of it, the more reckless it really was. But, as with most things in life, once I threw everything into it, things worked themselves out. It was clear after my time out on the road and the preliminary research, that there might be a book in it, something that would make it all worthwhile.

#### ***Q: Any comments on the experience of writing a book.***

On certain days it was difficult. But I had the endless pressure of needing to finish it, in order to move on and start working again. One can never count out the inspirational qualities of starvation and near utter financial ruin to get the writer writing.

But as long as it took and as difficult as it was sometimes, I knew I had to tough it out and never just write to get it done. If it took more time to do it right, then that was time worth taking. And you have to absolutely love the process of writing; the joy of creating and describing, of being open to where it all takes you.

This story had been tossed around in my head for years before I actually embarked on writing it and it was something I was interested in. I think that was for the best and it all came together naturally. I didn’t just crank it out because I had to. It was a story I had wanted to tell for a while and hopefully I told it properly.

#### ***Q: Any plans for future books or projects?***

Not at present, although there are always ideas floating around. I don’t want to ever get into a cycle or feel pressured to write a book for the sake of writing a book. But there are all kinds of good stories out there and, of course, I always have people telling me what my next book should be – on wrestlers, old circus freaks, another book on the Bill Lynch Shows ... I think the next one will be fiction, maybe a romance set in a post-apocalyptic world where nobody has any arms. Something completely different.

For now, I’m actually excited to get back into daily journalism and I’m sure the next book will come about just as naturally as this one. ■



## Jerry Lockett

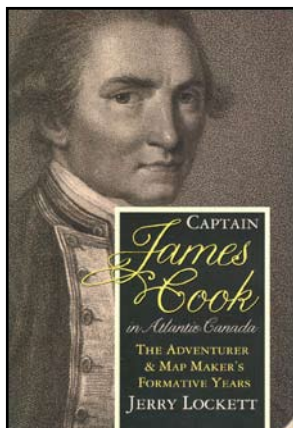
### **Captain James Cook in Atlantic Canada The Adventurer and Map Maker's Formative Years**

Formac Publishing, \$29.95, ISBN: 978-0-88780-920-0  
eBook \$19.95 ISBN: 978-0-88780-944-6

Shortlisted for the Dartmouth Book Award (Non-Fiction)

Shortlisted for the Margaret and John Savage First Book Award

*Between 1758 and 1767, the man who would be Captain James Cook was but a humble warrant officer in the Royal Navy spending significant time in Atlantic Canada. Those years in Atlantic Canada were pivotal for Cook as he mastered the arts of sea navigation and met future patrons and mentors who would aid him during the most distinguished years of his life.*



**Q:** Your book recounts the years that James Cook spent in Atlantic Canada – where he gained the knowledge and skills he needed to develop from a mere sailor into the famous world explorer. However, this period is often overlooked in biographies of Cook. Has your book shook up or reframed any long-held notions about Cook that were made without insight into his Canadian years?

The selection of James Cook as leader of a voyage of exploration to the South Seas in 1768 has always been a mystery. Why would a warrant officer be chosen to command such an important mission, one that would normally be commanded by a man of much higher rank?

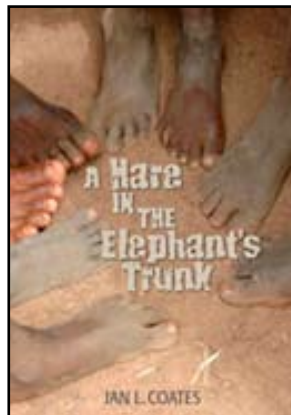
Cook was better qualified for the job than almost any other naval man, thanks largely to his experiences in the Maritimes and Newfoundland. With this book I didn't set out to shake up what we already knew about James Cook, but if it sheds a little light on his Canadian years, I hope it will raise a greater appreciation of just how crucial those years were in shaping the career of this remarkable man. ■

## Jan L. Coates

### **A Hare In The Elephant's Trunk**

Red Deer Press, \$12.95, ISBN: 0-88995-451-8

Shortlisted for the Ann Connor Brimer Award for Children's Literature



*In Southern Sudan, civil war strikes the village of seven-year-old Jacob, sending him on a seven-year odyssey to find refuge and peace. Despite a lingering anger towards the aggressors who destroyed his village, Jacob adheres to the wisdom of his mother, who believed education was the key to a better future for himself and his people. The book is based on the experiences of Jacob Deng, a so-called Lost Boy of Sudan, who has since founded Wadeng Wings of Hope, a charitable society committed to raising funds for children's education in Southern Sudan.*

**Q:** This book totally shirks the old adage 'Write what you know' What was the process of portraying history, landscape and culture that was outside of your own experience?

Writing about what you don't know involves lots of digging and delving. Never having been a young Sudanese boy living through a war and its tragic after-effects, writing *A Hare in the Elephant's Trunk* was definitely a challenge for me. I read everything I could find, both online and in books, watched a few films (including Noah Pink's documentary about Jacob's return to Sudan in 2005) and lots of YouTube videos, and listened to Jacob speaking about his childhood. Two used books I bought online, *Dinka Folktales* and *The Dinka of the Sudan* by Francis M. Deng, proved to be invaluable in helping me learn about these resilient people, their homeland and culture. ■

## Deborah Carr

### Sanctuary

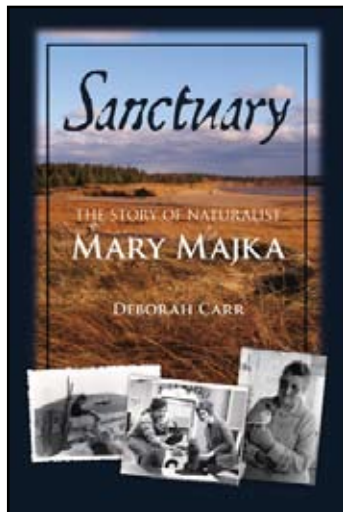
#### The Story of Naturalist Mary Majka

Goose Lane Editions, \$19.95, ISBN: 9780864926241

Shortlisted for the Atlantic Independent Booksellers' Choice

*Mary Majka is one of Canada's great pioneering environmentalists, best known as a driving force behind the internationally acclaimed Mary's Point Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve on the Bay of Fundy. Sanctuary gives full expression to the intensely personal story of Mary's life. A daughter of privilege, a survivor of World War II Poland, an architect of dreams,*

*Mary Majka became a passionate environmentalist intent on protecting fragile spaces and species for generations to come. In this amazing story of determination and foresight, Deborah Carr reveals a complex, indomitable, thoroughly human being – flawed yet feisty, inspiring and inspired.*



**Q: Why did you write Sanctuary?**

The actual book took a year to write, but the process was much longer. I began interviewing Mary in 2003. Knowing this would be a long process, we had to tackle it in small chunks, so we set aside Thursday afternoons for interviews. At that time, I had known her for about 15 years. It wasn't until I reached a certain stage of evaluation in my own life that I began to see hers in terms of purpose and achievement. Frankly, I wanted to learn what it takes to be a woman like her. I wanted to discover the motivations that drove her to a life dedicated to cause and what wisdom she had gained through her experiences.

I actually felt compelled to write her biography. At that time, I had been a non-fiction writer for only four years and admittedly did not have the skills to undertake such a large task as a biography, but felt if someone didn't begin documenting her life immediately, there was danger the details would be lost. I knew as long as I had the background material, the story would come in its own time ... when the storyteller was ready to write it.

**Q: Talk about your Nature of Words workshops. Your website says, "I will lead you outside the walls of the typical classroom into the heart of nature where we find our true creative source."**

I've never had much success taking creative workshops delivered within traditional classrooms with florescent lights flickering above me. Any creativity I may have dries up in such an environment. My greatest moments of inspiration visit me when I'm tucked away in a beautiful setting; when I can be quiet and peaceful and ready to receive what comes my way. So this is what I offer participants in my workshops. Safe, beautiful places to dream and let their creativity fly. I select B & Bs, artist studios, heritage buildings where the very walls are infused with history and life and creative energy. Weather permitting, we write outside as much as possible so writers can engage their senses and find space to be alone, should they desire.

**Q: You're a freelance writer. How does the philosophy that it is in nature that we find our true creative source, influence your writing? Does it play a part in your corporate writing at all?**

I believe in a Master Creator, so it makes sense to me that I was made to be a creative being. So, by extension I feel very much at home when I am wrapped in living creation. When I separate myself from the structure of man-made technology and white noise, my senses are heightened: my eyes quicker to pick out details, patterns, rhythms; my ears begin to separate sounds; I touch and feel textures and sensations. Nature teaches me to become more aware and the words that come as a result of this often surprise me.

I feel that keeping my awareness or perceptiveness sharp is as important to the writing process as the words. Whether I am doing a profile or a nature piece, detail and emotion is crucial, so I've learned to pay particular attention to intuitive nudges that alert me when something seems to be happening below the surface of things. My goal is to recreate my physical and emotional experience for the reader, so this awareness of nuance helps me achieve this.

Even when I'm writing an article or web content or newsletter for a corporate client, nature plays a part in the process. I review all my notes, then I go for a walk to let everything simmer. Gradually, I get a sense of where the work will begin, and then I return to my desk energized, refreshed and ready to work. ■

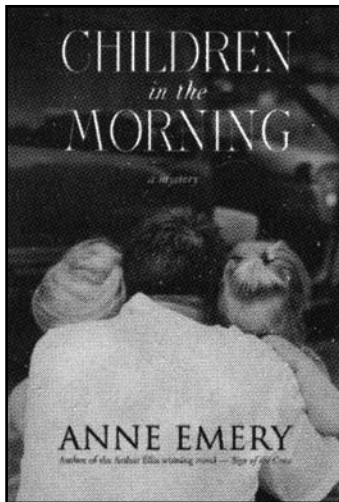


## Anne Emery

### **Children in the Morning**

ECW Press, \$26.95, ISBN: 978-1-5502-2927-1

Shortlisted for the Dartmouth Book Award (Fiction)



*In the fifth book in Anne Emery's acclaimed series featuring Monty Collins, Halifax lawyer and blues musician, a prominent lawyer, Beau Delaney, is charged with murder. It's another hard case for Collins, his friend Father Brennan Burke, and Monty's estranged wife, Maura. Watching all this through the eyes of a child is Monty and Maura's little girl, Normie. Like her spooky grandmother in Cape Breton, Normie has the gift of second sight. When she starts having visions that seem to involve Beau Delaney, she can't tell whether they reflect something he's done in the past, or something he might do in the future. We hear the story from two points of view, experience and innocence, Monty and Normie, and ask which of them will be first to uncover the truth about Beau Delaney.*

The following excerpts are taken from an interview between Anne Emery and Mark Medley which appeared in *The National Post* at last year's International Festival of Authors in Toronto,

#### **Q. What are the essential ingredients in any good thriller/mystery novel or short-story?**

... My answer will focus on the elements of most importance to me, so I won't cover all the essentials. ... For me, the most important element by far is the characters. That is what I start with every time, characters and their motivations. What would motivate this person to commit this act? I try to make my characters real and

fully human. Even the good guys should have a dark side, or at least a vein of turbulence in their makeup. ...

The characters are alive for me in a way best described by P. D. James in *Talking About Detective Fiction*: "It feels, indeed, as if the characters and everything that happens to them exist in some limbo of the imagination, so that what I am doing is not inventing them but getting in touch with them and putting their story down in black and white, a process of revelation, not of creation." That's what it's like for me: the characters are there, and I check in with them when I want to see what they're up to.

Dialogue is of great importance to me as well. ... Inseparable from all this is the "voice," the voice in which the story is told, whether it's a character speaking in the first person, or the voice of the author him- or herself. Sometimes the voice alone, if the writing is particularly fine, is enough to hook me on a story or a series. ...

#### **Q. Agatha Christie is to have said "The best time to plan a book is while you're doing the dishes." When and where do you plan your books?**

Going for long walks listening to music on my MP3 player. Whether it's rock, opera, Renaissance polyphony, Gregorian chant, or the blues, the music often helps me solve a problem in plotting or motivation. This is the only way I can claim to have anything in common with Alfred Einstein! It is said of Einstein that he worked out difficult problems and equations by turning to music, improvising on his violin.

#### **Q. What inspires your writing?**

Again, music is the most important inspiration. Some of my scenes and plot lines have been directly inspired by a piece of music. My two main characters are musicians, Monty Collins a bluesman and Brennan Burke a choirmaster.

In the latest novel in my series, *Children in the Morning*, the idea for the story comes from specific lines in three songs, Leonard Cohen's "Suzanne," Bob Dylan's "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall," and "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue." In fact, the title is taken from a line in Suzanne. On my website, I give the "soundtracks" for each of my books. At other times, music inspires the creation of a character, or a motivation, or just a mood or atmosphere. The following quotation is attributed to Victor Hugo: "Music expresses that which cannot be said, and on which it is impossible to be silent." ■

# The Eastword Interview

## Lesley Choyce

Lesley Choyce is a novelist and poet living at Lawrencetown Beach, where he surfs the North Atlantic year-round. He also runs a publishing company, Pottersfield Press, and teaches English at Dalhousie University. The author of more than 70 books of poetry, fiction and non-fiction for adults, teens and children, his work has been translated into Spanish, French, Danish and German.

***Congratulations on Raising Orion's nomination for the Dartmouth Book Award for Fiction. This is your first adult novel in nearly seven years, but I understand that it has been brewing and steeping for nearly as long. The elements that make up the story – Eric's grim quest Northward to Baffin Island, Molly's upbringing on Devil's Island in Nova Scotia and her subsequent life in Halifax, Todd's isolation in his IWK hospital room – seem so disparate, yet come together to make such a compelling narrative. Could you let us in on how the novel came together?***

Ah, the truth is there were two novels I was writing originally – two completely separate stories that were looking for direction. So I decided to weave the two unlikely pieces together, which eventually solidified into a single narrative that was a fairly large, ramshackle thing that took on a life of its own.

But I knew I had to create Molly – eccentric 30-something used book store owner and then she “needed” Eric, the lost history prof. And I needed a place for the alternative band, Dumpster Teeth, to practice. (In her bookstore, of course.) Then there was all the magic of Devil's Island waiting to be performed. And there were real life characters from our history demanding airtime.

The novel was written over a four-year period and I kept changing, so the book kept growing and evolving and wandering off into the wilderness, like Eric, and getting lost. So I finally locked myself in my office with all of my feisty characters and asked them to let me make sense out of the whole damn thing.

The characters would not allow this, of course, so I had to let them have their way. As usual, the novelist is the last person on earth who has much control over his novel, and the last to know what it is really about.

In the end, the editor working for Thistle-down convinced me to chop off a third of my big, crazy book.



So it turned out much more sensible and dramatic thanks to the cuts. I was very lucky.

***You're the publisher of Pottersfield Press. Also nominated for an Atlantic Book Award this year is Pottersfield Press's Under the Electric Sky: The Legacy of the Bill Lynch Shows by Christopher Walsh. Having grown up in Nova Scotia, I can certainly attest to the prominence of the Carnival in my life. I'm surprised that such a wonderful and strange aspect of Maritime life hadn't been written up until now. What appealed to you about Christopher Walsh's book?***

Well, Chris Walsh wanted to write this book about carny life and the Bill Lynch Shows and had so much enthusiasm that I couldn't turn him down. I didn't know at first that he wanted to do a kind of Hunter S. Thompson version, but once he threw himself into the project, I could see it was going to be a great book – all that richness of the shows travelling around the Maritimes.

Chris is probably still mad at me for “taming” the book slightly but I’m hoping he’ll forgive me. In the end, the story is a bit like Hunter S. Thompson meets Lucy Maud Montgomery, and I think that is a fine marriage of creative styles for a Pottersfield author.

*Speaking of untapped stories of the Maritime Provinces, I was intrigued to hear a story of a writer who believed their home province had been “all written out” and its stories mined completely. Nova Scotia certainly. What’s missing? What hasn’t been tapped yet? What perspectives are waiting to be expressed, if any? (Keeping any of your own future ideas under wraps, of course.)*

Lots more stories to tell. Amazing stuff. So many great voices and real life tales as well as fiction.

Pottersfield just published *Otto Strasser in Paradise* by H. Millard Wright, the true story of the German who might well have been the leader of the Nazi party but got booted out by Hitler. Guess where he ended up during the war? Paradise, N.S. Yep, down in the Annapolis Valley. If he’d remained as a top dog in the Nazis, history might have been other than what it was.

I think this is a great place for me to be a novelist as well. I sit out here by the ocean in the fog and more characters keep banging at my door. I’ve been teaching and doing publishing work for most of the winter and about to launch back into writing. I simply can’t wait to get my teeth into the next novel I want to write called “Closing Down Heaven.” There are so many more books I want to write. I feel like I’m just starting.

*In your backlist of over 70 books, you have run the gamut from fiction to poetry to creative non-fiction to the young adult (YA) novel. How have these forms interacted? Is there something your YA writing mind can teach your fiction writing, for example? Does your poetry inform your memoir writing, etc?*

YA novel writing taught me to stop trying to be too clever in a literary sort of way. Good character, good dialogue and complex personalities make for good novels. Plots are handy things as well but should never rule. And literary finesse is handy but needs to be tamed sometimes to tell a good story. YA also taught me that teens want really solid, sophisticated, challenging stories. Same as adults.

Writing poetry gets me back to paying attention to every single word, trying to get it right and pack each small poem with as much associated meaning and emotion as possible. So that helps me to keep an eye on the power of language in fiction, too.

*You’re well-known as a chronicler of life in Nova Scotia, yet I wonder what inspirations you find that have nothing to do with this place? A common writer’s comment is that in order to know your own World, you have to look at it from afar, or through the lens of other writers. Are there elements – books, music, experience – that you bounce off of yourself in order to keep the fire stoked? What inspires you?*

Well, I’ve been travelling quite a bit. I’ve spent some time in South Africa and am writing a kids book about a young South African boy named Elton, who grew up in poverty to succeed at living his dream as a paramedic on an ambulance. I’ve also been recording some new spoken word music in Toronto with Jason McGroarty.

Often, I try writing about things I know nothing about. I start the research from scratch and accumulate knowledge until something starts to gel.

*And a final question one cannot go without asking: how’s the surfing looking this year? Any topical literature on climate change in Nova Scotia never fails to mention “shifting oceanic conditions” – as a veteran rider of the sea, have you noticed any major changes in your time on the Nova Scotian ocean?*

Surfing has become more and more popular here. I like to see the next generations coming along. The beach is eroding more than ever here at Lawrencetown and I imagine the sea will be up to the end of my driveway some day. I haven’t lost my passion for surfing. My goal this summer is to become a really good noserider.

But I also use the time between waves to just sit on my board, staring at the sea and sky and daydreaming. That’s where a lot of good material comes from. A writer’s most productive time is when he is unfocused and drifting. Some people call this goofing off. I call it work. But it doesn’t feel like work. I honed my daydreaming skills in school but now, just sitting on my board between waves works just as well. Seawater between your toes is also part of the chemistry that breeds brainwaves and next novels. ■



## Maritime Writers' Workshop at UNB Fredericton July 4-8

MWW 2011 offers a series of one-day or evening workshops on writing essentials to help you get started and take you all the way to publication.

It's an opportunity to work with some of the region's best writers including Sheree Fitch, Linda Hay, Deborah Carr, Jo-Anne Elder, Mark Jarman, Bob Mersereau, Biff Mitchell, Sue Fisher, Kathie Goggin, Andrew Titus, publisher Susanne Alexander and others. One-day workshops are \$125 (+ HST) but you can sign up for five days for the price of four \$500 (+ HST). Evening sessions are \$45 (+ HST). Residence rooms are available on campus at reasonable rates.

Workshops include: Getting Started; Non-fiction Writing for Fun & Profit; Creative Short Fiction; The Thrill & Romance of Popular Fiction; e-publishing; Write in Nature; Murder & Mayhem Mystery Writing; Pitching the Publisher; Live Lines Writing the Stories of Your Life; Poetry, Spoken Word & Hip-hop; Going Whole Blog: Writing for the Blogosphere; Not Merely Children's Play: From Tongue Twisters to Dancing Monkeys to Teenage Angst.

For more information contact Beth Paynter, Coordinator Maritime Writers' Workshop [bpaynter@unb](mailto:bpaynter@unb) or phone 506-458-7106. For details check [www.unb.ca/cel/programs/creative/maritime-writers/](http://www.unb.ca/cel/programs/creative/maritime-writers/) ■



## Write from the Soul with Deborah Carr, May 28 at New Horton, NB

This full day workshop, held along the Bay of Fundy coast and led by Deborah Carr, is designed to be a spa day for your soul. In the relaxed and tranquil setting of An Artist's Garden, you learn about breaking free of structure and rules to release your most authentic voice. You will also learn how to generate fresh perspective and language, escape cliché and surmount writer's block. You will leave refreshed, inspired and confident.

When: Saturday, May 28, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Location: An Artist's Garden, New Horton, New Brunswick

Fee: \$125 (includes HST)

Discover the power of place. Connect with yourself in the midst of nature while doing something you love. Lovely accommodations available at An Artist's Garden ([www.anartistsgarden.com](http://www.anartistsgarden.com)).

For more information, visit [www.natureofwords.com](http://www.natureofwords.com) or to register email Deborah Carr at [info@natureofwords.com](mailto:info@natureofwords.com). ■

## Read by the Sea, River John, July 23

The lineup for Read by the Sea in River John is out. Look for Scotiabank Giller Prize winner, Johanna Skibsrud (*The Sentimentalists*), Alexander MacLeod (*Light Lifting*), multiple award winning author Richard B. Wright (*Mr. Shakespeare's Bastard*) and Commonwealth Writer's Prize winner Shandi Mitchell (*Under This Unbroken Sky*). Jill MacLean and Frieda Wishinsky will read and conduct workshops for children and young adults. Check [www.readbythesea.ca](http://www.readbythesea.ca) for details. ■

## Independent Writing Retreat facilitated by Gwen Davies, July 24-29, Tatamagouche Centre.

Cost: \$535 all inclusive.

Come and work independently on your manuscript, in a community setting designed to support writers. Included are your meals, a private room, beautiful grounds, easy access to the warmer ocean of the Northumberland Strait, walking trails and canoes, and freedom from distractions.

You set your own schedule, and decide the extent to which you want to interact with other independent writers. Unique to this retreat, you also have the option of workshoppping your writing in the evenings, facilitated by author and teacher Gwen Davies.

Call 1-800-218-2220 or register on line at [www.tatacentre.ca](http://www.tatacentre.ca). Youth scholarships are available for this retreat and any other writing programs at the Tatamagouche Centre, for participants aged 18 to 24. Contact [comwrite@gmail.com](mailto:comwrite@gmail.com) for more information. ■

### Writing for Pleasure and for Profit

#### Freelance writing workshop

with Sandra Phinney

When: Sat. May 7, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Where: Maitland Hall (close to Bridgewater)

Fee: \$110 (\$90 WFNS members)

Info: contact Sandra at [s.phinney@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:s.phinney@ns.sympatico.ca)

# imPRESSed & E-pressed

## ***Urban Tigers – Tales of a Cat Vet***

**Kathy Chisholm**

Ailurophile Publishing, May 2011, ISBN 978-0-9868301-0-5; E-book ISBN 978-0-9868301-1-2

A gentle, humorous, heart-warming novel of Dr. Emily McBride's first year at Ocean View Cat Hospital under the guidance of flamboyant Dr. Hughie Doucette. Her sense of humour and dedication earns her a loyal clientele that includes Herbert Grant, retired history professor and cat devotee whose cherished felines drink only bottled water and sniff organically grown catnip, Eunice Dalrymple, self-proclaimed cat psychic, and Titus Tid the Third from Tidsville, a smug Persian with a peculiar affliction.

In 1987, Kathy and her husband established the Atlantic Cat Hospital, one of the first feline veterinary practices in Canada. Drawn from her own experiences, *Urban Tigers* placed second at the 2007 Atlantic Writing Competition, while her manuscript "Seen But Not Heard" won the short fiction category.

## ***Dead Time***

**Christy Ann Conlin**

Annick Press, \$9.95, January 2011, ISBN: 978-1-55451-286-7

Isabella is in jail, waiting to be tried for a horrifically violent crime. Her boyfriend's ex-girlfriend, Lulu, is dead. Even her name makes Isabella want to poke somebody in the eye with a stick. True, Isabella was jealous and asked her boyfriend, Sergei, to prove his love, but how could she have known how far it would go? She's obviously the victim here. Sergei will tell them, will make them believe her story. Or will he?

Christy Ann Conlin is the author of the best-selling novel, *Heave*. Her next adult novel, *Listening to the Island*, is forthcoming from Doubleday.

## ***Our Way Out***

***Principles for a Post-apocalyptic World***

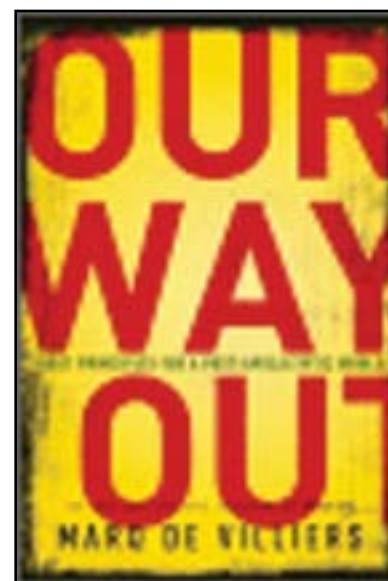
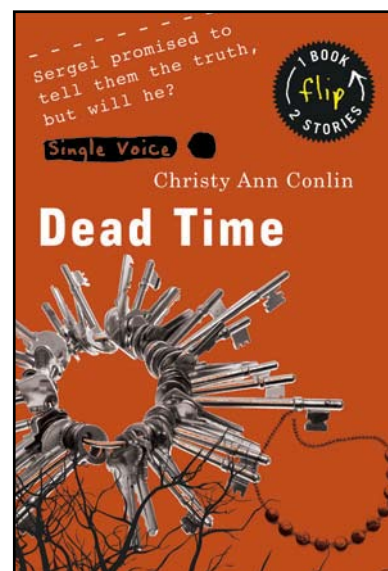
**Marq De Villiers**

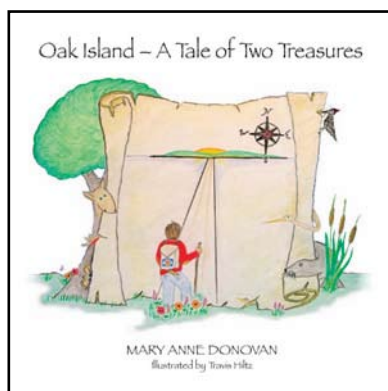
McClelland & Stewart, April 2011, Hardcover \$32.99 ISBN: 978-0-7710-2648-5

eBook \$32.99 ISBN: 978-1-55199-358-4

As a society, we're in an apocalyptic mood. Out of an endless stream of gloomy prognoses for humanity's future, we have emerged with little inspiration and few concrete ideas for change. *Our Way Out* treats our most urgent global challenges as aspects of a single, larger crisis – and it is the first to acknowledge that while crises reinforce each other, solutions enable each other. The transformation to sustainability is already happening, in many small ways, in many parts of the world. *Our Way Out* shows us how we can scale up these efforts to create meaningful and lasting change. This is the story of how within the solutions to the global crises we face, lie the seeds of something greater. It is a handbook for immense and exciting worldwide change. And, it offers us robust hope that we can make things better.

Marq De Villiers has written 10 books on exploration, history, politics, and travel, including *Water: The Fate of Our Most Precious Resource*, which has become the definitive book on this global crisis, with editions and translations in more than 20 countries.





### ***Oak Island – A Tale of Two Treasures***

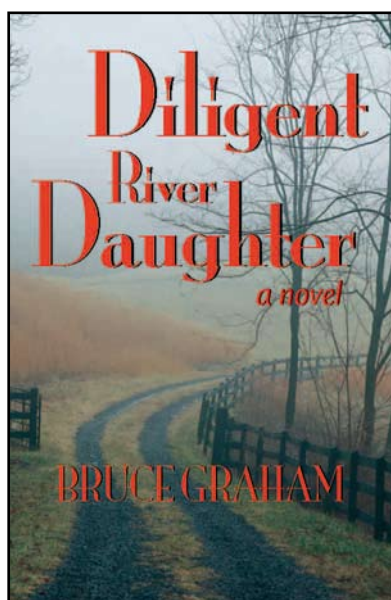
**Mary Anne Donovan**

**Illustrated by Travis Hiltz**

**McIntyre Purcell Publishing \$12.95 ISBN: 9781926916170**

This is not a typical treasure island or pirate adventure. Instead, it relays an important message to readers that the most precious gifts in life are usually right before their eyes and these riches can be found in the magical world of nature. “The intent is to enlighten and inspire the readers to go out and look for magic and treasure that surrounds them,” says author Mary Anne Donovan.

Mary Anne Donovan, who lives in Lunenburg, pursued a career in the biotechnology field, which led to publication in several scientific journals. Mary Anne combined her passions for nature and writing in this tale, inspired by the childhood adventures of her husband, Travis Hiltz, whose playful and innocent illustrations complement the poetic verse.



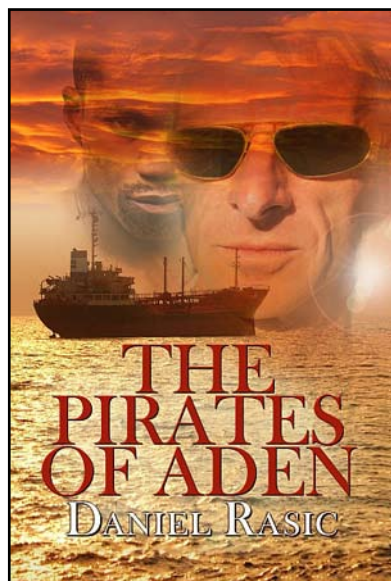
### ***Diligent River Daughter***

**Bruce Graham**

**Pottersfield Press, \$22.95, March 2011, ISBN 978-1-897426-23-4**

*Diligent River Daughter* is the story of Charlene Durant, born on the Parrsboro Shore of Nova Scotia, who fights for her independence and identity as a child and teenager in the early 1900s. At the age of eight, she's travelling the province with her father, scanning the local newspapers for obituaries and reading them to him as he sells tombstones door to door. By the time she's eighteen, she's in Boston kicking down doors to enter the male bastion of newspapers.

Bruce Graham spent four decades as a television journalist. *Diligent River Daughter* is his fifth book. Two of his previous novels – *The Parrsboro Boxing Club* and *Ivor Johnson's Neighbours*, both from Pottersfield Press – were adapted for the stage and performed at The Ship's Company Theatre in Parrsboro.



### ***The Pirates of Aden***

**Daniel Rasic**

**Wings ePress Inc. April 2011, [www.wings-press.com](http://www.wings-press.com)**

**Print: \$12.95 ISBN 978-1-61309-992-6**

**ebook: \$7.50 ISBN 978-1-61309-007-7**

Dr. Paul Alban has tried hard to forget. He's managed to carve out a quiet and relatively anonymous existence with his girlfriend Ellen while working as a physician in Somalia. But when a Somali pirate is injured during the hijacking of a cargo ship and brought to his clinic in the coastal town of Bosasso, the demons of his past threaten to destroy the future he's trying to protect.

Daniel Rasic is a writer and physician who lives in Halifax.



**Is**

**Anne Simpson**

**McClelland & Stewart, \$18.99, March 2011, ISBN: 978-0-7710-8051-7**

A cell is a world within a world within a world. In this new collection, Anne Simpson finds form and inspiration in the cell – as it divides and multiplies, expanding beyond its borders. As these poems journey from the creation of the world emerging out of chaos to the slow unravelling of a life that is revealed in a poem that twists like a double helix, Simpson illuminates what it means to be alive, here and now. Rich with the muscular craft, vibrant imagery, and exquisite musicality for which her poetry is widely acclaimed, this collection sees Simpson continuing to “negotiate an ever-changing path between language and structure” (*Vancouver Sun*). It is a work of great vision from one of our most compelling poetic voices.

Anne Simpson is the author of three previous books of poetry: *Light Falls Through You*, *Loop*, (which won the Griffin Poetry Award) and *Quick*. She is also the author of two novels, *Canterbury Beach* and *Falling*. Simpson lives in Antigonish, where she helped establish the Writing Centre at St. Francis Xavier University.

**Man Behind the Mission:**

**A Biography of Silas Tertius Rand,**

**Shirley Soleil**

**Sunny Publications, \$24.95, ISBN: 978-0-9866381-0-7**

This is a biography of Silas Tertius Rand, Nova Scotia minister and missionary. While Rand is best known for his advocacy work with the First Nations peoples of the Maritime Provinces, this book examines the man behind the mission – his lineage, education, family and writing. Rand was a self-educated man, preacher, linguist and advocate for the First Nations people. His victories during times of adversity are an encouragement to all Canadians.

Shirley Soleil, B.A., M.Div., M.Ed. is known as Sunny by family and friends. This is her first book. She lives in Wolfville,

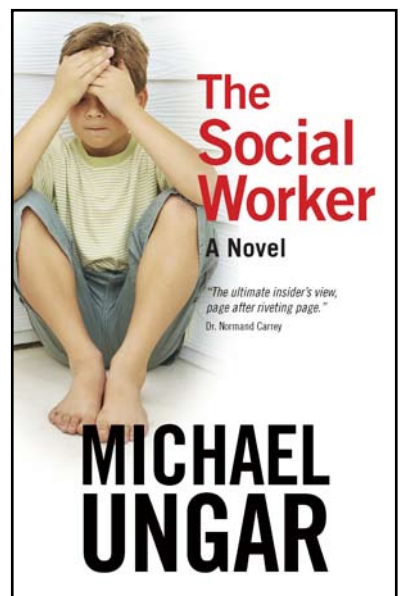
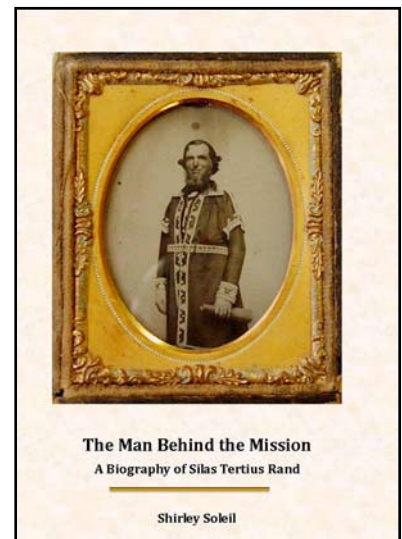
**The Social Worker**

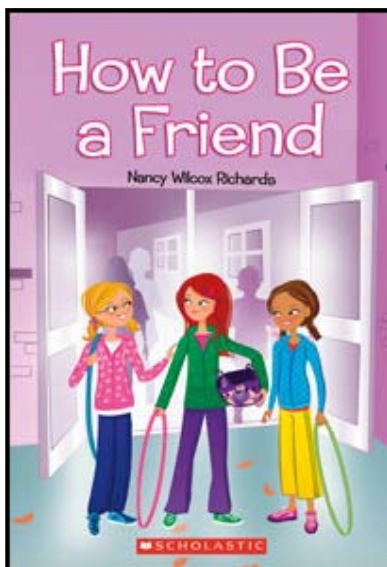
**Michael Ungar**

**Pottersfield Press, \$22.95, March 2011, ISBN: 987-1-897426-26-5**

Joey is not your typical social worker. He burns down houses to solve bureaucratic deadlocks, steals to get his clients bigger welfare cheques, and lies. In and out of foster homes, Joey knows what it feels like to be a client. He sets out to get revenge on the system that he believes failed him, but buried in old agency files he learns his family has many secrets yet untold. *The Social Worker* is a controversial and provocative story of what it means to reach out to the most vulnerable, set amidst the hidden world of those whose motivations to help can be as difficult to understand as the systems for which they work.

This is Mike Ungar's first novel. He has published nine non-fiction titles and his short fiction won the \$10,000 first place prize in the 2003 *Toronto Star* Short Story Contest.





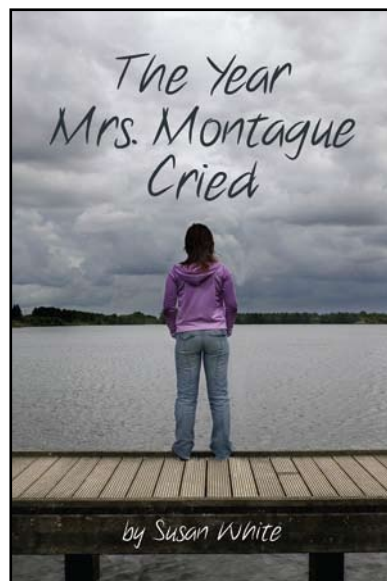
***How to be a Friend***  
**Nancy Wilcox-Richards**  
 Scholastic Canada Ltd., ISBN 978-1-4431-0485-2

Lexie is nervous. It's her first day of Grade Three at a new school. Her classmates seem nice, but will they still be friendly when they find out she's different? Then the teacher announces a new class project. All the kids are excited – except Lexie. Will she be able to take part like everybody else?

Nancy Wilcox-Richards has been an elementary school teacher for 29 years and resides with her husband, two children, a golden retriever dog and one cantankerous cat on an almost perfect lake. Her books have been translated into French, Spanish, Chinese and Norwegian. She finds inspiration for many of her stories from everyday life events and her own children. She also writes online teacher resources.

***The Year Mrs. Montague Cried***  
**Susan White**

Acorn Press, May 2011, \$12.95, ISBN: 9781894838573

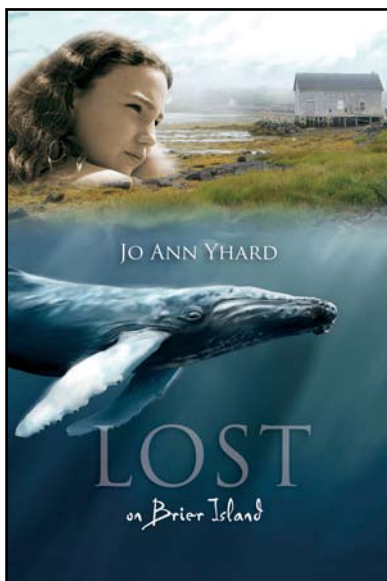


When Taylor is nine years old, her brother Corey becomes terminally ill. During this time she writes a journal that mirrors her family's journey through treatment, separation, coming to terms with a terminal illness, and the eventual loss of a sibling. It is a touching story of relationships and personal growth, which encourages discussion of many important issues faced by young adults. The novel – Susan White's first – won the young adult category of the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia 2010 Atlantic Writing Competition.

Sue White was born in New Brunswick. Settling on the Kingston Peninsula, she and her husband raised four children and ran a small farm while she taught elementary school. Since retiring she is grateful to now have the time to work on her writing and the freedom to regularly visit her new granddaughter in Alberta.

***Lost on Brier Island***

**Jo Ann Yhard**  
 Nimbus Publishing \$12.95 ISBN 1551098199



Fourteen-year-old Alex's life is in ruins. Her family ripped apart by unspeakable tragedy, she is stuck on Brier Island for the summer with her aunt. At first, Alex is desperate to escape this place where everyone's business is public knowledge and there is too much time to think. But the island begins to work its magic, with its quirky characters, rugged landscape, and whale-filled ocean, and Alex forms a special bond with an adventurous baby whale she names Daredevil. Alex slowly begins the long journey toward healing. But everything changes when Alex is suddenly thrown into a life-or-death struggle. Can she find the courage and the strength to save Daredevil and herself? Moving, funny, and honest, this is a powerful story of losing loved ones and finding yourself, set against the stunning backdrop of Brier Island.

Jo Ann Yhard's first novel, *The Fossil Hunter of Sydney Mines*, is a Canadian bestseller. Jo Ann lives in Halifax with her husband, James, where she writes on her yellow laptop, Bumble Bee.

# Who's doing what

■ The Moveable Feast, a fundraiser for various Writers' Federation programs, is back on the table. The Saturday, May 7 feast will run from 3 to 6 p.m. at the St. Margaret's Bay home of **Carol and Peter Moreira** (15 Foxberry Hill, Glen Haven), where mystery writers **Pam Callow**, **Anne Emery** and **Lisa Harrington** will talk about mystery writing. Tickets are \$20 at the door. Refreshments will be served. For more information or if you'd like to attend, please email: carolmoreira@eastlink.ca or call 821 2048. If you'd like to host a Moveable Feast, the Fed office has a handy manual and Jon Tattrie is the contact person on the WFNS board.

■ Halifax's Atlantica Hotel is the site for the launch of **Kathy Chisholm's** first novel, *Urban Tigers – Tales of a Cat Vet*, on May 15, from 7 to 9 p.m. Symphony Nova Scotia's Woodwind Quintet will be playing and there will be a cash bar and author reading. In 1987, Kathy and her husband established the Atlantic Cat Hospital in Halifax, one of the first feline veterinary practices in Canada. Drawn from her own experiences, the novel placed second at the 2007 Atlantic Writing Competition, while Kathy's story, "Seen But Not Heard," took first place in the short story category.

■ **Lesley Choyce** is fond of ravens, so it's appropriate that *Random*, his YA book published by Red Deer Press, is a White Ravens Title for 2011 – one of 250 outstanding international books for children and young adults. Chosen annually by language specialists from the International Youth Library in

Munich, Germany, the White Ravens catalogue is a collection of books considered to be especially noteworthy because of their universal themes and/or their exceptional and often innovative artistic and literary style and design. Each year the catalogue is introduced at the Bologna Children's Book Fair. An online version is available on the International Children's Digital Library (ICDL) website (<http://en.childrenslibrary.org/>).



■ The latest edition of *Fathom*, the Dalhousie University and University of King's College undergraduate Creative Writing journal, was launched at the Grad House on April 5. **Jenna Harvie** was editor-in-chief. There were 14 student readings and music by former Creative Writing student Scott Biggar. **Sue Goyette** is a faculty advisor and **Alex MacLeod** was a special guest at the reading.

■ **Janet Sketchley** is the sole Nova Scotian among the 37 Canadian writers included in the inspirational anthology, *A Second Cup of Hot Apple Cider: Words to Stimulate the Mind and Delight the Spirit*. Janet hosted the East Coast portion of the nationwide launch in April at Regal Road Baptist Church, Dartmouth, with servings of hot apple cider (the drink) and samples from *Hot Apple Cider* (the grace-filled and encouraging stories). Janet says her passion is fiction – contemporary Christian fiction with a twist of suspense. Her published work includes over 100 articles, reviews and stories under her own name and the pen name of Joanna Mallory. She's a member of The Word Guild, InScribe Christian Writers' Fellowship, and American Christian Fiction Writers, as well as Acquisitions Editor for InScribe's FellowScript newsletter.

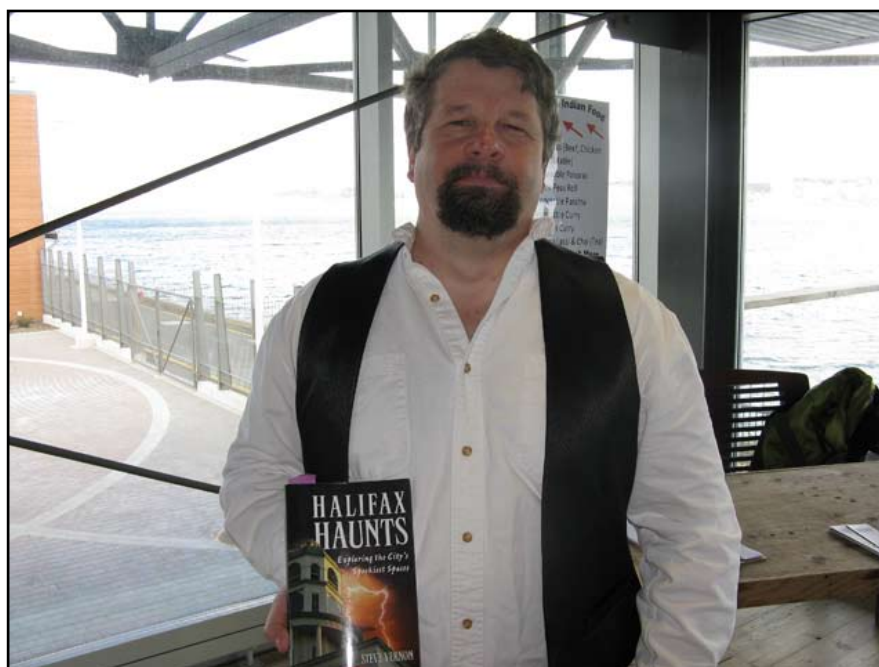
■ A frequent contributor to *Saltsapes*, **Sandra Phinney** received a Northern Lights Award For Excellence in Travel Journalism, sponsored by the Canadian Tourism Commission. Sandra took third prize in the Independent Journalist Category for "Only in Pubnico," a journey into the lives of some of the quirky characters who live in the coastal community in Nova Scotia, which appeared in the November/December 2010 issue of *Saltsapes*. "One of the unique things about writing this story," says Sandra, "was that photographers Kate Barden and Bruce Cramer and I moved into Pubnico for four days. People were so welcoming and helpful. We could have spent two weeks there. Not many writers get the opportunity



to be on assignment with amazing photographers like these for a few days, nor do we often get a chance to get totally immersed in a community.” Her biggest challenge was to pare the story down. “My first draft was well over 12,000 words because I had too many characters and wanted to include them all,” she says, adding that she feels it’s essential to give an accurate portrait of a person, people or place. “I worry about ‘getting it right’ – not to please the people I’m writing about, but to paint a picture that is honest, educational, and insightful, along with being fun to read and a celebration of being human.”

■ Literary Lunches are still on at the Halifax Club ([www.halifaxclub.ns.ca](http://www.halifaxclub.ns.ca)) and open to the public. The March event “Step Into Spring” featured **Vicki Grant**, who left a career in advertising and television to write critically acclaimed YA novels; **Jill MacLean**, author of dozens of novels under several pennames who now writes YA books under her own name; and **Sheree Fitch** writer of verse, poetry, picture books, nonfiction plays and novels. National Poetry Month was on the Halifax Club lunch menu in April with the official launch of *Open Heart Forgery Year One Anthology*, a collection of poetry from some of Halifax’s established and emerging writers. *Open Heart Forgery*, edited by Donal Power, is Halifax’s free monthly poetry journal that has published more than 90 local writers since its start in May 2010.

■ **Heddy Johannesen**’s article on athames is in *Circle Magazine*. About.com published her piece about her cat Shadow in the Reader’s Stories of Living with a Domestic Cat. Her poetry appeared in the April issue of *Open Heart Forgery*.



■ **Steve Vernon** at the Read Local Lunchtime Reading Series at the Seaport Farmers Market. Nimbus has just released his first YA novel *Sinking Deeper Or My Questionable (Possibly Heroic) Decision to Invent a Sea Monster*.

■ Authors @ Acadia presented **matt robinson** reading from his fourth collection of poetry – *Against the Hard Angle*. Matt’s previous books include *A Ruckus of Awkward Stacking*, *how we play at it: a list*, and *no cage contains a stare that well*, a full length volume of hockey poems.

■ In addition to home cooking with the freshest ingredients, the Trellis Café ([www.trelliscafe.com](http://www.trelliscafe.com)) in Hubbards showcased The Breath upon the Bay: An Evening of Locally Grown Poetry with **Anne Simpson**, **Carole Langille**, **Sue Goyette**, Heather Schellinck, Tim Addison, **Marilynn Rudi** and **Veryen Haysom**.

■ T.S. Eliott may think April is the cruelest month, but it was very kind to a crop of workshops throughout the province. The Tatamagouche Centre ([www.tatacentre.ca](http://www.tatacentre.ca)) hosted two: The Young Writers Program, which gave creative writers ages

12 to 18 the opportunity to work with professional writers **Shauntay Grant**, **Joanne Jefferson**, Ken Ward, and **Brian Braganza**, and Writing Through Spirit: A Creative Writing Retreat with **Donna Morrissey** designed for beginning writers. **Carole Langille** gave a day-long poetry workshop at the Shambhala Centre in Halifax. And **Deirdre Dwyer** taught Creative Writing in Musquodoboit Harbour at The Old School.

■ **Donna Morrissey** is giving two workshops in May. One at the Truro library on Thursday, May 12, from 1 to 8 p.m. And another on Saturday, May 14 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Four Fathers Library in Amherst. Both are designed around finding voice and combining fact and fiction to create short stories from one’s past. develop right brain thinking. The fee is \$79. For information email: [morrisseyworkshops@bellaliant.net](mailto:morrisseyworkshops@bellaliant.net).

■ The Hackmatack Children's Choice Book Awards for 2010-11 will be announced May 13, following a week of authors reading tours throughout Atlantic Canada. Each year, thousands of children aged 9 to 12 (grades 4 to 6), read from the selection of Canadian books and vote for the winners.

**Philip Roy** is on the 2010-11 shortlist for fiction for *Journey to Atlantis*, the second book in his Submarine Outlaw Series. The Hackmatack fiction list for 2011-12 includes *The Adventures of Jack Lime* by **James Leck** (Kids Can Press); *The Dread Crew: Pirates of the Backwoods* by **Kate Inglis** (Nimbus); and *Pit Pony* by **Joyce Barkhouse** (Formac). The nonfiction list includes *Highway of Heroes* by **Kathy Stinson** (Fitzhenry & Whiteside). Details on the program and how kids can participate can be found at [www.hackmatack.ca](http://www.hackmatack.ca).

■ Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice promotes reading by granting a Willow Award to the Canadian books voted by students to be the best of those nominated in three categories: Shining Willow (K to 3), Diamond Willow (4 to 6) and Snow Willow (7 to 9). The 2011 Snow Willow short list includes *A Hare in the Elephants Truck* by **Jan L. Coates** (Red Deer Press) and *Home Truths* by **Jill MacLean** (Dancing Cat Books).

■ The Village Series featured Poets in a Pub. Read by the Sea and Fables Pub presented readings by **Harry Thurston**, **Carole Langille**, Zach Wells and **Anna Quon** in March in Tatamagouche. Anna is featured in Inside the Author's Studio column in *Atlantic Books Today's* Spring 2011 issue. And in the same issue **Jon Tattrie** discusses Going Digital.



■ **E. Alex Pierce's** workshop Landscape and Memory recently wrapped up in Shelburne. The highly successful program brought folks from across Southwest Nova Scotia to Shelburne's McKay Memorial Library for two months' worth of Saturdays, followed by regular post-class luncheons at The Loyalist Inn. Left to right: Cheryl Pink (Yarmouth); Janice Comeau (Yarmouth); Alex Pierce (Sable River); Pat Nickerson (Clyde River); Timothy Gillespie (Shelburne); Nate Crawford (WFNS); Judith Green Ferron (Pubnico); Mabel Saulnier (Pleasant Valley); and Diane Nickerson-O'Connell (Doctors Cove).



■ Engage! A number of keen participants beamed in to Fed HQ and were indeed fully engaged by How to Write and Publish Science Fiction with SF writing guru **Nina Munteanu**. For info on Nina's upcoming workshops and activities, visit [www.ninamunteanu.com](http://www.ninamunteanu.com).





■ It was standing room only at the launch of *Tide Road*, the much anticipated debut novel from **Valerie Compton**. Following an introduction from Goose Lane Editions' Susanne Alexander, Valerie read an excerpt for the crowd at the ViewPoint Gallery, Halifax.

■ **Gary Blackwood** directed *The Belle of Amherst* by William Luce at the Marigold Cultural Centre in Truro in April. The one-woman show about the life of poet Emily Dickinson featured Amanda Jefferson-Gillis as Emily. In addition to marking the 125th anniversary of Dickinson death, the performance celebrated National Poetry Month. On the writing front, Gary's work covers the whole spectrum of kids' books, from picture books to young adult, both fiction and nonfiction, as well as writing plays for adults and young audiences.

■ **George Elliott Clarke** has a new "colouring" book out. *Red*, just released by Gaspereau Press, joins his previous books of *Blue* and *Black*. *Red* displays an expansive range of poetic forms and rhetorical poses, ringing with Clarke's lush voice, full-throated and unparalleled.



■ The Atlantic Book Awards Society hosted a successful fundraising event on March 22, featuring **Alexander MacLeod**, **Sheree Fitch**, and **Sheldon Currie** in conversation with Linden MacIntyre (left) at Dalhousie University's Ondaatje Hall.



■ "From Page to Stage: The How Tos of Publishing" was another successful night of literary discussion, hosted by Wordrhythm Productions at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. Pictured from left to right are panelists **Sue Goyette**, **Nate Crawford**, **Wanda Robson**, **Lesley Choyce**, **George Elliott Clarke**, and moderator **Shauntay Grant**. (Photo by Asna Adhami)

*Everyone's invited to the  
WFNS Annual General Meeting  
Saturday, June 4, 12 noon  
at the WFNS Office, 1113 Marginal Road, Halifax*



■ In May, Nimbus will release *In the Great Days of Sail*, a new edition of 14 of Archibald MacMechan's classic sea tales with an introduction by editor **Elizabeth Peirce**. MacMechan (1862–1933) collected the sea stories of Nova Scotia captains, crew members, shipbuilders, and their families, and published them in three volumes, all popular successes in their day but now out of print. A writer and literary scholar who taught at Dalhousie University, MacMechan also wrote the official history of the 1917 Halifax Explosion.

■ Nimbus will publish *Elizabeth Bishop Nova Scotia's "home-made" Poet* by **Sandra Barry** in May. The pictorial biography of the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet marks the 100th anniversary of her birth. Sandra takes readers through the highlights and turning points in Bishop's life, including her formative years in Great Village, Nova Scotia.

■ The 2010 Atlantic Journalism Awards will be presented May 7. **Stephen Kimber** is nominated in Feature Writing – Print for *Is Corey Wright the Wrong Man*, which appeared in the May 6, 2010, issue of *The Coast*. **Leslie Lowe** is a finalist in Feature Writing – Radio for *The Other Side of the Fist*, broadcast on CBC Radio's *Maritime Magazine*. Up for the Atlantic Magazine – Best Profile Article are **Jon Tattrie** for *That Far Shore*, a profile of long-distance swimmer Kristin Roe in the December 2010 *Halifax Magazine*, and **Sandra Phinney** for *Only in Pubnico*, published in the November/December *Saltsclapes*. To view, hear or read all the nominated finalists in each of the 28 categories visit <http://ajasonline.org/finalists2010>.



■ WFNS' eight-week series of fiction writing workshops, Hungry Minds, came to a close with a public round table talk on April 14. Enrolees from as near as two blocks away and as far as Digby Neck joined the eight Halifax-based writer/instructors for a rousing meeting of the Minds that covered a cross-section of subjects, including some war stories (all victories; no defeats) from the writing trenches. Many thanks to the instructors and all who attended for a fantastic eight-week journey.

■ A classic story about the relationship between a child and the natural world from two of Canada's most beloved writers is now back in print. Lorimer has reissued *Anna's Pet* Illustrated by Ann Blades and written by **Joyce Barkhouse** and Margaret Atwood.

■ Lorimer has also released a revised and updated edition of *Gone Bad* by **Lesley Choyce**. The YA novel about youth and violence was originally published under the title *Good Idea Gone Bad* in 1994.

■ **Don Aker's** latest YA novel is out from HarperCollins. *Fifth Rule* is the sequel to Don's novel *The First Stone*.

### New & Renewing Members

Dee Appleby, Truro  
Linda Bolton, Halifax  
Lorrie Boylen, Sambro  
Dorothyanne Brown, Dartmouth  
Leanne Chisholm, Halifax  
Catherine Cooper, Halifax  
Mary Anne Donovan, Lunenburg  
Rachel A. Edmonds, Pleasantville

Devin Folks, Wolfville  
Beth George, Brooklyn  
Sarah Gignac, Halifax  
Jenna Harvie, Halifax  
Judith Howe, Halifax  
Stacy Hudson, Dartmouth  
Jennifer Huizen, Bedford  
Mitchell Johnson, North Sydney  
Philip Kay, Halifax  
Joan Levack, Berwick  
Marilyn Livingston, Truro  
Christine MacDonald, Pleasant Hill  
Angela MacKay, Halifax  
Natalie MacLellan, Halifax  
Mandeep Matharu, Dartmouth  
Lori McKay, Dartmouth  
Maritza Miari, Dartmouth  
Kyla Milne, Halifax  
Henri-Dominique Paratte, Waterville  
Francis R. Phillips, Halifax  
Erika Pineo, Hantsport  
Rose Poirier, Halifax  
Daniel Rasic, Halifax  
Taylor Redmond, Parrsboro  
Wanda Robson, North Sydney  
Pamela Segger, Lunenburg  
Crystal Vaughan, Halifax  
Estelle Verner Janega, Bedford  
Lloyd Williams, Lunenburg ■

# It's time for arts coverage to come back from the dead

Ron Foley Macdonald

Arts coverage has declined in Nova Scotia and the Atlantic Region since 2008. This fact has hardly been considered or discussed within the larger population of the East Coast, to the sector's detriment.

Compared to the continuing coverage of the film and television production sector, which generally gets covered as business stories, the arts have suffered what I think is a 60 percent drop. Starting with the closure of the *Halifax Daily News* in February 2008, continuing with the *Halifax Chronicle Herald's* 25 percent cut in personnel a year later, and capping with CBC Radio Halifax dropping its Arts Reporter position last fall, the situation has clearly gone past the crisis point.

When I started writing for the *Halifax Daily News* in the mid-1990s, there were six people in the Arts and Entertainment department. One covered television, with an emphasis on local productions; one was devoted to the visual arts; one broke cultural stories and wrote on government policy. A twice-a-week film reviewer also ran the book reviews, while the department editor covered the live music scene. I reviewed theatre and local recordings.

As the paper slowly declined, so did the section. A merger with the "Life" pages signalled that the slide was terminal. A succession of departures and firings pretty well prefigured the end.

The local picture mirrored what was happening in the print media in North America through the mid-2000s. In the last half-decade, just to cite one particular example, more than 200 full-time, permanent film critics lost their jobs. Even *Variety*, the bible of the entertainment industry, took a cleaver to its drama and indie culture positions.

What was supposed to take up the slack, of course, was an expected army of citizen journalists ready to flood the Internet with their pithy opinions and ready remarks on arts and culture, both local and national. All unpaid, of course.

What happened was not exactly what was expected. I wrote, for example, for two Internet sites – Aliant.net and Infomoney.net. Both still exist but have not quite figured how to make money from the Internet. The army of citizen journalists hasn't quite materialized. Yes, there might be lots of blogs and commentary on the net, but very little of it replaces the kind of directed writing that helped disseminate a larger discourse on the arts.

Again, compare almost anything that happens in the film industry. Demands last December from film industry representatives in Nova Scotia resulted in changes to the tax credit for the film sector in this province. This was extensively

covered in the business pages. In New Brunswick, a groundswell from producers in the Picture Province has resulted in massive coverage of the New Brunswick government's decision to eliminate their film and television production tax credit. Their struggle is just beginning and it looks like it's going to be a fiesty fight indeed.

In the 1980s, Wormwood's Cinema Lowner Gordon Parsons led a group of arts practitioners to a confrontation with the managers of CBC Radio Halifax. Fed up with one CBC film reviewer, who never reviewed locally made or even Canadian features, Parsons forced the CBC to expand and open up their arts coverage.

With the commercial media now making up some of the lost ground of the last recession – the *Halifax Chronicle Herald* recently released some impressive gains in its circulation – maybe it's time for the arts community to emulate the late Wormwood's operator's lead to re-establish the importance of the arts in the local and regional media. Otherwise the necessary dialogue on the arts will remain a one-way monologue, consisting of press releases, announcements and listings. The question about what all this arts activity means in the larger sphere of things will remain unanswered. ■

## Social Media – Part 2: Some handy tips

Sandra Phinney

As mentioned in my March/April column, the Travel Media Association of Canada (TMAC) and the Atlantic Magazine Association teamed up to offer professional development workshops for their members. The focus was on social media. Some of the presenters agreed to send me some tips and advice for WFNS members. Even if you're an old pro at social media, do take a minute to read what Trevor Adams, author, freelance writer, and editor of *Halifax Magazine*, and Tim Currie, who teaches online journalism at the University of King's College, have to say.

### TREVOR ADAMS

Twitter: [Twitter.com/HalifaxMagazine](https://twitter.com/HalifaxMagazine)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/HalifaxMagazine](https://www.facebook.com/HalifaxMagazine)

Website: [www.halifaxmag.ca](http://www.halifaxmag.ca)

As an editor, it's been far more useful than I imagined, in two distinct ways.

The first is the relationship with readers. It's great to be able to quickly connect with readers. Occasionally taking the time to solicit story ideas, poll readers on proposed changes to the magazine, or just asking them what they're thinking has done a ton to build reader engagement with *Halifax Magazine*. It often felt like we were guessing at what readers wanted from us – now we just ask. It's important to remember that our social media community still represents only a fraction of our total readership (about 25 percent) so you do have to keep it in context, but on the whole, it's been useful.

The second way social media has been useful is building relationships with our freelancers. We rely heavily on freelance writers and photographers, who we often communicate with entirely through email. Through Twitter and Facebook, they can interact more directly with us and readers, and feel much more like part of our team.

### Challenges/Downsides

People will often tell you that one of the big challenges with social media is time. That seems kind of shortsighted to me. I mean, is answering the phone a big time-challenge too? If done well, staying active through social media requires very little time. People are following you because they're interested in what you think and what you do. Talk about that. It's not

nearly as difficult as people make it sound. When I do an interesting interview, I tweet about it. If a writer files a story I enjoy, I mention it on Facebook. It only takes seconds.

The biggest downside is that social media conversations evolve quickly. Readers expect you to be honest and candid, but you have to exercise discretion. I learned this early. I made a comment on Facebook about being appalled by the grammatical errors in a story I was editing. Mere seconds later, I received an email from a writer assuming I was referring to her story, and frothing with indignation. In retrospect, I should have just saved that comment for the water cooler.

Be candid and honest. Engage in real conversations. Ask questions and respond to answers. Don't try to script your social-media message. Readers will instantly disengage if they don't feel it's a real conversation. Don't force your social media into a schedule – keep it spontaneous but return to it often. Everyone can find two or three interesting things to talk about a day, with a minimal investment of time.

### TIM CURRIE

Twitter: [twitter.com/tcurrie](https://twitter.com/tcurrie)

Website: [timcurrie.ca](http://timcurrie.ca)

Blog: [newsnext.ca](http://newsnext.ca)

It might seem that the person with the most Twitter followers or Facebook friends has the most influence. But that isn't necessarily the case. Your influence is measured by the actions people take in response to your social media posts. For example, do people click the Like button on your Facebook updates? Do they retweet your Twitter posts? Do they comment on your blog? Engagement is the new metric of the Internet, even if it's difficult to measure.

Blogs remain the best way to explain something in-depth. Twitter and Facebook are more effective at distribution and short comment, with Facebook excelling in reach and Twitter excelling at timeliness and messaging tools.

### Five things you can do to increase your influence in social media:

Include a link: Studies have shown that tweets with links to articles on websites are more likely to be retweeted than those without. Links are the backbone of



the Internet. Links give your audience hard information to debate. They offer up information that you don't have to repeat. They give your argument more validity. They aid transparency by allowing people to check up on your interpretation.

Add some value: Simply pointing to information on the web can be useful to your audience. But Internet users rely on their social media pals to be their filter. So adding your opinion or putting a piece of information into context provides a real service. Internet users are deluged with information. Everyone wants to know: What does it mean? Is it worth my time? You might not author much original information yourself, but you can gain a substantial following by simply being a trusted guide.

Become an expert: Studies suggest that a big factor in building influence is having a beat and sticking to it. It's all about focus. Become known as the go-to person on a certain subject – however small that subject might be.

Keep it short: Twitter limits you to 140 characters, but if someone retweets your comment and adds a few words of their own, they need some space. Aim for 120 characters in Twitter. It's a good rule for Facebook or any other social media service. The hallmark of the Internet is its capacity to amplify short messages.

Interact: Engagement is a two-way street. It's important to acknowledge other people's work and not just expect people to pay attention to you. It's simply good manners. But each mention you place on the Internet builds your online profile and pushes your name into a new audience. Credit others by name when you pass along information.

A final piece of advice is to try to use a common username in all of your social media services. A single social media handle will help bind your identity in the mind of your audience. Pick something unique, something immediately recognizable. For example, New York Times' David Carr uses @carr2n. Whatever you do, make sure it's something you can live with for a while.

Good advice all around! ■

*Sandra Phinney writes from her perch on the Tusket River in Southwest Nova Scotia. She's starting to get the hang of blogging. Do drop in and say "boo" at [www.sandraphinney.com](http://www.sandraphinney.com). Meanwhile, she'll be giving a workshop on freelance writing May 7. See ad on page 12, or contact her at [s.phinney@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:s.phinney@ns.sympatico.ca)*

## Write When You Wonder, Write When You Wander Workshop with Dianne Hicks Morrow in PEI

PEI School of the Arts, North Rustico, July 4-8.

Through guided writing exercises you'll explore your own wonder and wanderings, both inner and outer. Your resulting writing will surprise you. And who knows where it will lead you – into writing a journal, a memoir, story, poem or play – it's your choice. A desire to explore your world through writing is all that's required. You'll have the opportunity to receive useful feedback on your new writing from the group, in a supportive environment, as well as the option to bring up to 10 pages of previous writing for written feedback from the facilitator.

By the end of this five-day workshop, you'll have written a body of new work, and determined how to shape it to suit your goals. You'll have read your new writing to the group for helpful feedback based on group guidelines. You'll have met one-to-one with the facilitator to discuss her written response to your writing. You'll have the opportunity to give a public reading to the whole school and guests on the final afternoon.

Pre-registration is recommended by May 31. For more information: [www.peischoolofthearts.com](http://www.peischoolofthearts.com). ■

## Mountain and Wilderness Writing at Banff

Application deadline: June 15

Off-site manuscript development: August 14 to October 15

On-site residency: October 28 to November 18

In this unique residency program, six writers delve into their own writing projects (essay, memoir, biography, feature article, poetry, or work of fiction) on a topic in the area of mountain or wilderness culture. This includes writing with a focus on adventure, history, or the environment. This residency offers participants individual consultation with two faculty editors experienced in book and magazine publishing, regular workshop discussions, and work space in Leighton Artists' Colony studios. Financial aid up to 100 per cent is available.

Details on Banff Literary Programs can be found at: <http://www.banffcentre.ca/>. ■

# Atlantic Writing Competition news flash

## Playwright winners announced & judging changes

Hillary Titley

You might think it's a little early for an update on the Atlantic Writing Competition, but winners in a brand-new category and significant changes to the operation of the competition have necessitated a mid-term report.

New to the competition was the unproduced play category, put in place to address a deficit of opportunities in the Atlantic region for new and untested plays and playwrights. The category drew 14 one- and two-act plays from all four Atlantic provinces. A volunteer three-person jury read and commented on scripts during January and February and met in early March to settle on the winners.

Prizes were awarded on March 28 at the Robert Merritt Awards celebrating achievement in Nova Scotian theatre arts. Congratulations are due to David Christoffel of Halifax for taking first place; Griffin McInnes, currently in his final year at the University of King's College, for a second-place prize; David Hughes of Dartmouth for achieving third; and Bet O'Toole of Saint John, NB and Beth George of Brooklyn, NS, for scoring honourable mentions.

Our cited playwrights have been composing scenes for varied lengths of time, from a long career's worth to just starting out. Third-place winner David Hughes tells us, "This is my first stage play, although once upon a time I wrote several for CBC Radio, as well as a good deal of revue material. It all goes back 50 years or so."

Writers mined their personal experiences or questions about human nature. Griffin McInnes' "Dead in Wawa" germinated thusly: "Two years ago I went treeplanting in Northern Ontario. It was a whole lot of fun, but tough – hard piece-work, 10 hours a day, six to 10 days on end without breaks. You get very close to the people you're working with and some of them can be real characters."

Bet O'Toole drew inspiration for "The Land of Beauty," from personal curiosity. "I've always been intrigued by the importance placed on art and its various interpretations of beauty, sometimes in contrast to the



The winners of the Atlantic Writing Competition's Unproduced Play category: left to right: Bet O'Toole (H.M.), Beth George (H.M.), Griffin McInnes (2nd), David Christoffel (1st). Absent: David Hughes (3rd).

importance of the beauty in the human spirit of kindness and love."

"As someone trying to work my way into the theatre scene here," Griffin McInnes says, "any exposure and criticism for my work is always a good thing. Having professionals in the industry critique my writing is invaluable."

And, of course, there is the sheer to-hell-with-it! thrill of entering your work into a competition. "When I saw the item in the PARC (Playwrights Atlantic Resource Centre) Newsletter, and not having had any luck in flogging the script to various theatres, I just thought it would be fun to enter," says Hughes. "The result was totally unexpected."

The niche the competition has carved for itself as a launching pad for literary talent across the Maritimes is a tremendous source of pride for WFNS. With the unproduced play contest, WFNS aims to generate a legacy similar to that of the competition's other categories.

The deadline for the 35th Atlantic Writing Competition's Unproduced Play Contest is Thursday, July

28, 2011. (Entries to all other competition categories will be welcome in Fall 2011.) Online entry will be available this year.

If the numerous entries to this competition are the fuel, what really greases the machinery of the AWC are the valiant volunteer readers who contribute their time and expertise reading, assessing and responding to piles of manuscripts. The changes to the judging process come directly from comments received from these two components of AWC. For entrants, the eight-month wait to hear about the status of manuscripts was getting too long, while for readers, the pile of entries to read and comment on was simply getting to be too big.

For the 34th AWC, a shortlist of finalists were created for each category. Pairs of readers were tasked with reading and responding to a smaller batch of entries and choosing whatever instances of outstanding writing were among them. These are the finalists for each category and from among these manuscripts, final judges will choose the ultimate prize winners.

The competition is something we are never finished with and we at the office are talking right now about the deadline for the 35th AWC and about how to best celebrate our winning writers in the fall.

Pats on the back and crossed fingers are in order for the following finalists for the 34th AWC: (Entrants' pseudonyms are used.)

#### **Creative Non-Fiction**

"The Slip" by Taco  
"Memoir (Prologue and Part of Ch. 1)" by Ben Berlitz  
"263 Miles From Brazzaville" by Tom Swifty  
"Reflections on Moving Wood" by Griff  
"A Time Before Memory" by Amelia Grace  
"High Winds" by Linda Jones  
"In Praise of the Off-Season" by Merilee  
"Fog Island" by Jed  
"The Cross Road" Anthony D'Sousa

#### **Poetry**

"This Liminal Place" by Joseph Pais  
"November Poems" by Jay Kay  
"Tenacious Enuciations: Five Poems Inspired by Christian Bok" by Sebastian  
"Sweet Release" by Evelyn Wood  
"Drifting" by Will Blackler  
"Patrimonial Calendar" by Griff

#### **Short Story**

"Pizzaion and Qison" by Mitch Zarow  
"Moving Forward" by Lady Grey  
"Outbreak" by Ann Denis  
"Rita's Wish" by Rio Bently  
"The Championship" by Frances Doyle  
"From The Outside Looking In" by Kaye Simms  
"The Chair" by Mae Clark  
"I Heard A Small Boy Singing: A Memoir" by Charlotte Miles  
"The Grandson She Never Had" by Lavendula  
"A Dip After Work" by River Current

#### **Writing For Children**

"Henrietta's Nightlight" by Shirley Holmes  
"Pick Me Up Daddy" by Klondike Kate  
"Tap, Tap, Twirl" by Miss Moffat  
"Kili Cat and Ding the Bat" by Bobby Hubbard  
"Hiding In The Fireplace" by Suzanna Wiltse  
"Snow Day in Paradise" by Lizzie Pike

#### **Adult Novel**

"A Certain Kind of Freedom" by Helen Grace Kelly  
"Sacrificing Sticks" by J.K. MacDonald  
"For A Song" by Jim Waito  
"It All Comes Down To This" by Bill Hay  
"Turn Us Again" by Audrey Smith  
"The Fallen Angels" by Ryszard Wallechinsky  
"That Thing That Happened by Mavis Edley

#### **Young-Adult Novel**

"Lore Isle" by Jimi Ink  
"Spider's Parlor" by Samantha Charm  
"Fiera, Beyond Neverdark" by S. Lillie  
"The Night Has Teeth" by Kat Kruger  
"Rosie's Quest" by Maggie Warren ■

*Everyone's invited to the  
WFNS Annual General Meeting  
Saturday, June 4, 12 noon  
at the  
WFNS Office,  
1113 Marginal Road,  
Halifax*



# Markets, etc.

■ **Unlimited Editions “At the Edge” call for submissions:** Marjorie Anderson and Deborah Schnitzer, the editor of and one of the contributors to the best-selling *Dropped Threads* anthologies, have teamed up with renowned authors Gail Anderson-Dargatz and Jack Hodgins to offer writers in Canada and other countries the opportunity to collaborate with them on a collectively written novel, *At the Edge*. The story hinges on a tragic accident at an urban university in an unspecified Canadian city. Each of the 13 chapters will be written by a different author, and each will deal with circumstances in the life of one of the characters present at the university at the time of the incident. 10 of the chapters will be selected from submissions sent in by writers from across Canada and internationally. Interested writers have until June 7 to register their intentions to submit chapters for the collective novel and until September 7 to send in completed chapters for consideration. Details are available at <http://unlimitededitions.ca>

■ **Attention Writers with a Prince Edward Island Connection:** Fiction Anthology, The Acorn Press, PO Box 22024, Charlottetown, PE C1A 9J2. PEI's Acorn Press invites writers to submit unpublished short stories for a new anthology of fiction by PEI writers, to be published in spring 2012. Deadline: June 30 postmark. Potential contributors must have a significant PEI connection, e.g.: born or raised in PEI, lived on the Island for 6 months of the past 2 years; or another strong connection, such as summer residence. Indicate your connection with PEI in a covering

letter. The purpose of this anthology is to introduce and promote newer fiction writers, so contributors may have published no more than 2 books of adult fiction. Send up to 3 stories for consideration, up to 5,000 words per story. Adult fiction, stories for teens and young adults are welcome. No requirement for “Island” content: stories may be set anywhere. Between 15 and 20 authors/stories will be accepted for inclusion. Contributors will receive \$75 and a copy of the anthology. Send your submissions in hard copy only, using 12 pt. Times New Roman font and double-spacing. Include contact information in your covering letter. Manuscripts will not be returned.

■ **Poet to Poet Anthology:** Guernica Editions (489 Strathmore Blvd., Toronto, ON M4C 1N8) is accepting poems by Canadian poets about or inspired by other poets (living or dead, Canadian or non-Canadian), accompanied by short prose pieces that tell the back story behind the poems, what prompted their writing. Deadline: June 30. Looking for poems of any genre of up to 60 lines, together with back stories of up to 250 words. Poems can be experiential or speculative, sad, serious, humorous, or light, narrative or non-narrative, or any combination thereof. Previously published pieces are admissible, provided the writer holds the copyright, but prefer new/unpublished work. Send 1 to 3 poems, each with an accompanying back story to Michael Mirolla, either as a Word Doc email attachment to [michaelmirolla@guernicaeditions.com](mailto:michaelmirolla@guernicaeditions.com) with “Poet to Poet Anthology” typed in the subject line – or by post with “Poet to Poet

Anthology” on the envelope. Email submissions are preferred. The authors of the selected poems and accompanying back stories will receive as payment two copies of the anthology, and will also enjoy a 40% discount on additional copies.

■ **Riddle Fence:** PO Box 7092, St. John's, NL A1E 3Y3 ([www.riddlefence.com](http://www.riddlefence.com)) a journal of arts and culture, published three times a year. “We endeavour to publish high quality fiction, non-fiction, poetry, artwork, and anything else that fits on paper and punches above its own artistic weight.” Deadline July 8. Submit work electronically to the appropriate email address: [fiction@riddlefence.com](mailto:fiction@riddlefence.com); [non-fiction@riddlefence.com](mailto:non-fiction@riddlefence.com); [poetry@riddlefence.com](mailto:poetry@riddlefence.com); [artwork@riddlefence.com](mailto:artwork@riddlefence.com).

■ **Portuguese-Canadian Anthology:** A Vancouver editor is seeking fiction, poetry, personal essay, memoir and creative nonfiction by Portuguese-Canadian writers for a Portuguese Canadian anthology. Deadline: August 1. Submission guidelines: Fernanda Viveiros at [arquipelagopress@shaw.ca](mailto:arquipelagopress@shaw.ca). (from [www.placesforwriters.ca](http://www.placesforwriters.ca))

■ **The Literary Bohemian** ([www.literarybohemian.com](http://www.literarybohemian.com)), this online quarterly “is the final destination for first-class, travel-inspired writing that transports the reader, non-stop, to Elsewhere.” Looking for poetry (3 to 5 poems, up to 100 lines each), postcard prose (up to 2 pieces, no more than 300 words each), travelogue (1 piece up to 1,200 words).

■ **Tin House:** PO Box 10500, Portland, OR 97210 ([www.tinhouse.com](http://www.tinhouse.com)) Quarterly. Reading period is September 1-May 31, submissions received outside this reading period will be returned unread. Accepts online submissions. Spring 2012 theme: Weird Science – Improbable, far-fetched, real? Today's science headlines read like futuristic tales. From nanobots and neutrinos to architeuthis, the real is often stranger than the most speculative sci-fi. In that vein, looking for fiction, poetry, and nonfiction that goes beyond the headlines into current, past, and future scientific explanations of "reality." Open to speculative fiction, if there are humans involved. Suggested deadline: October 1.

■ **Barrelhouse** ([www.barrelhousemag.com](http://www.barrelhousemag.com)) A print journal featuring fiction, poetry, interviews, and essays about music, art, and the detritus of popular culture, also a web site that regularly posts new short fiction, nonfiction, interviews, and random stuff. A note on nonfiction: looking specifically for essays that touch on pop culture in some way.

■ **Shyness Anthology:** Naomi K. Lewis and Rona Altrows are compiling an anthology, SHY. Looking for personal essays of up to 5,000 words, poems and visual artworks that deal in an honest, fresh and non-preachy way with the creator's experience of being shy. For essays, send a double-spaced Word attachment. Submit your work or inquiries to [shynessbook@gmail.com](mailto:shynessbook@gmail.com). Deadline: September 15.

■ **anderbo.com** ([www.anderbo.com](http://www.anderbo.com)) This New York City-based literary online journal publishes short stories, poetry, and nonfiction (a.k.a. "fact"). Accepts work from previously

unpublished and emerging talents, as well as established writers and poets.

■ **Briarpatch:** 2138 McIntyre St., Regina, SK S4P 2R7 (<http://briarpatchmagazine.com>) "A bimonthly contemporary issues magazine with a chip on its shoulder and a fire in its belly. Fiercely independent and frequently irreverent, it tackles today's most pressing problems from a radical, grassroots perspective." Publishes writing and artwork on a wide range of topics. Welcomes queries from unpublished writers, seasoned freelancers, front-line activists, and anyone else with a story to tell and a desire to tell it compellingly. Payment ranges from \$50 to \$150 November/December issue will focus on Labour. Query deadline is July 5.

## Contests

■ **The Antigonish Review**  
**Contest:** Box 5000, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, NS B2G 2W5. ([www.antigonishreview.com](http://www.antigonishreview.com)) **Sheldon Currie Fiction Contest:** deadline May 31 postmark; prizes \$600, \$400 and \$200 and publication; stories on any subject, up to 20 pages. **Great Blue Heron Poetry Contest:** deadline June 30 postmark; poems on any subject; total entry not to exceed 4 pages; maximum 150 lines; entries might be one longer poem, or several shorter poems; prizes \$600, \$400 and \$200 and publication. Entry fee: \$25 for either contest, may enter both for an additional \$10. Entry fee includes subscription.

■ **The 2012 Ken Klonsky Novella**  
**Contest:** Quattro Books Inc, CSI second floor, 720 Bathurst Street, Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4 ([www.quattrobooks.ca](http://www.quattrobooks.ca)) Quattro Books

will publish the 2 best novella manuscripts (not less than 15,000 words or more than 42,000 words) submitted by July 1. Does not publish genre fiction (science fiction or romances. Check Quattro's website for the type of material they prefer. Deadline July 1. \$15 reader's fee Manuscripts will not be returned.

■ **Riddle Fence and Rattling Books short fiction contest:** "Riddle us with your most brilliant writing. Rattle us with great characters and unexpected verbs. Win big prestige, and a little prize money, too!" Deadline September 14 postmark. The winning story will be published in *Riddle Fence* and professionally recorded as an audio short by Rattling Books ([www.rattlingbooks.com](http://www.rattlingbooks.com)). Winning author receives \$500, plus payment for publication and royalties for audio sales. Also-greats receive \$200 each and may be published. Stories must be in some form of English (any dialect), maximum of 4,000 words, unpublished and not currently submitted to any other publication or contest. One entry per participant. Blind judging. Entry fee (includes a one-year subscription to *Riddle Fence*): \$35 Email work to [contest@riddlefence.com](mailto:contest@riddlefence.com) or mail it to: Riddle Fence, PO Box 7092 St. John's, NL A1E 3Y3.

■ **The Malahat Review creative non-fiction contest:** University of Victoria, P.O. Box 1700 Stn CSC, Victoria, B.C. V8W 2Y2 ([www.malahatreview.ca](http://www.malahatreview.ca)) deadline August 1, length between 2,000 to 3,000 words, entry fee \$35, no restrictions as to subject matter or approach, may be personal essay, memoir, cultural criticism, nature writing or literary journalism.