

east word

Joyce Barkhouse (1913-2012)



PETER BARSS PHOTO

Joyce, wearing the Order of Nova Scotia and the Order of Canada.

Joyce Barkhouse was a founding member of the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia and The Writers Union of Canada. She was also instrumental in creating Nova Scotia's Writers in the Schools program.

Joyce Carmen Killam Barkhouse was born May 3, 1913, in the Annapolis Valley, the daughter of a country doctor. She attended a two-room school in Woodville and went on to Teachers' College in Truro, returning to the Valley community of Sandhill (East Aylesford today) to teach in her own one-room schoolhouse, all grades from one to 11, all subjects.

She wrote her first short story after her grandfather gave her a Baptist Church paper for children. At 19 she wrote a short story, sent it in and was paid \$1. After that she wrote many stories which were published in a variety of church papers and her articles appeared in the *Family Herald* and the *Weekly Star*, among numerous other magazines and in several anthologies. Although she wrote constantly, her first book – *George Dawson, The Little Giant* – wasn't published until she was 61 in 1974.

She'd seen an article on Dawson in the *Montreal Gazette* and was intrigued. The book grew out of her observation, "Isn't this scandalous, we know nothing about him, he should have been in our history books." She was annoyed that this brave, gnome-like, tiny hunchback, who was one of Canada's greatest geologists had been forgotten. Both Dawson City and Dawson Creek were named in his honour because he explored and mapped much of the interior of British Columbia and all of the Yukon. And she continued to sing about our unsung strengths, helping us to know who we are.

Joyce knew that the more we knew about ourselves the stronger we would be, and spent most of her creative life helping us to grow. Most of her writing was for young people because she believed that an essential element of engaging a child's imagination is the rich detail to be found in that child's own neighbourhood.

Her best-known book, *Pit Pony*, won unanimous praise for its brilliant evocation of a Cape Breton coal mining community and the Sable Island ponies that laboured in the mines. The story was adapted into a successful television movie and weekly series which captivated international audiences.

In recognition of her efforts, Joyce was named to the Order of Nova Scotia in 2007 and the Order of Canada in 2009.

For those who wish to make a donation in memory of Joyce, she requested that donations may be made to the Writers in the Schools Program, the Atlantic Writing



PETER BARSS PHOTO

Joyce's great-grandson Jonas; his mother, granddaughter Kari holding her daughter, great-granddaughter Charlotte; Joyce, CM, ONS; and The Honourable Mayann E. Francis, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia. In the middle in the front is great-granddaughter Karlee. The Lieutenant Governor presented Joyce with the Order of Canada at a private ceremony at Joyce's home in Bridgewater in 2009.



PETER BARSS PHOTO

Lt.-Gov. Mayann Francis, Joyce and her children Janet and Murray.

Competition, or to our Emergency Fund for Writers. To make a donation online, visit www.writers.ns.ca/donations.html and click on the corresponding 'Donate' button. We appreciate your donation and will issue a charitable tax receipt for all donations of \$10 or more. You may also send a cheque made payable to the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia, with a note indicating where you wish your donation to be directed, to 1113 Marginal Road, Halifax, NS, B3H 4P7.



PETER BARSS PHOTO

Left to right: Marsha Harding, Susan Kerslake, Marian Hebb, Joyce Barkhouse, Jane Buss, Lt.-Gov. Mayann Francis, Budge Wilson, and Sylvia Gunnery in Bridgewater, August 2009.

Remembering Joyce

Budge Wilson:

These days are filled with the realization that our Joyce is no longer with us. This is a compelling thought that refuses to leave me. People may say: "Don't grieve too much. You have her books. You have your memories of her." That is not enough for me, and comforts me very little.

It's true that I'm glad that she died peacefully and that she lived so long – so long, in fact, that she deceived some of us into thinking that she might stay with us forever. We would have liked that.

We all took such pleasure in our visits to her in Bridgewater – marveling at her incredibly young face, appreciating the way she really listened to us when we talked with her, admiring her cheerful manner, her ready laugh. We loved her quiet dignity, her pleasure in meeting with her friends, her enduring interest in life and living. We'll miss her get well cards when we're ill, her congratulatory letters when we hit some jackpot or

other. And we'll continue to praise her genuine humility in the face of her honours and achievements, her open delight when wonderful things happened to her or to her friends, her generosity of act and spirit.

So let's sum up what we're all feeling about Joyce Barkhouse. And let's use Shakespeare, because that would please her. And let's quote – with a slight change in pronouns – the words of Hamlet as he speaks to Horatio about his father: "Take her for all in all, we shall not look upon her like again."

Harry Thurston: – I am saddened to hear of Joyce's passing. I had the privilege – and it truly was – of serving on the Writers' Fed board with Joyce in the mid-70s. She was, as we all know, a lovely and sweet person, but possessed, too, of a fine mind. She will be missed, but those of us who knew her are the better for her long life.

Susan Tooke: – I am so sorry to hear that Joyce has died. It was Joyce who introduced me to Zoe Lucas and in that greatly influenced my life ... as she did so many others.



The Scribblers, left to right: Clara Dugas, Heather Stevenson, Janet Barkhouse, Joyce Barkhouse, Rose-Marie Lohnes-Hirtle.

Rose-Marie Lohnes-Hirtle:

For the past two and a half years I have had the privilege of being Joyce Barkhouse's friend. That was when she joined our little Scribblers writing group with her daughter, Janet Barkhouse, Heather Stevenson and Clara Dugas. You can only imagine her contribution as a writer, but it was also her generosity of spirit, her witty comments and her loving nature that made her special.

After Joyce joined the Scribblers we exchanged many e-mails: *How great to be with all you wonderful Scribblers again. ... so much loving and caring and helping ... and laughter, too! You brighten my days ... and make me feel I'm still part of the writing world. Love to all. – Joyce*

When I faltered in my attempts with numerous drafts, she quipped: *One author wrote that he wouldn't even let his cat see any of his first drafts! but save all your "scribblings" ... they may prove to be of value ... to someone.*

She loved coming to the Scribblers and often sent heart-warming e-mails such as, *"Grey November is on its way, but there's a bright spot on my calendar as I just marked "Scribblers" for the 13th."*

Then there would be the follow-up, *"I had a lovely time, and it is such a treat (you can hardly imagine!) for me to be with writers again! To step back into 'my' world and to get away for a while from the routine and the suffering elderly, who are inclined to get turned in on themselves."*

Joyce remained "young" and vibrant to the end. She thanked us for inviting her to the Scribblers when we were the ones given a precious gift. Her last invitation for a visit for me to share some writing arrived just a week before she died. She gave, and gave and gave!

We, her fellow writers (she said we must say "authors") were the fortunate recipients of her expertise, her sharp wit, and her love of writing and of us, and we

will cherish the opportunity we had to know and return that love and to benefit from her encouragement and accolades.

We will grieve the empty chair, the special hugs and your sweet smile at our next Scribblers meeting and we will be forever grateful for how generously you shared yourself with us. Miss you Joyce

Suzy Crocker, Woozles Children's Bookstore: I re-read *Pit Pony* just weeks ago (it is on the Battle of the Books list again this year) and was reminded not only of what a great writer she was, but just how important that book was to me when I first read it. Sad news indeed.

Heather MacKenzie, Branch Manager, Keshen Goodman Public Library, Halifax: A sad day indeed. Joyce was the first "real" author I worked with when I began my career as a children's librarian, and I will always remember her kindness and support for all of our endeavours at the library. Such a gracious lady.

Susan Atkinson: – Dear Joyce. What a very kind and lovely person who, in my experience, was always thinking of the other person – how to make them feel useful, and valued. Just knowing that she was there in Bridgewater has always been a comfort to me. I am sad and tearful but what a strange line it is to the other side, where one knows that Joyce has led a full and oh so amazing life, affecting so many others and giving, always giving so much – and so we have an awful lot to celebrate.

Eliza Desmarais: – I am 34 and have been living in Quebec for over 10 years. I remember meeting Joyce Barkhouse [when I was] 8 years old. She came to visit us at our elementary school in 1985 at Clementsvale Consolidated Elementary in Nova Scotia.

I will never forget, because I was so inspired to write after hearing her speak, which I did for many years. ... she was there to talk about her experience as a writer, but not only that, she was so adamant on encouraging our fresh minds to embark on exploring our imagination, and put it to pen. I remember her pointing out that you are never too old to start writing.

Her mission that day was apparent. ... She had so much passion and so much to express about encouraging us to not be afraid to write. She also gave us [her] address for any questions that we had as young, aspiring writers. Although I have embarked on a career of science, I will never forget the vivid, though brief, meeting with Joyce Barkhouse. She left me with an infusion of creativity, and left her mark in many ways. ■

Kicking off 2012 at the Fed

Nate Crawford, Executive Director WFNS



Left to right: Hillary Titley, Kathleen Martin, Ryan Turner, James Leck, Valerie Compton, Sherry Ramsey, Stephens Gerard Malone, Jon Tattie, Heidi Hallett, Sue Goyette, Brett Loney, Marlo MacKay, Brian Braganza.

Once again, the signals lit up the sky and the WFNS board of directors convened at a secret base for our annual strategic planning session. Each January we look back over the last year and forward to the next, indentifying what should be tweaked, turned, or trapped in amber when it comes to the Fed's programs and plans.

First on the agenda was the creation of a Core Values Statement. Intended to interact with our mission and mandate while serving as a guideline for conduct both

internally and externally, each staff member and director looked into the heart of their experience with the organization, as well as what they personally value as creators. By morning's end we had a wall's worth of post-it notes, which were then boiled down to a set of six messages which we hope communicate the motivations behind what we do here and why we do it, while reflecting your values as a member:

The Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia, including our membership, staff and board of directors, works to

maintain a supportive and vibrant writing community in Nova Scotia. These are our core values:

We value the diversity of writers in all regions of Nova Scotia, and are inclusive of all backgrounds, abilities and languages represented in the province. We value all genres of writing, and strive to create a welcoming, accessible and supportive atmosphere for all writers.

We value the practice of writing and the importance of developing our skill and craft as writers.

We value writing as a profession and a passion. We strive to represent the

interests and protect the rights of all writers.

We value community building among writers. We encourage writers to connect to readers, services and resources. We have an appreciation for writing and a commitment to supporting its role in the life of Nova Scotians. We value the contributions of Nova Scotia writers regionally, nationally and internationally.

We value the inherent skills and resources of our community, and where possible, will use the skills and resources of our membership and community at large.

We value professionalism, and conduct ourselves with a high level of integrity. We are resourceful and creative in how we manage our organization's operations.

Thoughts? Comments? All are welcome. In addition to the broader reflections that led to this statement, we also addressed more pragmatic issues that will affect how we will provide services and make public presentations in the future.

As many of you know, we've been steadily developing a completely new website, and aim to launch it in the coming months. Why a new site when it's already had a relatively recent facelift? Well, as we all know, the online world doesn't stop for anybody, and in order to take full advantage of what websites are capable of today, a complete overhaul was necessary. At the moment we're working at updating and enhancing the reams of old content on the site, and developing ways to let you know how to best make use of a site that will be less static and more interactive for both the public and the membership.

Much discussion was dedicated to our Book Prizes – the Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction, the Evelyn Richardson Non-Fiction, and Atlantic Poetry Prizes will be presented in October of this year, with shortlist announcements in June – watch for appearances by and events with the shortlisted writers throughout the summer months.

Atlantic Book Week continues as usual in late May, making for a year-round schedule of literary treats to look forward to.

In addition to the workshops currently underway at WFNS, we will be presenting a series of three seminars from March to May – March 22 finds us talking digital publishing; on April 28 we discuss the editor-writer relationship; and on May 24 we cover legal issues of interest to writers. Further information on all of the above will, of course, be coming your way as we make our way through 2012.

Interested in contributing to the Fed's prepping and planning? Oh so curious to know where this "secret base" is? We will have as many as five board positions to fill at this year's Annual General Meeting in June, and hereby call for expressions of interest in WFNS board membership.

The executive positions of secretary and treasurer will need to be filled, so if you've a keen ear and a quick hand or a strong capability with numbers, we're especially looking for you. The WFNS board meets six times a year, in addition to our June AGM and January annual planning session. For more information or to submit your name, write director@writers.ns.ca. It's already shaping up to be another exciting year. ■

PLR registration from Feb. 15 to May 1

The Public Lending Right (PLR) Commission gives a yearly payment to Canadian authors in recognition of the availability of their books in Canadian libraries. Authors, co-authors, translators, illustrators, and anthology contributors are all potentially eligible for PLR.

The registration period for this year's PLR payment will take place between February 15 and May 1.

If you are a creator who has not registered with the PLR Commission previously, you can register for the payment during the registration period. A downloadable registration form is available from the PLR website – www.plr-dpp.ca. The form must be completed and mailed back to the Commission by May 1.

If you are already part of the PLR Commission and wish to update your file with new works, please use the File Update form that you received from the Commission, and mail it back to them by May 1.

If you are already part of the PLR Commission and your contact information has changed, please use the File Update form that you received from the Commission, and mail it back by May 1. Alternatively, you can send your new contact details in writing to the Commission, including your PLR file number, or by phone.

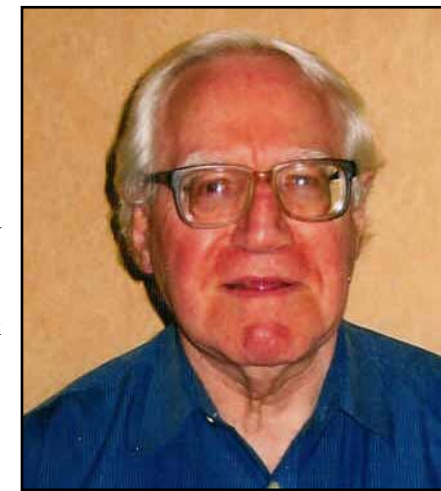
Public Lending Right Commission toll-free 1-800-521-5721. www.plr-dpp.ca ■

Who's doing what



■ The \$18,000 Portia White Prize went to photographer, visual artist and filmmaker **James MacSwain** (right) in recognition of his artistic accomplishments and work as a mentor, educator and arts administrator. He designated Visual Arts Nova Scotia's mentorship program to receive the \$7,000 protégé award. At the Creative Nova Scotia Awards gala five individuals received Established Artist Recognition awards worth \$5,000, including poet and novelist **Sue Goyette** (third from left).

■ The Nova Scotia Legislature has recognized **Jim Lotz** and his latest book. MLA Kelly Regan introduced Resolution 2014 on November 4: "Whereas Halifax author Jim Lotz's most recent book, *Canada's Forgotten Arctic Hero: George Rice*,



has illuminated the contribution of Cape Bretoner George Rice to the little-known 1881 Greely Expedition to the Arctic to gather meteorological and astronomical data; and Whereas Lotz relied on the diaries of George Rice, who was the expedition's photographer, to tell the story of the doomed venture of the far north; and Whereas Lotz describes Rice as a genuine 19th-century hero, well liked and respected who died in the frigid Arctic

looking for food for his starving crewmates; Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jim Lotz on his book which details an important historic expedition to the Arctic while at the same time drawing attention to a Cape Breton champion."

■ Judith Fitzgerald's blog in *The Globe & Mail* on January 2 gave her picks for the Top 10 Poetry Collections 2011 – including **Sue Goyette's** *Outskirts* (Brick) and **Anne Simpson's** *Is* (McClelland & Stewart).

■ The theme for TD Children's Book Week is Read a Book, Share a Story. May 5 to 12 will see 29 writers, illustrators and storytellers touring the country. **Don Aker** will be in Alberta, **Jessica Scott Kerrin** in Ontario, and **Richard Rudnicki** in Quebec. Ontario writer and illustrator Karen Patkau will be in Nova Scotia. Details can be found at www.bookweek.ca.

■ Palimpsest Press will release **John Wall Barger's** second poetry collection *Hummingbird*, in May 2012. His first *Pain-proof Men* was published in 2009.

■ On January 16, **Tanya Davis** and **Vicki Grant** took part in Blowhard Presents "Lost and Found, Stories of What Comes and Goes" at FRED on Agricola Street in Halifax, along side Kyle Shaw and Deborah Young. Blowhard is a bi-monthly night of storytelling and performance organized by Jackie Torrens, Andrea Dorfman, Tara Doyle and **Stephanie Domet**.

■ McGill-Queen's University Press is publishing an anthology – *Omar Khadr, Oh Canada* – exploring Canadian-born Omar Khadr's background, his incarceration at Guantanamo Bay, his treatment by Canadian authorities, and the implications raised by his legal case. Contributors include **George Elliott Clarke**. As part of African Heritage Month George spoke at the North Memorial Public Library in Halifax about Black Refugees to Nova Scotia from the War of 1812; his special guest was El Jones.

■ Tradewind Books will publish **Sheree Fitch's** latest picture book *Night Sky Wheel Ride* in May. Tongue-twisting lines and nonsense words describe a brother and sister as they explore a nighttime fair and go on a Ferris wheel adventure. Boldly coloured illustrations by Quebec artist Yayo accompany the text.

■ **Bylines seen:** **Jon Tattrie**'s feature "Love Bites" in January/February's *Halifax Magazine* tells the story of a Halifax man bitten in an online romance scam, who now works to foil the crooks and help victims through RomanceScams.org. **Paul Bennett** is a frequent contributor of book reviews to the *Chronicle Herald's* Nova Scotian supplement, as is **George Elliott Clarke**. Regular columnists in the *Chronicle Herald* include **Lezlie Lowe**, **Angela Mombourquette**, **Megan Powers**, and **Chad Lucas**. **Jim Lotz** and **Joan Baxter** recently appeared on the daily's Op-Ed page. In the January/February edition of *Saltsapes*, **Harry Thurston** visits "Big Land Rising" – Labrador's Mealy Mountains, slated to become Atlantic Canada's largest national park, protecting both the land and the culture. Also in *Saltsapes* in "Finding her Focus," **Donna D'Amour** profiles photographer Connie Publicover, who specializes in close-up water drop photography; in "Sketching Characters" **Darcy Rhyno** gets to know Allan Hawco, the star of CBC's *Republic of Doyle*; and **Jodi DeLong** discusses plants that are bullies in "Turf Wars."

■ Overheard on CBC Radio on Monday, January 16 – **Ami McKay** discussing her latest book *The Virgin Birth* on The Next Chapter with Shelagh Rogers. There's a cornucopia of past episodes for your listening enjoyment at www.cbc.ca/thenextchapter

■ **Catherine Banks** won't be walking to Barcelona in November, but she'll be in the Spanish city where her play *It Is Solved by Walking* will be part of a Barcelona-Canada exchange. The script is currently being translated into Catalan.



■ As the photo shows, it was packed to the rafters with writers at our annual open house this past December. We hope a good time was had by all, and look forward to seeing you all again next year.

■ This year is acclaimed contralto Portia White's 100th anniversary and her centenary was celebrated February 27 at the Dalhousie Arts Centre. Hosted by **Shauntay Grant**, the evening featured a screening of **Sylvia D. Hamilton's** documentary *Portia White: Think on Me*, and music by mezzo soprano Marcia Swanston and singer/songwriter/pianist Marko Simmonds.

■ **Sandra Phinney** might have been on sunny Tortorla for the past couple of months, but she wasn't spending much time on the beach. She was busily tending her freelance writing business – completing revisions to *The Michelin Travel Guide to Atlantic Canada* and writing cover stories for *Saltsapes* January/February issue ("Million dollar legs" a peek inside a Cape Breton crab plant) and *Coastal Life* ("Puckering up for Valentines"). She's a new contributor for Travel + Escape and will be giving a workshop on travel writing at the annual MagsNet Conference in Toronto in June.

■ Fans of Alfred Hitchcock will be heading to the alfreSnow filmFesto scheduled for March at Neptune Theatre's 200-seat Studio Theatre in Halifax. Co-sponsored by the

Atlantic Film Festival, it's the winter counterpart of the popular alfresco filmFesto held outdoors every summer. Each Monday evening in March, a local director will introduce one of Hitchcock's film and the screening will be followed by a meet and greet. On March 5, Michael Melski presents *Dial M for Murder*, on March 12 Thom Fitzgerald hosts *Rope*, on March 19 it's *I Confess* presented by Eva Madden-Hagen, and **Josh MacDonald** presents *Strangers on a Train* on March 26. A suggested donation of \$8 will help the organizations offset technical costs and fees for rights.

■ **Joanne Merriam** writes, "My short poem 'Love in the Time of Alien Invasion' and my long poem 'Tender Aliens' – both originally published in *The Magazine of Speculative Poetry* in spring 2011 – have just been nominated for the 2012 Rhysling Poetry Awards in their respective categories. This is a tremendous honour, given that the Rhyslins are awarded by my peers, other speculative poets (or science fiction poets, if you prefer the old skool terminology). I'm pretty excited about it!"

■ **Philip Roy** has a new book scheduled for this fall – *Blood Brothers in Louisbourg* – just in time for the 2013 celebrations of Fortress Louisbourg's 300th anniversary. Cape Breton University Press will publish the young adult novel that's set in 1744, and there are plans for a French translation. An option for a film adaptation is already in hand.

■ Spring is the season for new books and there's quite a crop for 2012. Pottersfield Press will publish **Frances Jewel Dickson's** latest book, *Destination White Point*, about the fabled White Point Beach

Resort on Nova Scotia's South Shore. Nimbus has several new releases scheduled: **Vernon Oickle** tells us about *South Shore Facts and Folklore*. **Laurie Glenn Norris** and Barbara Thompson go back to 1878 in their biography *Haunted Girl: Esther Cox & The Great Amherst Mystery*. **Christine Welldon** has penned a non-fiction book for children on Canada's newest national museum – *Pier 21, Listen to My Story*. **Carol McDougall** has the first in a new series of board books focusing on the developmental stages of a baby's first year, with *Baby Play*. **Richard Rudnicki** provides the illustrations for *Gus the Tortoise Takes a Walk*. There's a new edition of *Fiddles and Spoons, Journey of an Acadian Mouse* by Lila Hope-Simpson and illustrated by **Doretta Groenendyk**.

■ Storey Publishing just released *The Year-Round Vegetable Gardener* by **Niki Jabbour**. Niki is a food gardener and garden writer whose articles have appeared in *Canadian Gardening*, *Garden Making*, *Gardens East*, *The Heirloom Gardener*, and other publications. In addition, she's the host of *The Weekend Gardener*, a call-in radio show that airs throughout the Maritimes on News 95.7 FM and www.news957.com, and she blogs at www.yearroundveggiegardener.blogspot.com.

New members

Chis Adekayode, Halifax
William (Dann) Alexander, Thunder Bay, ON
Georgia Atkin, Halifax
Emma Boardman, Halifax
Curtis Botham, Bedford
Alex Boutilier, Fall River
Miriam Breslow, Halifax
Libby Broadbent, Liverpool
Robert Buckley, Rose Bay

Katherine Burris, Bible Hill
Anne Marie Campbell, Sydney
Jonathan Campbell, Halifax
Patricia Clothier, Halifax
Lisa Corra, Dartmouth
Tim Damon, Sydney
Charlene Davis, Halifax
Sandra D'Entremont, West Pubnico
Sue Deschene, Shelburne
Heather Dillon, Sydney River
Susan Dodd, Halifax
Chris Donahoe, Halifax
Daniel Durant, Halifax
Roy Ellis, Dartmouth
Stephen Emberly, Porters Lake
Lori Errington, Dartmouth
Presley Ferguson, Lower Sackville
Renee Field, Halifax
Jaime Forsythe, Halifax
Christopher Fournier, Halifax
Colleen Fraser, Beaver Bank
Heidi Fruth-Sachs, Port Mouton
Barbara Fry, Halifax
Heather Gillis, Sydney
Victoria Goddard, Halifax
Diane Goodwin, Dartmouth
John Goossens, Dartmouth
Susan Greaves, Albert Bridge
Joann Griffin, Halifax
Elizabeth Hamilton, Lunenburg
Jill Hamilton, Halifax
Kimberly Hawker, Hammonds Plains
Peggy Hogan, New Glasgow, PEI
David Hood, Halifax
Niki Jabbour, Stillwater Lake
Alexandre Jagot, Halifax
Juliette Jagot, Halifax
Dennis Jones, Dartmouth
Samuel Jopling, Halifax
Heather Killen, Aylesford
Aura King, Halifax
Sarah Kiss, Halifax
Lindsay Koziel, Frenchvale
Linda Kreger, Halifax
Holly Kritsch, Napean, ON
Andrea Kuttner, Fletchers Lake
Carol Lamarche, Halifax
Natalie Landry, Yarmouth
Nicole Landry, Dartmouth

Nadine LaPierre, Halifax
Maisa Leibovitz, Fredericton, NB
Richard Levangie, Dartmouth
Patsy MacDonald, Dartmouth
Christine MacKinnon, Sydney
Crystal Mann, New Glasgow
John Marshall, Lawrencetown
Allen McAvoy, Toronto, ON
Betty McEachern, Dartmouth
Gene McManus,
Michael Meagher, Halifax
Jennifer Merlin, Timberlea
Margaret Miller, Rines Creek
Pamela Mood, Yarmouth
Colin Morrison, Halifax
Susan Morton, Yarmouth
Maura Lee Morykot, Sydney
Martha Mutale, Dartmouth
Rick Myers, Lunenburg
Haley Myles, Carlisle, PA, USA
Leah Noble, Baddeck
Sandra O'Driscoll, Halifax
Michelle Paon, Halifax
Eileen Pease, Halifax
Jon Peirce, Halifax
Jayne Peters, Lantz
Mary Lou Petersen, Halifax
Anne Hope Pollett, Upper Granville
Catherine Robertson, Mineville
Paula Romanow, Lawrencetown
Alan Ruffman, Halifax
Susan Saunders, Paradise
John Sell, Halifax
Marney Simmons, Mulgrave
Christine Sonntag, Dartmouth
Anita Stewart, Kingston
Jennifer Stewart, Herring Cove
William Swanson, Pictou
Kathi Thompson, Halifax
Janet Parker Vaughan, Middleton
Anthony Weagle, South Brookfield
Gloria Ann Wesley, Halifax
Shirley Whitman, Bedford ■

Challenged by the Wolf—Annett Wolf

by Sandra Phinney

For a dozen writers at one of the Writers' Fed's workshops last fall, Annett Wolf revealed The Art of the Interview. Annett Wolf's credentials (<http://annettwolf.com>) would fill several pages and includes documentaries and in-depth film profiles of Jack Lemmon, Michael Caine, Steven Spielberg, Michael Douglas, Alfred Hitchcock, Peter Ustinov, and Nick Nolte (to name but a few). The 75-year old pioneered "The Making of" genre, including *The Making of Jaws 2*. Insightful trailers to movies such as *Nighthawk*, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, *Somewhere in Time*, and *Carwash* are part of her large repertoire.

Part of the course was devoted to the process of interviewing. Although Wolf didn't say anything I didn't already know at an intellectual level, what she said went way beyond words. I came away with a larger understanding and appreciation for the interview process.

Sure, she admonished us to be prepared, create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, be respectful, don't interrupt, be mindful of not crossing over the line, don't ask loaded questions, park your ego at the door, repeat the same question in different ways (but know when

to get out), keep eye contact, be authentic – ad infinitum. But it's not only saying or doing the right things, it's the *how* that's important. If Wolf said this once, she said it 10 times, albeit in different ways – "Listening is Apha and Omega."

She said an interview is not about a topic. It goes beyond gathering information. It's a journey to find the truth. You may have to get into an area by going through the back door, but always have a sense of where you came through. Also, you may have to move into shark territory, but you don't have to get bitten by the shark. Stay in charge; keep the reins very tight if you have to.

Wolf added, "My personal mission is always to go back to the core. We have an obligation, a responsibility, to drag uninformed people out of oblivion." That can be interpreted many ways, but I now ask myself: why should I care what this person is doing (or has done)? What is the common ground here that unites us as human beings? Who is this person? What is the story?

One of the tricks is to figure out what we want to know. Never mind second guessing what we think readers want to know. If we writers are not genuinely curious

and interested, why bother in the first place? It's easy to get careless or sloppy and approach interviewing as the "same-old, same-old." So it's not a bad idea to take risks and push the edges of our own personal envelopes. Fear of failure can actually prompt us to do some of our best work, so we shouldn't shy away from challenges.

Before the first day of this two-day workshop closed, Wolf gave us an assignment – due the next day. Namely: choose an "amazing renegade" then proceed to come up with a synopsis; determine location and visuals; explain why we chose to profile that person; prepare the opening of the show (welcome, introduction and first question); and propose how the rest of the story/show might unfold.

When we reconvened the next day, it was obvious that everyone had bust a gut trying to fulfil the assignment. The results were inspiring, dramatic and delicious. As the workshop drew to a close, Wolf challenged each one of us to carry on with our "renegade" stories. She even offered to mentor us through to completion.

Remember, she said, "You have a responsibility. The story comes first, second, third—and forever." ■

Impressed – New books by WFNS members

Titanic Victims in Halifax Graveyards

Blair Beed

Nimbus, March 2012, \$19.95, ISBN: 978-155109-897-5

This new and revised edition of the guide to *Titanic* victims buried in Halifax answers many questions about the city's connection to the infamous ship. Why were some of the recovered bodies buried at sea? Why were some sent elsewhere for burial and the rest buried in the port city? The book also tells the intriguing and little-known story of the 150 passengers and crew who are buried in three Halifax cemeteries. Using official reports and newspaper articles, Blair Beed provides an outline of life on the *Titanic*, describes society as it was in 1912, and highlights the care for the dead taken by the crews of the recovery ships and those who met them on arrival in Halifax.

A graduate of Saint Mary's University, Blair Beed's tourism career has involved tour guiding, planning and training. Active in heritage preservation and municipal politics, he is the author of *1917 Halifax Explosion and American Response*.

Halifax and Titanic

John Boileau

Nimbus, March 2012, \$19.95, ISBN: 978-155109-895-1

On the one-hundredth anniversary of *Titanic*'s sinking, John Boileau examines the relationship between Halifax and the unprecedented tragedy. When *Titanic* hit the iceberg and went down in 1912, Halifax was the base from which recovery operations were launched. 150 victims are buried in three Halifax cemeteries – the largest number of *Titanic* graves in the world. This illustrated history includes more than 100 historical photos of the people and places involved in the city's recovery effort.

John Boileau served in the Canadian Army for 37 years, retiring as a colonel in 1999. He is the author of eight previous books, including *Fastest in the World*, *Valiant Hearts*, and *Halifax and the Royal Canadian Navy*. John lives on an island in St. Margaret's Bay.

Driftwood Dragons and other seaside poems

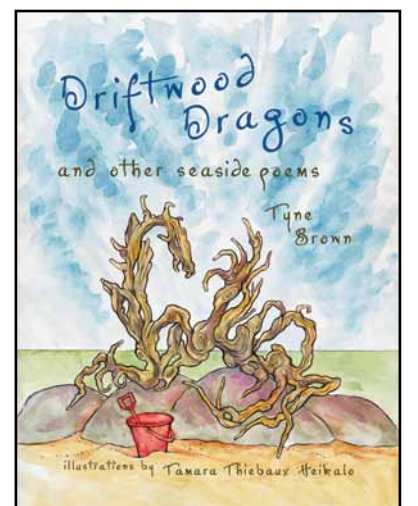
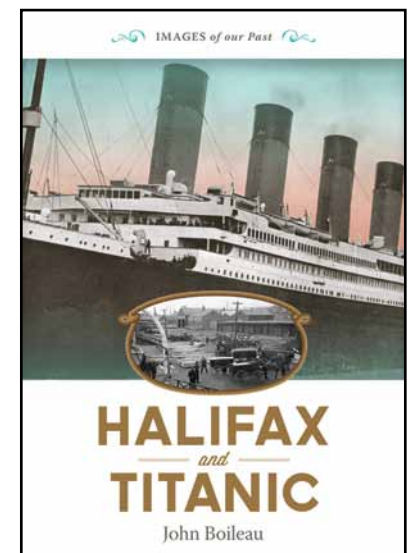
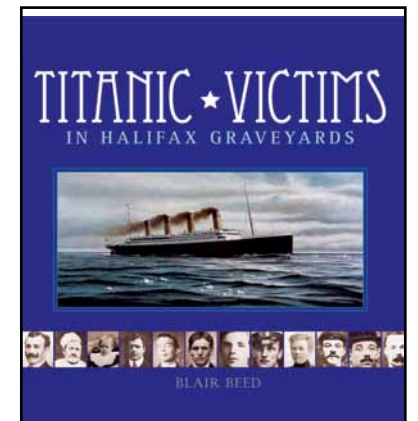
Tyne Brown

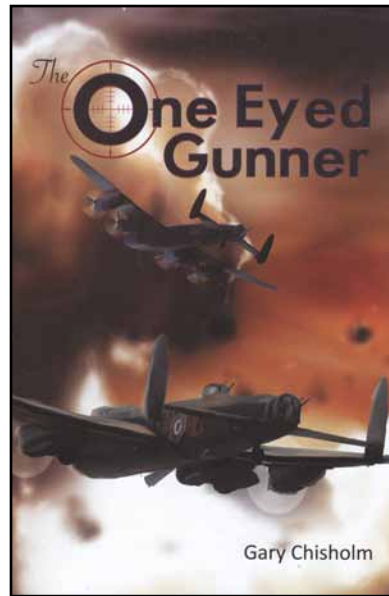
Illustrated by Tamara Thiébaux-Heikalo

Nimbus, April 2012, \$12.95, ISBN: 978-155109-893-7

Driftwood Dragons is a collection of 34 lyrical seaside poems for children. Inspired by the Maritime coastline and accompanied by whimsical illustrations, these poems are celebrations of the coastal environment. From an ode to a beach flea to a short conversation with a snail, *Driftwood Dragons* perfectly captures the beauty, diversity and joy to be found at Maritime beaches.

Tyne Brown's work has appeared in numerous children's magazines and literary journals.





The One Eyed Gunner

Gary Chisholm

Bryler Publications, 2011, \$24.95, ISBN: 978-1-927003-02-2

The one-eyed gunner is Larry Sutherland, a farm boy from Nova Scotia. This is his story – a story about a man who lived through unimaginable horrors, a man who epitomizes courage and valour, a man who risked his life so that we may live in freedom. In aviation, it takes at least five kills to be considered an ace. During the Second World War, in all of Bomber Command, there were only three Heavy Gunner Aces. One was Larry Sutherland, Canada's top gunner ace.

Gary Chisholm wrote this book as a tribute to his uncle Larry Sutherland. Gary has travelled extensively. He is a former marine diver who dove off the coast of Cape Breton in an attempt to find the wreck of the 18th-century ship *Tilbury*, lost during the battle for Louisbourg.

Oak Island Revenge

A Jonah Morgan Mystery

Cynthia d'Entremont

Nimbus, April 2012, \$12.95, ISBN: 978-155109-899-9

Jonah is 14 and lives on the Western Shore of Nova Scotia in 1958. He and his best friend, Beaz, go to Oak Island to seek treasure. They find a gold locket in one of the treasure shafts and can't believe their luck – until they realize it's not pirate booty but possibly evidence in a current murder investigation, one which Jonah already knows more about than he can handle. Beaz is in danger from his abusive mother if she finds out he's gone to the island, so Jonah keeps the secret even though there is a killer at large in his small community.

Cynthia d'Entremont is the author of *Unlocked*. She also offers workshops on creativity and writing for children, teens, and adults. She has won both the Joyce Barkhouse Writing for Children Award and a Nova Scotia Talent Trust Scholarship in Literary Arts. She lives in Lakeview.

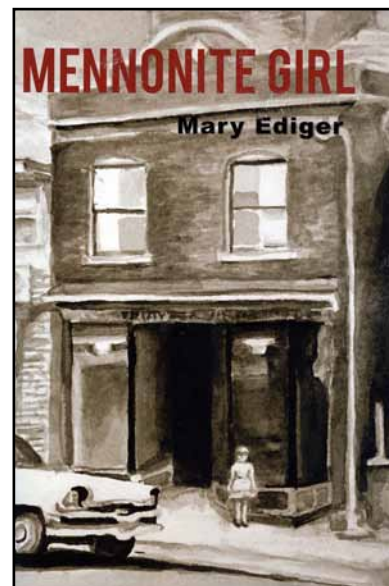
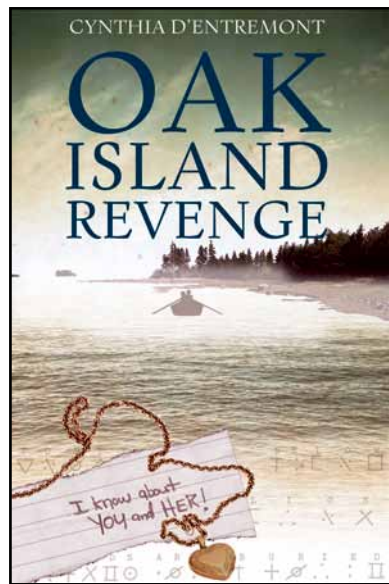
Mennonite Girl

Mary Ediger

Bryler Publications, 2011, \$18.95, ISBN: 978-1-927003-00-8

Welcome to the Welcome Inn, and welcome to the life of Mary Ediger. A work of creative non-fiction, *Mennonite Girl* follows Mary from her life as a young girl on an Oklahoma farm to a pre-teenager in Hamilton, Ontario. The daughter of a Mennonite preacher, Mary struggles with the trials of growing up a Mennonite in a non-Mennonite community, while her mother and father continue to follow God's call. With wit and a sense of humour, this story is a coming of age story for the child in all of us.

Mennonite Girl won third prize in the adult novel category of the 33rd Atlantic Writing Competition under the title "Welcome Inn." Mary Ediger grew up in a mobile Mennonite family. She holds a teaching degree from Simon Fraser University and taught for several years in British Columbia. She and her husband now live in Port Mouton.



Historic New Glasgow, Stellarton, Westville and Trenton

Monica Graham

Nimbus, April 2012, \$19.95, ISBN: 978-155109-896-8

Well known for mining and manufacturing activities, New Glasgow, Stellarton, Westville and Trenton share a fascinating history. First settled by the Mi'kmaq then Acadians, and later by Scots, the area became an important hub supported by coal and steel industries that attracted people from all walks of life. Monica Graham outlines the towns' coal and steel industries, their businesses and institutions, and their best-known people and landmarks. The book contains more than 180 historical black and white images from the 1870s to the 1940s.

Monica Graham, a freelance writer, lives near Pictou. She is the author of *Bluenose*, *The Great Maritime Detective*, and *The Historic Town of Pictou*.

Emily for Real

Sylvia Gunnery

Pajama Press, April 2012, \$14.95, ISBN: 978-0-9869495-8-6

Seventeen-year-old Emily's world crumbles when her boyfriend dumps her, and secrets are revealed that threaten to tear her family apart. Emily feels there is no one to turn to, until an unexpected friendship blossoms with Leo, a troubled classmate. Sometimes moody but always supportive, Leo is Emily's rock in an ocean of confusion and disbelief. But Leo doesn't have an easy life either. The two friends lean on each other, and discover the inner strength to face whatever life throws at them. With insight into the teenage psyche and speckled with humour, Sylvia Gunnery has created a coming-of-age story that explores the intricacies of family and friendship.

Sylvia Gunnery is a fiction writer for young adults and children, as well as a curriculum writer in English language arts. She also gives writing workshops encouraging young writers to find their own voices and tell their own stories.

Kamakwie

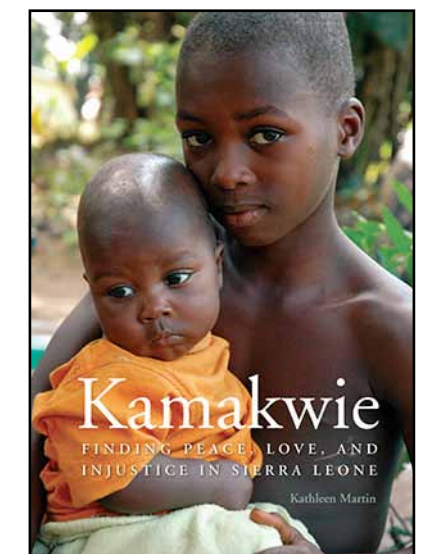
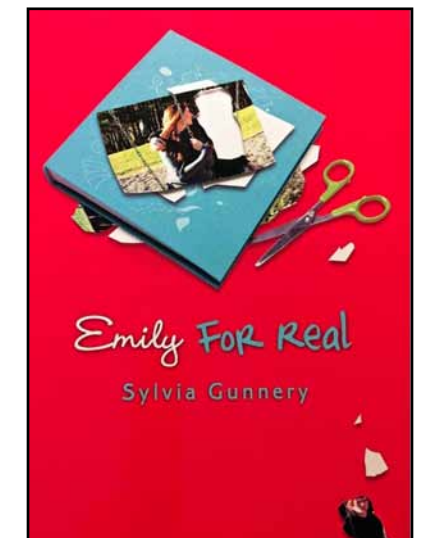
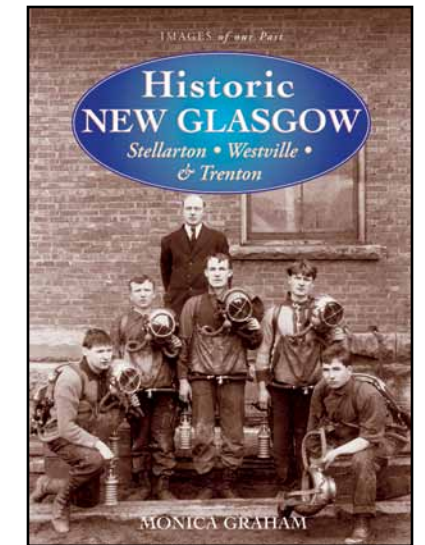
Finding Peace, Love, and Injustice in Sierra Leone

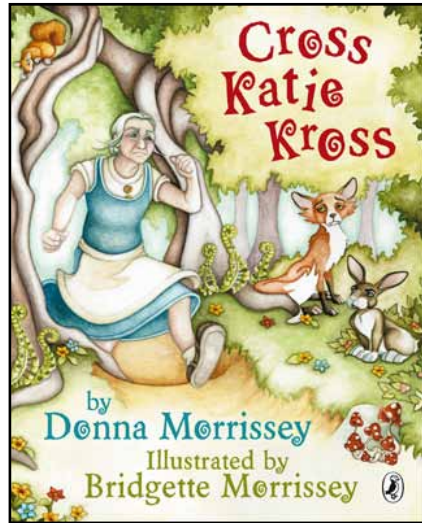
Kathleen Martin

Red Deer Press, fall 2011, \$19.95, ISBN 0-88995-472-0

Sierra Leone is the poorest country in Africa. Yet it is populated by people who are hopeful, and aspire to better themselves through education, proper health care, and through putting behind them the horrors of civil war. Kathleen Martin spent several weeks in the tiny village of Kamakwie in the interior of the West African country. She spoke to the people – and the children – about their lives, their aspirations, and their memories of war. The experience was a revelation, which she has chronicled in this moving and inspiring portrait of a people willing to forgive so they can look to the future with regained hope and dignity. To learn more visit <http://kamakwie.org>.

Kathleen Martin is a journalist, the author of several children's books about animals, an editor, book reviewer, and the executive director of the Canadian Sea Turtle Network.





Cross Katie Cross

Donna Morrissey

illustrated by Bridgette Morrissey

Puffin Canada, January 31, 2012, \$18, ISBN: 9780670064793

In this children's story from award-winning author Donna Morrissey, we meet Katie Cross, a curmudgeonly old woman who hates just about everything. Katie becomes so fed up with life on her farm that she leaves her home in search of Love Valley: a beautiful, idyllic place where she can be on her own, away from tedious chores, pestering neighbours, and pesky animals. But Katie's journey leads her to learn that sometimes dreams come true in the most surprising ways. The story is accompanied by Bridgette Morrissey's charming and quirky illustrations.

Donna Morrissey is the author of four adult novels: *Kit's Law*, *Downhill Chance*, *Sylvanus Now*, and *What They Wanted*.

Ghost Islands of Nova Scotia

Mike Parker

Pottersfield Press, March 2012, \$24.95, ISBN: 978-1-897426-35-7

Nova Scotia has more than 3,800 islands scattered along its 5,000 miles of coastline. Mike Parker explores a few at the height of their glory – Sable, Seal, St. Paul, Scatarie, and Devils come to life, as do a score of others including McNabs, Lawlor, Deadmans, Melville, Little Hope, Liscomb, the Tuskets, the Canso Islands, Georges, the LaHave Islands, McNutts, Oak, Isle Haute, Bon Portage, and Sambro. Parker has selected 330 photos and maps to produce a series of pictorial vignettes accompanied by a wealth of descriptive text. It's a look back at a rugged, adventurous, dangerous, often lonely, and sometimes tragic way of life.

Ghost Islands of Nova Scotia, Mike Parker's fourteenth book, completes a trilogy joining his two most recent best-sellers – *Gold Rush Ghost Towns of Nova Scotia* and *Buried in the Woods: Sawmill Ghost Towns of Nova Scotia*. Mike offers heritage programs and services through Old Days, Old Ways.

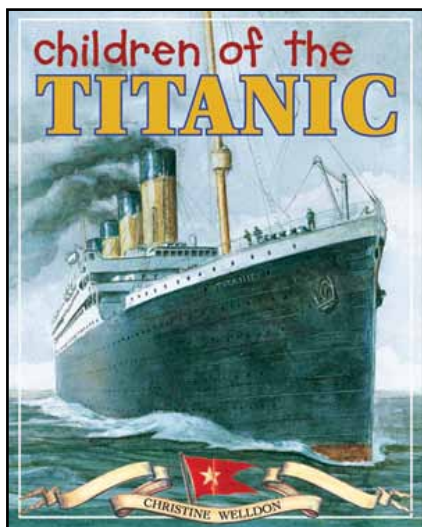
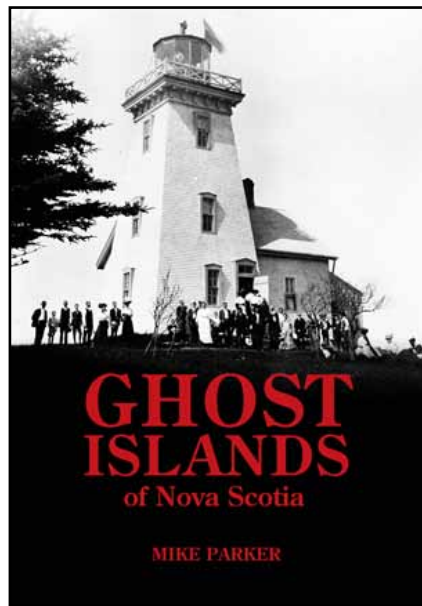
Children of the Titanic

Christine Welldon

Nimbus, March 2012, \$14.95, ISBN: 978-155109-892-0

On April 10, 1912, the *Titanic* left England with 2,240 passengers – 109 were children. Introducing children to the ship that couldn't sink, this book follows three children – Beth Cook age six, travelling third class; Charlotte Murphy, age eight, second class; and John Crosby, age 11, first class. We meet them as they board and get settled in their rooms in various parts of the ship, witness their experience of the events on the night of April 15, and see their eventual arrival in New York on the rescue ship *Carpathia*. The book includes over 40 photographs, highlighted glossary terms, and sidebars on aspects of shipbuilding, early 20th-century life, and the events of April 15, 1912. It provides a richly illustrated, detailed look at this historic event and a way of travel unfamiliar to most children today.

Christine Welldon is the author of *Molly Kool: Captain of the Atlantic*, *The Children of Africville*, and *Canadian National Railway: Pon Git Cheng*.



Three try self-publishing

Hillary Titley

We've all heard the self-publishing fairy tales of those that uploaded their tomes to digital platforms and had sold hundreds, thousands, even millions of copies in good time. Take Darcie Chan of Courtland Manor, New York, who saw her manuscript, *The Mill River Recluse*, rejected by more than 100 literary agents before selling over 400,000 digital copies in 2011. Also have a look at Amanda Hocking of Austin, Minnesota, who, needing only \$300 for a trip to Chicago, uploaded her novel to Amazon and other e-book platforms with the intention to sell copies to her family and friends. In the six months she needed to raise her \$300, she sold 150,000 copies, making an additional \$20,000.

With more and more authors taking control of their manuscript's destiny and doing so outside the traditional route of trade publishing, we thought we'd check in with some Writers' Fed members who have gone into the publishing business for themselves and ask them to flesh out what lies between having your manuscript on your hard drive, getting your books back from the printer and beyond.

The decision to go into business publishing their own work was the result of frustration with the inability to break into the traditional publishing business with the specific manuscripts they were writing. **Guy VanAmburg**, author of the novel *The Prince of Rockport*, published in November of last year, **Kathy Chisholm**, who wrote *Urban Tigers: Tales of a Cat Vet*, released in April 2011, and **Jennifer Hatt**, creator of the *Finding Maria* series, all have "thanks, but no thanks" letters from publishers in their past. As Hatt puts it, "I decided I would rather write the book than write query letters, work for revenue instead of royalties, and maintain control of the story."

Hatt, VanAmburg and Chisholm opened up about nurturing a readership for their books. For Chisholm, she felt her readership was already cultivated. "My husband and I established the real life Atlantic Cat Hospital in 1987 [a fictionalized version of which frames the action of *Urban Tigers*], so after working there for 23 years, I felt I understood my intended target audience," she says.

Hatt started with her family and friends and is now concentrated on "widen[ing] the circle beyond my direct influence." To do so, she is joining and taking advantage of professional organizations such as The Professional Writers' Association of Canada and the Atlantic Publishers Marketing Association. VanAmburg hired a local publicist to design a website and create a marketing plan for his book.

With Chisholm firmly ensconced in the ailurophile (cat fanciers) community and Hatt depending on the enthusiasm of her close circle of family and friends, both women exemplify the confidence you must have in your potential market before you go to print. The response from initial readers gave Hatt the encouragement she needed to release a second book – a sequel to her first. "A pool of readers was already waiting for the new release," she says.

In the fairy tale stories of Darcie Chan and Amanda Hocking there are some grey clouds. Chan's initial goal for her book, *The Mill River Recluse*, was to be published traditionally. She wanted the services of an editor and to see copies of her book in traditional book stores. Due to the overwhelming success of her book online, publishers claim the book's popularity may have run its course. Hocking is overwhelmed by the editing process and fears that her books are overrun with grammar and spelling errors.

To place the demands of publishing on top of the demands writing is an enormous undertaking. Says Hatt, "All of this juggling – I have three active children and a day job, in addition to the publishing company and writing – has left little time to focus. But at the same time, it is teaching me to make every second count."

Indeed, as with publishing a book the old-fashioned way, it is the connection with the individual reader that counts. Chisholm says she received an email from a reader dealing with a recent tragedy. "Every afternoon," the reader wrote to her, "I would lie down and read this charming, often funny, sometimes sad, delightful book. It eased the pain during my reading and took me to another place."

"And really," according to Chisholm, "what more needs to be said." ■

Links to e-publishing info

A Writers' Bill of Rights for the Digital Age (www.writersunion.ca/digital_bill_of_rights.asp) The Writers Union of Canada has developed 12 rights for Canadian authors. They're not written in stone as the digital publishing scene is rapidly evolving and changing, but these points are the current core demands and principals for writers' rights in the digital age.

How to self-publish an e-book: (<http://reviews.cnet.com/how-to-self-publish-an-e-book>) Interested in self-publishing an e-book? CNET executive editor David Carnoy offers some basic tips for e-book publishing and lays out your best options for publishing quickly and easily.

eBooks Crossroads: (www.ebookcrossroads.com) An interesting and helpful site that describes itself as a one-stop resource for writing, publishing and marketing. Also includes a directory of ePublishers (www.ebookcrossroads.com/epublishers.html). As well there are reviews of e-book compiler software.

<http://calibre-ebook.com> "Calibre is a free and open source e-book library management application developed by users of e-books for users of e-books. It has a cornucopia of features divided into the following main categories: Library Management; E-book conversion; Syncing to e-book reader devices; Downloading news from the web and converting it into e-book form; Comprehensive e-book viewer; Content server for online access to your book collection,"

www.goodreads.com A networking service connecting authors to readers

Joe Konrath, genre author, preaching to the self-publishing converted: <http://jakonrath.blogspot.com>

Review of 10 online book publishing companies: (<http://online-book-publishing-review.toptenreviews.com/>) Review and comparison of iUniverse, author-house, outskirts press, infinity publishing, virtual book worm publishing, Llumina Press, Xlibris, bookstand, wheatmark, and fuitus. These companies charge writers for publishing services.

Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing: (<http://kdp.amazon.com/>) With Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) you can self-publish your books on the Amazon Kindle Store. Books self-published through KDP can participate in the 70% royalty program and are available for purchase on Kindle devices and Kindle apps for iPad, iPhone, iPod touch, PC, Mac, Blackberry, and Android-based devices. With KDP, you can self-publish books in English, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian and specify pricing in US Dollars, Pounds Sterling, and Euros.

Smashwords: www.smashwords.com Smashwords is an e-book publishing and distribution platform for e-book authors, publishers, agents and readers. Offers multi-format, DRM-free e-books, ready for immediate sampling and purchase, and readable on any e-reading device. At Smashwords, authors and publishers have complete control over the sampling, pricing and marketing of their written works.

www.wululu.com lets you make, self-publish, print and sell print-on-demand books, e-books, photo books and calendars.

www.WordPress.com allows you to start a blog without any technical knowledge. The website says almost everything on WordPress is free, and what is free currently will remain so, but they also offer a la carte services for things like custom design and custom domains.

The Self-Publishing Review (www.selfpublishingreview.com) An online magazine devoted to self-publishing: book reviews, publisher reviews, interviews, news, opinion, and how to's.

<http://paidContent.org> – the economics of digital content For those of us who want information and the latest news stories on digital content and e-publishing.

www.guardian.co.uk/books/ebooks The Guardian is a British daily. This portion of its site has news and stories about e-books and digital publishing.

The Eastword Interview

Pamela Ditchoff on fairy tales & e-books

Pamela Ditchoff is the author of a wide selection of fiction, poetry and non-fiction, including a novel of linked short stories, Seven Days & Seven Sins (published by Shaye Areheart Books), and a non-fiction book about teaching poetry in the classroom, Poetry: One, Two, Three (published by Interact Press). A writer whose interests veer toward the speculative, the fantastic and the magical, we were eager to ask her about hope in fairy tales, the value of speculative and fantasy fiction, and the very real-world experiences of e-publishing. Pamela currently lives and writes in Liverpool.

Your two published e-books, Mrs Beast and Princess Beast, portray some classic fairy tale heroines long after they have been swept off their feet by their handsome princes. So, uh, do your e-books contain any remote possibility of hope?

Okay girlfriend, I will answer your first question by saying YES!

But the hope is not that of warbling over a wishing well waiting for a prince to come. Nor jamming your foot into impossibly high heels to compliment your Versace dress, nor getting a beauty sleep in a glass coffin, hunk of poison apple in your mouth, again waiting for a prince to rescue you.

The hope is in loving yourself enough to be yourself, not what media, magazines, or fairytales portray as the pinnacle of beauty, and only then can you find happily ever after.



Your writing blends everyday human experience with elements of sci-fi and fantasy. What, in your opinion, is the value of science or speculative fiction and fantasy within the literary cannon?

This question could be, and has been, the subject of scholarly debate for decades. One hundred years ago the canon of world literature would fill perhaps two pages of titles. Decades ago, the canon of Western Literature would fill perhaps 20. Today, "canon" is used in a broader sense to include a variety of subject matter. Since this is an interview and not a thesis, my answer is absolutely yes, and in fact, speculative fiction, science fiction, and fantasy have been in the literary canon for centuries.

Beowulf, The Odyssey, Dante's Inferno, The Tempest, and A Midsummer's Night Dream. Moving along in history, there is Kafka and Orwell. Who can say what literature university students will be reading from the literary canon in 100 years? Will Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* be there? Toni Morrison, Marquez, Allende, Tolkien, or Huxley? How many novels were written in a year in the time of Homer, even Dante and Kafka? How many novels are published in a year currently?

The value of speculative fiction, science fiction, and I will add magic realism, which I strive for in my novels, holds the same value it has always held: to expand the limits of our imagination.

Originally from Michigan, your writing education includes attending the Bread Loaf Writing Conference in Vermont and Sewanee Writers' Conference in Tennessee. What does the U.S. have to offer Canadian writing students?

The Bread Loaf Conference and The Sewanee Conference made a real difference in my perception of writing, as well as in my career as a writer. They are intensive writing conferences, not festivals or retreats.

They are juried – to be accepted, a writer must submit work, not just cash. They both offer scholarships and fellowships for those short of said cash and with real talent. They both run for 12 consecutive days. Usually the faculty numbers 20 writers, well known in the disciplines of poetry, fiction and non fiction, as well as special guest agents, editors, and publishers. Visit their websites for a full understanding of these conferences.

What does the U.S. have to offer Canadian writing students? Bread Loaf is the oldest writer's conference in North America, established by Robert Frost. It offers to Canadians the same thing it offers writing students who come from the world over to attend – intensive workshops, amazing speakers, the company of like-minded, driven writers, and one-on-one manuscript evaluation with a seasoned, well-published author. Often, students come to study with a specific author.

One author I studied with suggested I submit one of my short stories to the *Chicago Review* Writing Competition. At that point in my early career, I was unsure of submitting my work. I did and I won. I also met my first literary agent at a writing conference.

All that said, Canada also offers many writers' workshops, festivals and retreats. CanWrite! in Ontario, and The Surrey International Writer's Conference in British Columbia, are two with solid reputations.

Your last two novels are exclusively e-books and published by Stay Thirsty Press. Was your decision to publish this way conscious or circumstantial? How did you become associated with Stay Thirsty Press?

My decision was both circumstantial and conscious. While browsing a writers' site, I found a call for submissions from authors who had been previously published. The call was from Stay Thirsty, a publisher of e-books exclusively. My agent had been unable to find a home for *Mrs. Beast*. Although rejections were glowing, none of the editors wished to take a risk on "speculative

literary fiction" in the "current climate" of publishing. That is a whole other conversation.

Once I spoke with the publisher at Stay Thirsty, I was convinced that Stay Thirsty was the best place possible for my novel. After *Mrs. Beast* was published, I proposed my follow up novel, *Princess Beast*, and Stay Thirsty was pleased to accept.

How are you and Stay Thirsty cultivating your readership electronically?

I have left cultivating my readership largely to my publisher. Under his recommendation, I have written articles related to the novels, established an author page on Amazon, and posted at several book sites. I asked my publisher for help on this question, and he sent me the following:

"Actually, it is the reading public that has responded to Pamela's novels. *Mrs. Beast* has been a top-10 bestseller in the "Beauty and the Beast" category on Amazon for years, regardless of format (hard cover, paperback or e-book) and *Princess Beast* has been in the top 20. As the number of people reading electronic books has increased over the last two years, more and more people have discovered her work and clearly word-of-mouth is helping. Stay Thirsty Media and their Internet magazine is seen in more than 170 countries."

Will you publish in conventional print book form again?

Yes. My agent has sent my latest novel, "The Book of Leaves," to a few traditional book publishers.

I do love holding a book and turning the pages. I have bookcases filled with hundreds of books.

I also love my Kindle, especially when I travel or when I wish to read a translation, like *Shadow of the Wind*, and can't find it in my local library or bookstore.

I enjoy having a hand in both venues. There is certainly room for both in this rapidly changing publishing world. I am reminded of a science fiction classic, *The Time Machine* by H.G. Wells, the scene in which the traveller asks for books and they crumble with his touch as the media disc whirls and projects images from history with voice-over narration. ■

Report from the Field – e-publisher Joanne Merriam

Joanne Merriam was the executive assistant at the Writers Federation from 1997 to 2001. She now lives and writes in Nashville, Tennessee.

In June 2009, the economy collapsing around me, I spent six weeks looking for work before I landed a temp job at a local hospital, doing much the same stuff I used to do for Jane Buss at the Writers Fed, for four surgical oncologists (they hired me eventually and I still work there).

During that six weeks, I got up every day at the crack of dawn, applied for all the new job postings for which I was even remotely qualified, and spent the rest of each day researching e-publishing and coming up with a business plan for Upper Rubber Boot Books (www.upperrubberboot.com), which I officially spoke into existence two years later in July 2011.

I decided to make the books I was publishing e-books only, for several reasons. I see a lot of poetry formatted very badly in e-books and thought I could do it better – I have 15 years' experience in web design.

I read a lot of e-books and like their portability, and my allergies like their lack of dust. And, since I planned to primarily publish poetry and short story collections, neither of which tend to be hot sellers, and since my budget is laughably miniscule, I wanted to minimize my up-front and ongoing expenses as much as possible.

The business model for e-books makes good sense for poetry. Publishers don't have to worry about hitting their break-even point before



they run out of warehousing budget or before the printer's bill comes due. I decided I wanted to focus on marginal genres, which have trouble finding a home in traditional publishing.

First I started *Seven by Twenty* (twitter.com/7x20), a literary journal for very short work fitting into the 140-character maximum of Twitter. Twitter made finding and retaining readers easy, since anybody with a Twitter account could follow us on an impulse. I solicited reprint rights from a whole host of accomplished writers of haiku and scifaiku and other short forms, and opened to submissions, and spent a while just building a readership. At this writing I have 1,845 followers.

In early 2011, I began sending contracts to the writers of the pieces I thought were the best of *Seven by Twenty* so far – leaving some out

which just didn't fit into any of my seven themed sections). I raised about \$900 on Kickstarter, bought some ISBNs and a lot of advertising on places like Goodreads and Facebook, and put out three titles just before Christmas: *140 And Counting* (the aforementioned anthology), a reprint of my own poetry book, originally published by Stride in the U.K. and out of print since 2007, and a poetry chapbook by Heather Kamins called *Blueshifting*, which combines poetry with science, exactly the kind of work I want to encourage.

In order to publish these books, I had to figure out a lot of things.

Notably, it took me an entire month just to get hanging indents right. HTML, which is the backbone of e-books, doesn't have a default "poetry" or "line" element, the way there's a default "paragraph" element, which means that in order to make

poetry look like poetry, you have to cheat.

I cobbled together a solution using feathers and glue, and held my face just right, and made it work. I expect this will be an ongoing issue until the people who design e-readers get interested in poetry – in other words, until the end of time.

Formating solved, I had to work out fair compensation for my authors. Some of the standard clauses in book contracts just don't apply to e-books.

For example, what does it mean to be "out of print" when there's no such thing as a print run – and if the book can't go out of print, under what circumstances do rights revert back to the author?

My contracts include this clause: "In the event that Publisher fails to sell greater than ten (10) copies of the Work in any rolling twelve (12) month period, all rights shall revert back to Author upon Author providing Publisher with written notice that Author is exercising this option."

For another example, the standard 7 to 10 percent royalty on print books would be exploitative on e-books, which have so many fewer costs to produce. That's not to say that publishers are simply manufacturers. Even without a physical product, publishers still need to edit, copyedit, do layout and cover design, proofread, advertise/market, make sure credits and permissions are in order, negotiate with vendors, and, if it's non-fiction, fact-check and sometimes produce an index and glossary.

Nonetheless, authors should get higher royalties from e-books than they do from print books. The industry seems to be oscillating

between 15 to 35 percent of the cover price. The Writers' Union of Canada recommends 50 percent of net, which in most cases is equivalent to 35 percent of gross, since vendors typically keep 30 percent.

My authors get 30 percent of gross on the first so many books (until I break even, essentially), and 40 percent thereafter. This means that when Kamins sells a copy of *Blueshifting* at \$4.99, her initial royalty is exactly equivalent to the 10 percent royalty she would have made from a print book selling for \$14.97 (and at the second tier, to a 10 percent royalty on a \$19.96 print book), and she has a good chance of selling more copies to price-sensitive readers.



For a third example, I had to decide what to do about DRM. Digital rights management, which limits the use of digital content after its purchase, is offered by all the major e-book vendors. If I wanted to add it to my product, it's simply a matter of clicking the appropriate box when submitting the file for sale.

I've long thought that DRM reflects a hostile attitude towards readers, inconveniencing them while treating them like thieves; meanwhile, actual copyright infringers find it trivial, in most

cases, to work around DRM. I decided against DRM and in favour of trusting my customers.

Some of them will undoubtedly share their files, in the same way I think nothing of loaning a book to a friend. I think the goodwill and word of mouth advertising generated by that, more than makes up for any losses I might suffer thereby.

In any case, as a publisher of poetry and short story collections, piracy is the least of my worries, although it gets a lot of press in the popular media. I'm far more concerned about the almost monopoly-level power vested in a handful of e-book vendors.

Amazon reportedly sold more Kindle editions than print books as of May 2011 (not counting free editions). They have the largest market share, followed by Barnes and Noble and Apple. In Canada Kobo (majority owned by Indigo) is also a force.

I've read some wildly varying figures. While Amazon makes it easy for authors to get sales figures for their own books, it never releases aggregate sales figures for the Kindle. But most sources agree

that Amazon is on track to have fully half of all U.S. book sales – print and e-book – by the end of 2012. That's a lot of power for one company to have, and the current political climate in the U.S. makes regulatory antitrust actions against them seem unlikely to me.

We're living in interesting times in the book industry. Issues like monopoly power and predatory pricing, piracy, authors' rights, and fair compensation are all coming to the forefront as e-books increase in market share. Self-published indie authors are typically pricing their

books much lower than publishers are, which may lead to reader expectations of nearly free books which make it even harder for writers to make a living.

For society at large, access to information may become even more abridged for people who cannot afford e-readers or tablets or are too technologically unsavvy to keep up with the rapid pace of change. These sorts of issues will be a challenge to us all.

On the positive side, the opportunities to interact with readers in new ways are also growing as the technology matures. Writers can reach out to readers more directly. People with vision problems can just customize their e-reader to display bigger fonts instead of being limited to books popular enough to justify the release of a large print edition.

E-books take up essentially no room, and can't gather dust or grow mold. They can have soundtracks, gorgeously coloured illustrations, touch-activated graphics, or give readers multiple narrative options, like the choose-your-own-adventure books so many of us grew up with in the '80s and '90s.

I suspect that new forms of interactive literature will arise as these options expand. I'm excited to be involved in bringing poetry and fiction to the vanguard of this reading revolution. ■

Writers' associations links

SFWA: Science Fiction Writers Association (www.sfwaw.org) A professional organization in the U.S. for authors of science fiction, fantasy and related genres. Open to authors, artists, editors, and other industry professionals who meet eligibility requirements. Active Members: established authors with three qualifying short story sales, one qualifying novel sale, or one professionally produced full-length dramatic script; membership fee \$80 US. Associate Members: authors with at least one qualifying short story sale, fee \$60 US

SFCanada: Canada's National Association of Speculative Fiction (www.sfcanada.org) To qualify for membership, an author must have published for payment at least two short stories or three poems in commercial markets, or received a royalty advance for a novel. A one-year membership is \$30.

ASJA: American Society of Journalists and Authors (www.asja.org) A professional organization of independent non-fiction writers. Membership consists of more than 1,400 freelance writers of magazine articles, trade books, and many other forms of non-fiction writing. Monthly newsletter is available online to non-members. A wealth of information for freelancers is readily available on this site.

CFU: Canadian Freelance Union (www.cfu.nion.ca) The Canadian Freelance Union (CEP Local 2040)

PWAC (www.pwac.ca) Professional Writers Association of Canada reflects the broader professional interests of approximately 600 members across the country. You name it, PWAC members write it.

CANSCAIP (www.canscaip.org) is dedicated to the celebration and promotion of Canadian children's authors, illustrators and performers and their work. Provides promotional and networking opportunities to over 400 professional members (fee is \$85) and over 600 Friends (associate members, fee is \$45) across Canada. CANSCAIP is open to all supporters of children's culture including librarians, teachers, designers, parents, editors and publishers, as well as both aspiring and professional children's authors, illustrators and performers.

Crime Writers of Canada (www.crimewriterscanada.com): a national organization for Canadian mystery and crime writers, associated professionals, and others with a serious interest in Canadian crime writing. Professional membership \$125. Associate membership includes writers and aspiring authors of crime books and stories, \$85. Supporting members includes fans, \$85.

Editors Association of Canada (www.editors.ca) promotes professional editing as key in producing effective communication. The 1,600 members include both salaried and freelance editors. EAC sponsors professional development seminars, promotes and maintains high standards of editing and publishing in Canada, establishes guidelines to help editors secure fair pay and good working conditions, helps both in-house and freelance editors to network, and cooperates with other publishing associations in areas of common concern. ■

Markets

■ **Submissions wanted for anthology *Desperately Seeking Susans*:** Oolichan Books is accepting all forms of poetry by Canadian poets named Susan. If your poems are accepted, proof of your name will be required (e.g. photocopy of your driver's license, student card, birth certificate). To submit your work, send 1 to 4 poems (maximum of 6 pages) and a CV of previous publications to sarahtsiang@yahoo.ca. Deadline March 20.

■ **Call for Submissions: I Found It at the Movies.** Forthcoming anthology seeks new and previously published poems inspired by cinema. All styles and approaches welcome. Looking for poems that reference specific films or actors, genres of film, the act of movie-going or video-watching, or the intersections of movies and life. Editors: Ruth Roach Pierson and Sue MacLeod. Publisher: Tightrope Books (spring 2013). Submit from 1 to 5 poems, as attachments, to filmpoems@gmail.com. They will send an acknowledgment upon receipt, and hope to complete the selection process by October. Include full publication details for any poems which have appeared or been accepted elsewhere. Deadline: March 31.

■ **Call for Submissions Children's Poetry Anthology on Sports:** Adults who write children's poetry, including emerging poets, are invited to submit their work to an independently published e-book anthology of children's poetry, aimed at 5-to-12-year-olds, dedicated to sports. Editors are interested in receiving poems written in a variety of forms including, but

not limited to: couplets, triplets, limericks, haiku, tanka, cinquain, diamante, mask, apostrophe or list poems, etheree, palindromes, etc. Poets whose work is selected for the collection will receive a small honorarium and will be notified shortly after the deadline. A portion of the anthology's proceeds will be donated to Right to Play, an organization working with volunteers and partners to use sport and play to enhance child development in areas of disadvantage. Email poems to Carol-Ann Hoyte: atkidlitfan1972@yahoo.ca. Deadline: March 31.

■ **Mosaic:** University of Manitoba, Room 208 Tier Building, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 2N2 (www.umanitoba.ca/mosaic) This journal for the interdisciplinary study of literature will publish a special issue on Blindness – deadline April 16 – that will bring together critical and disability theories to address historical and contemporary studies and interpretations of blindness across various genres, as well as studies of, to use Samuel Weber's title words (in *Institution and Interpretation*), "The Blindness of the Seeing Eye." Details on website.

■ **The Malahat Review's East Coast Issue and The Fiddlehead's West Coast Issue:** Deadline May 15. *The Malahat Review* invites submissions from East Coast writers (from NB, NS, PEI, and Newfoundland and Labrador), while *Fiddlehead* invites work from British Columbia writers. Looking for poetry, fiction, personal essay, memoir, cultural criticism, and literary journalism. No definite "regional" theme or focus is required. See www.malahatreview.ca/east_coast.html and www.thefiddlehead.ca/west_coast.html. The magazines will launch a joint website where

web surfers can also engage in the convergences and differences in the literatures of two of Canada's remarkable coastlines. Proposals for web content may be sent to either or both magazines.

■ **Room:** (www.roommagazine.com) is Canada's oldest literary journal by and about women. Looking for original, unpublished art, fiction, creative non-fiction, and poetry that explore all iterations of women's labour, from a labour of love, birth labour, the labour movement, traditional and non-traditional women's labours. Send to the attention of Lorrie Miller by May 30. For full submission details see website.

■ **Descant:** PO Box 314, Station P, Toronto, ON M5S 2S8 (www.descant.ca) 2 theme issues: The Hidden City, deadline June 15 – an issue dedicated to that which escapes first notice in the world's myriad urban landscapes. Masala: deadline August 15 – looking for the stories of the Indian Diaspora, its triumphs and its tragedies. Essays, poems, fictions, memoirs, and art work which show the ways in which the Indian peoples connect with one another worldwide and also differentiate themselves from and yet are still linked to modern India. Details on website.

■ **ENC Press:** (www.enypress.com) Accepting submissions of fresh, original, entertaining novels (45,000 to 75,000 words) driven by engaging characters. "We are looking for full-length, character-driven novels that contain elements of social and political satire or commentary, offer unusual insights into foreign cultures, have a strong element of humor, and tip a few sacred cows along the way. We avoid genre

fiction (e.g., murder mysteries, horror, sci-fi, fantasy), unless the genre is but a context for a satirical commentary on human condition." Details on website.

■ **Parenting Press:** (www.parentingpress.com) Based in Seattle, Washington, their goal is to offer useful books that teach practical life skills to parents, children and the people who care for them. The books are non-judgemental in attitude, useful to people with many different value systems, and full of options rather than "shoulds." They are short, easily understood and present material in a fresh way. Does not accept fiction.

■ **Grain:** (www.grainmagazine.ca) the journal of eclectic writing, is a literary quarterly published by the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild. Poetry, fiction, literary non-fiction. All contributors, regardless of genre, are paid \$50 per page to a maximum of \$225. Visual work published inside the magazine (reproduced in black and white) is paid at the same page rate as text contributions. Cover images (full-colour) are paid at the current CAR/FAC rates.

■ **Second Story Press:** 20 Maud Street, Suite 401 Toronto, ON, M5V 2M5, (www.seconstorypress.ca) Dedicated to publishing feminist-inspired books for adults and young readers. Their list is a mix of fiction, non-fiction, and children's books. Looking for manuscripts dealing with the many diverse and varied aspects of the lives of girls and women. Does not publish poetry, rhyming picture books, or books with anthropomorphized animals.

■ **NeWest Press:** Edmonton, Alberta (www.newestpress.com) Publishing radically rewarding literature for over 30 years. by established and emerging Canadian authors. Publishes 8 to 10 books each year in short print runs. If a book sells well, reprints it as necessary. Publishes fiction, poetry, drama, and non-fiction works with literary merit. Does not publish young adult or children's books. Browse their online catalogue to see if your writing fits within their publishing mandate.

■ **Anvil Press** (anvilpress.com) is a literary publisher based in Vancouver interested in contemporary, progressive literature in all genres. Publishes 8 to 10 titles per year. Not interested in seeing formulaic genre novels: Sci-Fi, Horror, Romance, etc.

■ **Tradewind Books** (202-1807 Maritime Mews, Vancouver, BC V6H 3W7) (<http://www.tradewindbooks.com/submission-guidelines.html>) publishes books for children and young adults. Review their online catalogue to see the types of books they publish before you submit your work. Picture books, chapter books, young adult fiction, poetry

■ **Harlequin.com:** There are at least 30 publishing imprints on Harlequin website and their writers' guidelines are available for downloading. Harlequin Heartwarming, Kimani Press, Harlequin Teen, Harlequin Historical Undone, Nocturne Cravings, and Nonfiction are accepting submissions – check out their new guidelines: at www.harlequin.com/articlepage.html?articleId=538&chapter=0

■ **Poetry:** (www.poetryfoundation.org) Founded in 1912 it's celebrating its centennial. Pays on publication at the rate of \$10 per line (with a minimum payment of \$300) and \$150 per page of prose. Accepts online submissions. Details on website.

Contests

■ **Grain's 24th Annual Short Grain Writing Contest:** (www.grainmagazine.ca) Deadline April 1 postmark. Poetry: any style, including prose poem, up to 100 lines. Fiction: fiction in any form including post card story, to a maximum of 2,500 words. 3 prizes in each category: 1st \$1,000, 2nd \$750, 3rd \$500. Entry fee \$35 for a maximum of two entries in one category. Details on website.

■ **Event 2012 Non-fiction Contest:** PO Box 2503, New Westminster, BC V3L 5B2 (<http://event.douglas.bc.ca>) Deadline April 15. Open to manuscripts exploring the creative non-fiction form. 5,000 words max. Judges reserve the right to award two or three prizes: three at \$500 or two at \$750, plus payment for publication in Event 41/3. Other manuscripts may be published. Entry fee \$34.95 includes subscription. Details on website.

■ **TWUC's Writing for Children Competition:** The Writers Union of Canada, 90 Richmond Street East, Suite 200, Toronto, ON M5C 1P1. (www.writersunion.ca) Deadline April 15. Entry fee \$15. Prize \$1,500. Entries of the winner and finalists will be submitted to three publishers of children's books for consideration. Any writing for children up to 1,500 words. Details on website, click on contests.


■ **Canada Writes: The CBC Literary Prizes** are the flagship competitions of Canada Writes. Three separate competitions – fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction – that take place throughout the year. \$25 entry fee. Accepts online submissions. The first-place winner of each category receives \$6,000 and each of the four finalists \$1,000. First place winners are published in *enRoute* magazine and online on Canada Writes and broadcast on CBC Radio. Poetry competition opens March 1, submission deadline is May 1. Short story opens September 1 deadline is November 1. Details at www.cbc.ca/books/canadawrites.

■ **Malahat Review:** University of Victoria, P.O. Box 1700 Stn CSC, Victoria, BC, V8W 2Y2 (www.malahatreview.ca) **Far Horizons Award for Poetry:** deadline May 1, emerging writers may enter up to 3 poems. Details on website.

■ **The Antigonish Review:** (www.antigonishreview.com) 2 writing contests – **Sheldon Currie Fiction Prize:** deadline May 31 postmark. Stories on any subject. Total entry not to exceed 20 pages. **Great Blue Heron Poetry Contest:** deadline June 30. 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 in both competitions:


1st \$600 & publication, 2nd \$400 & publication, 3rd \$200 & publication. Entry fee \$25. Details on website.

■ **Room Magazine's Annual Fiction, Poetry, and Creative Non-fiction Contest – 2012:** (www.roommagazine.com) Calling all women writers: sharpen your pencils or fire up your laptop and send your fiction, poetry, or creative non-fiction contest entries. Deadline: Entries must be postmarked or e-mailed no later than June 15. Entry fee: \$30 per entry. Prizes: 1st prize in each category – \$500, 2nd prize – \$250. Winners will be published in a 2013 issue. Other manuscripts may be published. Poetry: max. 3 poems or 150 lines. Fiction and Creative Non-Fiction: max. 3,500 words. Electronic entries accepted. Details on website.

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Spring Seminar Series at WFNS

We will be presenting several info sessions on pertinent topics from March through May at the Writers Fed office 1113 Marginal Road, Halifax.

First up is *Rights & Contracts in the Digital Age: An Essential Primer for Writers* with Sherry D. Ramsey on March 22, 7-9 p.m. Cost: \$30 for WFNS members; \$45 for non-members. Write programs@writers.ns.ca to register.

Upcoming in this series:

The Editor-Writer Relationship, with Valerie Compton and Bethany Gibson, April 26.

Legal Information for Writers, with the Nova Scotia Artists Legal Information Society and Invisible Publishing, May 24.

Take in all three of these seminars for \$80 members, \$125 non-members. ■