



No. 12: Fall 2018

Upcoming Meetings

Monday,
September 17

Annual General Meeting

Monday,
October 15

General Meeting with Guest Speaker John Mavin

Monday,
November 19
Christmas Social

*Venue and time
to be confirmed*

Monday,
January 21

General Meeting with Guest Speaker Aaron Chapman

Meeting location:

The Program Room, 3rd Floor
North Vancouver City Library
Time: 7:00 – 8:45 p.m.

Members: Free
Non-Members: By donation

Write On!

Newsletter of the North Shore Writers' Association
Linking North Shore writers since 1993

Vice President's Message

Rod Baker

Through the dense smoke of what is becoming our new summer norm, I can see, or at least sense, a bright light behind the haze, the resumption of our North Shore Writers Association meetings!

I hope you all had a great summer and were able to enjoy the unusual warmth and aridness. But as we head towards fall, shorter days and cooler weather, maybe, probably, most likely, as members of the NSWA, your creative juices are turning towards that most challenging venture, stringing words into sentences, into paragraphs, into chapters into...something which captures readers and transports them to a world beyond their own.

We know of Anne Frank's world solely through the power of her writing: "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." For us writers, improving our world means sitting down, as Anne did, and capturing a time, a place, a feeling with such truth that it rings like a clear bell.

As writers, well conceived words are the connective tissue, the magic medium reaching past time and distance, joining us together, helping us understand one another's thoughts and experiences.

Let's join together once again, in the company of fellow writers at our upcoming Annual General Meeting on the 17th of September where we will hear about our past accomplishments, future plans and vote in some new talent to our Board of Directors.

For me, this will be my fourth year as a member. Since joining I have published three books and have another in the pipeline. I can honestly say that without the support from the members I've met, and speakers I've heard, I would have lacked the direction, confidence and resolve needed to accomplish this. Writing is a solitary and difficult challenge, so, as they say, misery loves company—looking forward to seeing you all soon. ■

For news, features and
more, visit NSWA
website:

www.nswriters.com



A Note from the Editor

After a hot and smoky summer, I hope everyone is ready for some brisk air and a return to fall routines and writing discipline. I – for one – am!

I've enjoyed a fantastic summer, having traveled overseas to see family, gone on big outdoor adventures and revelled in excellent books while swaying in my backyard hammock (this last delight cannot be underestimated). I have, however, neglected my own writing this summer. Instead of feeling guilty about it, though, I'm calling it my recharge break, topping up my creative juices with recreation, rest and inspiration from others' writing. As the kids return to school, it feels time to get back to work, back to my writing community, back to story-writing.

This issue is chock-full of wonderful writing news and submissions from you, great photos from an eventful past season and exciting upcoming workshops and guest speakers.

Last but not least, at the request of several members, I'm trialing a new section in this newsletter called "Member Bulletin Board". This is where I will post *your* writing or publishing questions and responses from fellow members who wish to share their knowledge, experiences and resources. It will be something of a community bulletin board.

Please continue to email me your writing news, stories and writing/publishing questions to editornswa@gmail.com or by mail to NSWA PO Box 37549 Lonsdale East, NV V7M 3L3.

Write on!
Wiley Ho

Deadline for next newsletter:
December 1, 2018

Table of Contents

Vice President's Message.....	1
Submission Guidelines	2
A Note from the Editor	2
Meetings & Speakers	3
Writing with Writers.....	4
Dare To Be Heard	5
Publishers Corner.....	5
B R A V O !.....	6
Photo Gallery!	8
100 WORD CHALLENGE.....	11
Non-Fiction.....	13
Poetry.....	18
Member Bulletin Board.....	20
Advance Notice – Local Authors Book Fair	21
Treasurer's Report	22
Executive 2017-2018.....	23
Event Calendar	23
The Last Page	24

Submission Guidelines

- Submissions can only be accepted from NSWA members
- Submissions to the Editor, at: editornswa@gmail.com (in WORD format, please, within the body of the email, if possible; illustrations in JPEG format)
- Space is limited and lengthy submissions (over 700 words) are therefore discouraged
- The Editor reserves the right to make revisions or corrections
- Publication in WRITE ON! is at the discretion of the Editor, in consultation with the Executive

***Disclaimer:** Contributors are responsible for the accuracy, originality, reliability, etc., of their submission content, and any views expressed are not necessarily those of the Editor and/or the NSWA.*

Meetings & Speakers

*Monday
September 17*

Annual General Meeting



Speak up and be counted! Make sure you attend our Annual General Meeting. This is your opportunity to have your say on the upcoming season of the NSWA. We'll be electing new executive members for 2018/9, accepting volunteers for upcoming activities, answering your questions and listening to your ideas. Bring your suggestions for the upcoming season.

It is also membership renewal time. For a mere \$35, you can renew your membership by cheque or cash at the meeting.

This is a great evening to meet and mingle with other members of NSWA, and to swap some writing tales and tips!

*Monday
October 15*

Meeting plus Guest Speaker John Mavin



John Mavin is the author of *Rage*, a collection of dark literary short fiction. A past nominee for both the Aurora Award and the Journey Prize, John holds an MFA in Creative Writing from UBC, is a graduate of SFU's The Writer's Studio and has taught creative writing at Capilano University, SFU, UBC, the Learning Exchange, and New Shoots.

His work has been translated, studied and published internationally. John will be giving a presentation on Story Origins, how to take that initial, surface inspiration and develop it into a deeper, more complex story that will capture and hold your reader's attention. He'll also answer questions on revising your manuscript, if time permits. This is a must-attend session for beginner and experienced writer alike, so make sure to mark this date on your calendar! For info on John and his work, see his website at www.johnmavin.com.

*Monday
November 19*

Christmas in November



It's an annual tradition — our pre-Christmas social event in lieu of a meeting. The location will be a local restaurant and it's always a fun evening of mingling and lively chatter, complete with door prizes! Save this date!

Venue, time and arrangements to follow!

We'll be back January 21 for the first meeting of 2019 with guest speaker Aaron Chapman.

Have a great autumn! Happy writing!

North
Vancouver

City Library

The North Shore Writers' Association thanks the North Vancouver City Library for their generous support of our ongoing activities and special events, and also for their support of all local writers and readers. The Library plays an active and varied role in the cultural life of our community - for more information and to find out how to participate, go to: www.nvcl.ca

Writing with Writers

NVCL/NSWA *Writing with Writers* Workshops – North Vancouver City Library

September 26, 2018 7:00 – 8:30pm

Writing From a Child's Point of View

Presented by Sonia Garrett,
author of *Maddie Makes a Movie*



Children are some of the most precious, unique, misunderstood and infuriating creatures on the planet. One moment they'll astonish you with words of wisdom beyond their years, and the next they'll exasperate you with their stubbornness.

In this hands-on workshop, published middle-grade author Sonia Garrett will show you how to represent such complex and unpredictable little people in your writing. We'll look at how you can get inside their world and look out from behind their eyes.

Through writing exercises and readings, Sonia will guide participants as they create believable and memorable child characters.

If you want to create the next *Oliver Twist*, *Pippi Longstocking*, *Charlie Bucket*, or *Harry Potter*, then this workshop is for you.

December 5, 2018 7:00 – 8:30pm

Writing Thrillers

Presented by Lawrence Verigin,
author of award-winning *Dark Seed*
and *Seed of Control*



If you're writing a thriller, want suspenseful scenes, action and/or need your story to "move," then this is a workshop you don't want to miss. Even if you are writing non-fiction, you still want it to be compelling.

Momentum in pacing and plot keep the reader interested and turning pages. The story has to breathe in and out and sometimes hold its breath to create tension. Know when to release it.

Work with a character prompt form to know the background, mannerisms, motivation and quirks of each of your characters.

Does page 1 draw the reader into the story and make them want to keep reading? What do they need to find out about to make them turn the page? Bring a copy of your first page and we will go over a few of them, if you don't mind a little critique.

All participants will receive a character prompt form (created by author Elizabeth George) that you can tailor to your own preferences.

No matter where in the writing process you are, this workshop will be worth an hour of your time.

Dare To Be Heard



If you're a writer and want to read your work to a non-critical audience why not come out to the next Dare to be Heard Literary Evening at North Vancouver City Library, **September 10**. Dare welcomes all different genre writers at all stages of the journey and interested listeners, too. We meet in the 2nd Floor Boardroom at North Vancouver City Library on the **first Monday of each month**.

Dare has been such a success that we've moved the start time from 7:00 to 6:30 p.m. If this early start is impossible for you, please email Mark Turris, at mark.turris@gmail.com and he will make sure you have a spot on the readers' list.

Dare to share! See you there!

Upcoming sessions: Sep 10, Oct 1, Nov 5, Dec 3, Jan 7, Feb 4, Mar 4, Apr 1, May 6, Jun 3
Venue: The 2nd Floor Boardroom, North Vancouver City Library
Time: 6:30 p.m. - 8:45 p.m.

Publishers Corner



There are many services available to indie authors. It can be an effective, quick way to put your work out there, and also a way to maintain more creative and financial control. Here are a few services to check out:

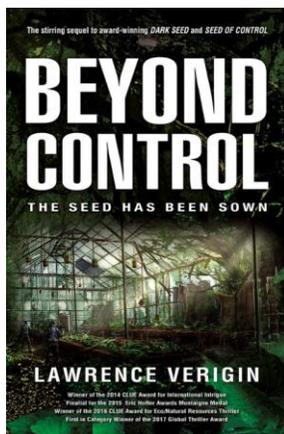
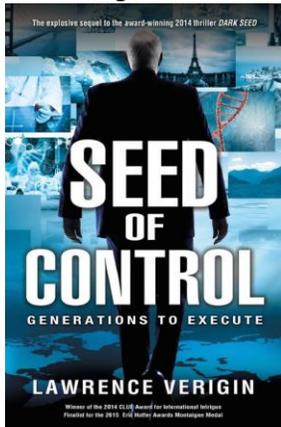
Cascadia Author Services is a B.C. boutique firm offering premium services that can be tailored to each client. They offer editing services, proofreading, cover design, e-book conversions, and advice on marketing yourself and your work. They are not a publisher, but they will help self-published authors set up an account with IngramSpark; they will also help prepare manuscripts for submission to traditional publishers. Read their website thoroughly. They divide their services between the indie author path and the traditional publishing path. You can find out more about this group at www.CascadiaAuthorServices.com

Inkshares is a publisher that gives authors the ability to pitch directly to readers instead of agents or editors. They edit, design, print, distribute and market books. They publish any work that successfully hits a pre-order threshold on their platform. A recent publication of Inkshares is a mystery novel titled "A Gentleman's Murder" by Canadian author Christopher Huang, which was reviewed in The Vancouver Sun's Saturday Review this past summer. To find out more, check them out at www.inkshares.com.

As always, **do your own research**. Search the web for information, *especially the author reviews or independent articles that are critical*. Ask questions. Reach out to other writers, find out if they've had good or bad experiences, or if they know anyone who has dealt with a publisher or group you are interested in. The world is full of both good and bad editors and publishers. Due diligence and a healthy skepticism is the best way to ensure your own experience is a positive one.

B R A V O !

Lawrence Verigin is pleased to learn his second thriller novel *Seed of Control* has won First in Category for the 2017 Global Thriller Award. *Beyond Control*, the final book in the Dark Seed trilogy comes out this November! For more info, go to lawrenceverigin.com.



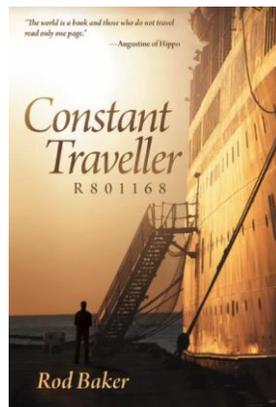
A huge shout-out to **Arshia Sorourian**, for finishing his third book! At 11, Arshia is NSWA's youngest member. His latest book, yet untitled, is on parenting – tips, tricks, quotes and humour for parents of young children. It

will be out in time for Christmas!

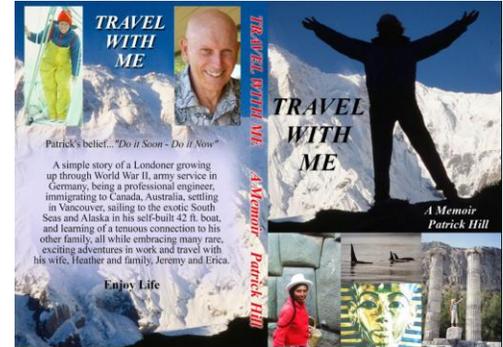
Joan Boxall is pleased to announce, "*Dare to Do Edinburgh in August*" in August's edition of *Inspired Senior Living*. To read the article, go to www.seniorlivingmag.com/edinburgh-in-august/.

Joan is even more pleased (jumping-for-joy jubilant) to announce that her upcoming book: *Drawbridge: Drawing Alongside My Brother's Schizophrenia* has been picked up by Caitlin Press, to be published in September 2019! Her brother, Stephen Alexander Corcoran, is the illustrator.

Bravo to **Rod Baker** for making the shortlist for the 2018 Whistler Independent Book Awards for Non-Fiction for his exciting memoir *The Constant Traveller*. For more info, visit rodbakerbooks.com.



Hats off to **Patrick Hill** for the release of his fourth book *Travel With Me*, which documents his professional and personal life, all the while embracing life through exciting adventures.

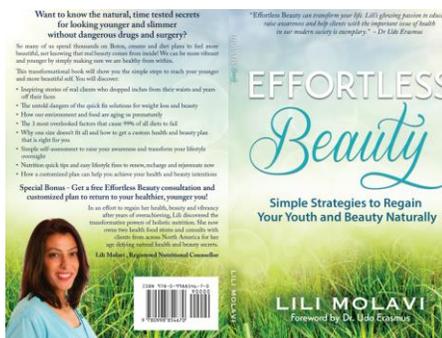


Doug MacLeod's story "*Take a Breath*" has been published in *Postscript* magazine. It describes his first day at Hazelton Secondary School, in September 1976. *Postscript* is a quarterly publication of the BC Retired Teachers' Association with a circulation of several thousand. The story will be part of a longer work of non-fiction.

John K. Nixon thought we might be interested to know that another of his "wretched scribbles" has seen the publishing light of day". His travelogue "*Impressions of China*" has been published in the Winter 2017-2018 (Issue #203) of *Humanist Perspectives*, a quarterly publication. This marks the

18th of John's essays that have been published to date. See Non-fiction section for **"Impressions of China"** (p.16).

Lili Molavi has just released her first book **Effortless Beauty**, about age-defying natural health and beauty secrets. Real beauty comes from within, and she shares inspiring stories of people who have achieved their health goals and gained effortless beauty results. Self-awareness can help us redefine what it takes to be healthy and beautiful.

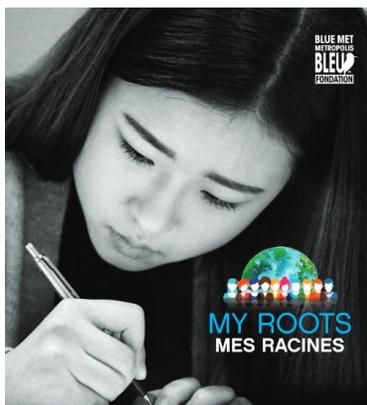


Alex Hamilton-Brown has won Honourable Mention in the Royal City Literary Arts Society's "Write On" Poetry Contest. The awards ceremony was held at the Anvil Centre on June 9th.

Bernice Lever is busy as ever, publishing her verses in 4 different poetry magazines this fall – from California to Toronto to Mongolia!

Joanna Gould facilitated a teen writers' workshop on July 4th at Lynn Valley Library. Not only did she share her top ten writing tips for writing compelling short pieces for a contest, she helped raise NSWA's profile in the community and inspired the next generation of writers.

Wiley Ho, your humble newsletter editor, was chuffed to be invited to participate in a joint project by the Vancouver Writers Festival and the Blue Metropolis Foundation for the **My Roots Anthology**, which pulled together immigrant and refugee stories across Canada. See Non-fiction section for **"Packing for Home"** (p.14).



Additionally, Wiley has been writing articles for the North

Vancouver Recreation & Culture Commission's **Active Living** blog. Visit www.nvrc.ca/notices-events-blog/active-living-blog.

A big welcome to **Peter Woodbridge** and **Kit Tam** who recently joined NSWA!

Congratulations to **Peter Woodbridge** for the release of his debut novel **The Girl from Barcelona**. Based on the Arabic saying 'The Enemy of my Enemy is my Friend', this political thriller skilfully unfolds a tale of crime, suspense and romance. The novel has garnered impressive 5/5 reviews, and Peter was interviewed for a feature article in the July 2018 issue of **Barcelona Metropolitan**. For more information, go to peterwoodbridge.com.



A collective BRAVO to all you wordsmiths out there - sung and unsung. Write on!



PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM WRITERS...

"Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go." ~ *T. S. Eliot*

"Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now." ~ *Goethe*

Photo Gallery!



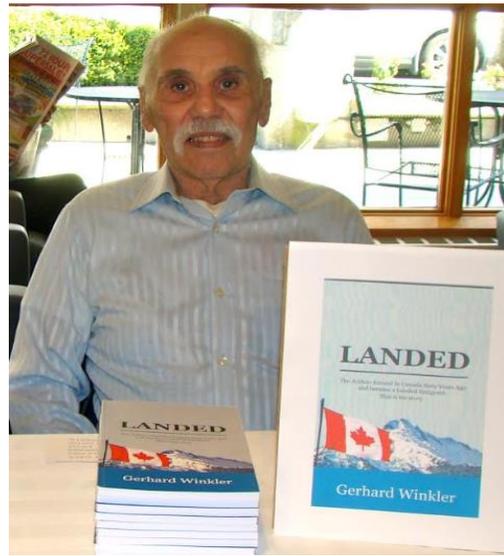
2018 North Shore Writers Festival April 20-21. L to R: Cathy Scrimshaw, Sonia Garrett, Sanford Osler, Bernice Lever



JJ Lee interviews Canadian novelist, journalist and UBC creative writing professor Timothy Taylor



Arshia Sorourian with his books at the Book Fair



Gerhard Winkler with his memoir

Here's a link to a great video of the festival (courtesy of Mrs. Sorourian). Copy and paste this address into your browser:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ejr9p-4msu63CkmmEF4od6yuTNL27iUA/view?ts=5ae64572>



NSWA celebrates 25 years!

The June year-end party was extra special this year! A festive evening was held at the Silk Purse in West Vancouver, complete with food, drinks and a live jazz band. The weather cooperated and the revellers were treated to a warm, sun-kissed evening on the patio by the beach. Happy Anniversary, NSWA!





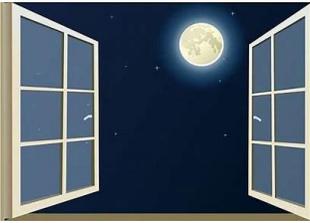
On July 4th, Joanna Gould facilitated a successful writing workshop for teens at Lynn Valley Library, raising the profile of NSWA and inspiring a new generation of young writers!



100 WORD CHALLENGE

The challenge was to produce a story or poem, in **100 words or less**,
on the theme of **outside the window**
Here are your creations (images: Bing)

Tracking the Moon *Karen Bower*



I lay here flat-backed in a hospital bed
Tracking the moon.
Its appearance anticipated,
Like a friend's arrival
On an inexorable track
It grows from sliver to quarter to full.
Each night the orange smoked disk
Reveals more of my friend's face.
I anticipate its arrival.
Am sorry when Stanley Park devours it
Early each morning
Then tosses it out each night
For me to say a silent 'Hello.'

The Hellebores *Martha Warren*

There is so much we can't agree on.

You say that I work too hard,
Or not hard enough,
That I spend too much time with my mother,
Or don't see her enough,
That I spoil my children,
Or don't give them enough.

You seem to have a contrary opinion on everything.

So I'm asking you to take just a minute
To look outside the window
At these hellebores on the bank in my garden,
Because they are so beautiful.

Surely that is something we can agree on.

Why Cats Rule *Cinda Morales*

Pete the Pomeranian gets up from his dog bed to face the living room window. It's noon. He sticks his chin up and says, "Wow, I look so big and fierce in my reflection!"

After I see him do this, I stop licking my paws, jump off the sofa, and run upstairs.

He continues, "Sorry Kitty, didn't mean to scare you. I've been working out at the off-leash park. Look at my physique. I'll be shredded in no time!"

Oh, Pete's gonna get shredded alright.

For outside the half-open window, a hungry-eyed coyote is staring back at him!

Outside the Window *Rose Dudley*

Hospitals checked, friends and relatives contacted, police called, panic all round at Dudleys' house. Grandpa's missing.

Grandpa, being forgetful, often goes missing but not for a whole day. Grandma is crying now. "Perhaps he's been abducted," she sobs.

"That's nuts, Grandma, who would abduct a 95-year-old man?"

"You never know, these days there are so many weirdos out there."

Police cars wailing, fire engines and ambulances, sirens blasting, curious crowds gathering. Mayhem.

Then—outside the window, they see Grandpa, coffee in hand.

"What in hell's name is going on out here?" he shouts. "They must be looking for some weirdo."

Outside the Window

Rod Baker

Mum spoke with a different accent from the other village women. Sometimes, I'd get beat up on the way home from school for having a *posh* mother. When we moved to town, I was made fun of because I came from a village.

When I joined the merchant navy, I didn't tell my fellow deckhands I liked visiting the gay stewards, because queer minds were more nimble. When employed on Canadian tugboats, I was the guy with the accent who had worked on deep-sea freighters.

It was okay. I could see more from outside the window than from inside.



Photo: Anne MacDonald Hall
© Wendy Alden 2018

Next 100 Word Challenge Theme:

What if?

You may include or exclude the theme words!

Submit your 100-word masterpiece to

editornswa@gmail.com

or by mail to

NSWA PO Box 37549 Lonsdale East, NV V7M 3L3

100-Word Challenge Tips

- Strictly 100 words or less (excluding title, if any).
- Use the word count facility in WORD; it keeps track of the number of words used.
- Hyphenated words and words including an apostrophe are counted as single words.
- Fiction, non-fiction, poetry acceptable.
- If the challenge theme inspires a longer piece, please feel free to submit it for consideration for the newsletter (with an "inspired by..." note).
- Exercise your precision and concision.
- Have fun!

Non-Fiction

In Control of Success

Janine Cross

Editor's note: It is with warm enthusiasm that the NSWA welcomes back Janine Cross, one of the founding members of the NSWA! In this article, Janine shares her hard-fought and won knowledge from her writing journey. Besides having published four novels, Janine is a private pilot!

Twenty-five years ago, Peggy Trendall-Whittaker, Laurel Hickey and myself were at the helm of the brand new North Shore Writers' Association. Lots has happened in that time--amongst other things, Peggy is now deacon of St. Clement's church, Laurel has seen her beloved long-time home bulldozed for a sprawling condo project on 3rd Street, and I somehow became a private pilot. During this passage of time, one thing stands out above all else as to what I've learned in my writing career: there's a whole *ream* of things that a writer can't control during the process of trying to sell a book to an agent or publisher.

As a writer, you can't control whether an agent has just signed on a book about blind one-armed assassins, which happens to be, gosh-darn-it, exactly what your book is about. You can't control whether an agency or publishing house has just hired an intern who's been told to whittle down the query inbox by next week, so said intern is rejecting manuscripts as if she's swatting flies at a BBQ. You can't control whether the agent/editor has the flu that day and is grumpy and not receptive, or going through a divorce and is grumpy and not receptive....

You can't control any of these things.

But the good news is, there are a whole lot of things that you *can* control. You can increase your chances of success by not only mastering the craft of writing, but also the *art of selling* a book. Have you familiarized yourself with the genre you're writing in? Do you have the appropriate word count? Has someone vetted your manuscript before you send it out? Have you created a synopsis and query letter that captures the unique and compelling aspects of your book? Have you researched what agents and publishing houses are appropriate for your manuscript? These are things we writers have absolute control over. These are ways we can increase our chances of success... in addition to writing a darn fine book, of course.

I like to think of it as dialling a telephone number--it won't work if we get the first 9 digits correct, but the 10th wrong. We've got to get all ten numbers correct to get through to the party we're calling. Writing a story we're super excited about without following through with mastering the art of selling is kind of like dialling 9 numbers instead of ten. We probably aren't going to reach an agent or editor.

That said, for every "truth", there's an exception. There is no *one* way to sell your manuscript, and over the years I've heard things as wild as "My neighbour was a screen-writer, so I pitched the idea to her" and "I lap-danced on [an-editor-whom-we-shall-not-name] in the hotel hot-tub at a conference". But as my neighbour is a plumber, and I couldn't lap-dance to save my life, my best bet in giving my manuscript a fighting chance at being published is to master everything that's in my control, which includes not just focusing on the *craft* of writing, but on the art of selling the book to an agent or editor, too. Where did I learn such things? The Internet, at conferences and workshops, and through painful experience. The reward has been 3 novels published with Penguin USA and internationally with Heyne, and a 4th published by Dundurn in Canada.

Let's see what else I learn, in the next 25 years of writing....

You can visit me at: www.janinecross.ca; www.thewanderingeye.ca; and www.bluecamels.org. ■

The Beauty of Truth, Revisited

Rod Baker

Mr. Pearson, our math teacher, always wore a green tweed suit and a red tie. I can still hear his Yorkshire brogue, “The beauty of math is truth.” I didn’t like Mr. Pearson. He was an OCD nit-picker. I didn’t like math, and as a lazy 15-year-old, I wasn’t much sold on the value of truth.

After explaining a concept to us, he would set us to work announcing, “While you are working on this, I don’t even want to hear a pin drop.” One day, as his words still echoed, a dropped pin rang loud and clear on the oak parquet floor.

A tormented grunt flew out of a Mr. Pearson. His face flushed crimson and he propelled himself rapidly up and down the aisles of students, looking for the errant pin so he could pounce on the perpetrator. Eddie Hubbard swivelled his foot two inches to cover the pin. In the whole year, it was the best thing to happen in that boring math class.

If Mr. Pearson had been aiming for truth, he was using the wrong discipline. It’s English, not Math, that contains the beauty of truth, Mr. Pearson. Numbers do not appeal to the emotions, but truthful words inspire, capture, clarify and reconnect us to the threads of life.

Half a century later, truth became more valuable to me. I am writing—re-writing, winnowing through my scribbled words — sifting, separating, sorting, sweating, cutting, cussing, and burnishing. I delete, quit, drink tea, start afresh, and distill some paragraphs, which finally ring with the clear bell of truth. Once found it’s unmistakable, like the singular din of a pin falling on a hardwood floor in a silent room. ■

Packing for Home

Wiley Ho

“Pack only clothes and shoes,” my mother instructed each of us five children. “We can’t fit everything in.”

While our mother fretted over how to cram our entire life into two suitcases each, our father tried to boost morale with impressive facts about our Pan American flight from Taipei to Tokyo to Los Angeles and finally to Vancouver. In 1980 there were no direct flights from our birthplace, Taiwan, to our adoptive home.

“The 747-100 can carry over three hundred passengers and fly eight hundred kilometres an hour. Can you imagine how fast that is?”

I asked if it was faster than a seagull. My older siblings laughed at me, but Baba just smiled and talked over the laughter. He described the vastness of our final destination, of wide open spaces, beautiful mountains, friendly people and – most importantly, he said – political stability. He prophesied: “You will love Canada.”

My mother’s sighs grew progressively heavier as our suitcases filled to overflowing. She went over what we’d packed and, despite heavy protest from my sisters and brother, pulled out forbidden items tucked carefully into folded shirts and pants: books, diaries, photo albums, Chinese checkers, a pair of nunchuks. “Didn’t I say clothes and shoes only?” she sighed so deeply her voice quivered. “We must all give up something.”

I knew my chances of smuggling Goh-Goh onto the airplane diminished with each of my mother’s sighs. The fact that my stuffed white dog was nearly as big as I was didn’t stop my seven year-old self from trying. “I can hold Goh-Goh on my lap.”

Mama appraised my plush dog, taking in his food-stained ears, his balding back from the years when I’d ridden him like a horse. She suddenly seemed a hundred years old. Her lungs emptied unsteadily as she shook her head.

When I spied our dented National-brand rice cooker in one of the suitcases, I pointed an accusing finger at the metal pot. “That’s not clothes or shoes!”

By way of an answer, Mama lifted the lid of the rice cooker to show its interior stuffed tightly with socks and underwear rolled like ancient scrolls.

“We need this,” she said, closing the lid firmly. “Rice is home.” ■

Family Skeletons

Patrick Hill

On a summer visit to the UK, something completely different surfaced. My brother Tony gave me and my wife Heather, an envelope saying it might be of interest (enclosed are just the key bits). Carefully opening it I was amused to be reminded our parents never married but this time I learnt a lot more. The letter was sent twenty years earlier and 38 years after our father died, to my eldest brother Michael saying;

Dear "Uncle Mike".....Anyway, I enclose the outline of my researches to date, plus what I know of your father's first family.....

So there we are! I look forward to seeing you/meeting you. I always felt deprived in childhood, having no aunts or cousins except ones we never heard from, and no uncles at all. Now at last....you must let us know how many cousins I have got!

Your niece, Gillian

Of course my first reaction was, what is this about? - "your father's first family." I looked at Tony with a "What the heck?" look. Tony said, "Yes, he was married and had three daughters, Peggy, Jennie and Pamela". A staggering piece of news I learnt was that he did not marry my mother because he could not get a divorce from his wife. We did manage to meet Gillian at her house with perhaps a certain level of restraint. This eased fairly quickly, when she showed us the whole family tree that she was working on. . She was the youngest daughter of Peggy. After an interesting chat I agreed, when we arrived back in Canada, to send her, whatever photos and data we had to add to her collection.

The key issue though, that hit between the eyes, was that our Mother was pregnant with Michael at the same time as our father's legal wife, was pregnant with the youngest of the three daughters; in fact, Michael was born 8 May 1921 and Pamela in January 1921. Now we did start thinking about my father. Was he some kind of hot rod? Did he or we have any other family around? Basically, at that time I was not too interested in following up the trail any further and after a couple of letters our communication would likely have faded.

But not yet, as on return, we found a message on our phone from a Linda living in Vancouver, saying that she was the daughter of Pamela and that we were likely related because of my English accent. Obviously, there had been some fast communication while we were still in the UK. Linda's mother Pamela, the youngest daughter, had married a Canadian in 1944 and immigrated to Regina after the war. This was yet another surprise too, as Michael's son was living there when Linda contacted us.

At the earliest opportunity, we invited Linda to our home along with Jeremy, our son, and Ramy, his wife. As we swapped question and answer, another huge surprise surfaced. One that proved to have an incredibly tenuous connection. It turned out that Linda had taught music at Jeremy and Erica's (J's sister) Carson Graham school! This was difficult to accept, but was proved when Jeremy produced his school year books, and there Linda was in one of the group pictures. We have experienced many incredible coincidences, but this seemed to be an extraordinary one. I imagine some talented mathematician, could calculate the chances of this happening. Later in the conversation, a further connection arose when Ramy, on hearing Linda's surname, said, "You live at such and such road, in fact, at number 2345." We all looked at her in surprise with Linda asking "How do you know that?" Ramy's reply was, "I was a postie in that area and I remember all the names and addresses." Gob-smacked, yes.

This combined family scene might be called a family 'skeleton' but I have heard of skeletons in so many families that I have thought of advertising for families to advise me about their 'skeletons' and start writing a book called 'Skeletons I Have Known'. Any offers?

Respond to Patrick Hill at hphill@telus.net

Impressions of China (2012)

by John K. Nixon

Barbara and I travelled with a group of ten Canadians (eight from the Vancouver area and two ladies from Edmonton). We had excellent English-speaking guides throughout the trip and everything ran like clockwork. We left Vancouver on 2 May and returned on 16 May, 2012.

China is indeed a fascinating country with a rich history and culture, much of which was ignored by the West for many centuries. The country is changing fast and is without doubt an emerging superpower. During our trip we visited seven different cities (Beijing, Wuhan, Yichang, Chongqing, Xi-An, Suzhou and Shanghai). The smallest of these, incidentally, was Yichang, with a population of only 4.1 million! Between Wuhan and Yichang we had a five and a half-hour bus ride which gave us a glimpse of rural China.

A highlight of the trip was a four-night cruise on a river boat on the Yangtze River. We visited the Three Gorges Dam (largest hydroelectric project in the world) and took in the sights of the Three Gorges along the Yangtze. Of course we visited the usual tourist attractions (Tiananmen Square and Forbidden City in Beijing, the Great Wall, Terracotta Warriors Museum in Xi-An and the Bund in Shanghai). Everywhere the strong work ethic of the Chinese was in evidence.

Development in the cities is proceeding on a massive scale. In Shanghai alone we were told that there are about 2000 high rise towers under construction with 26 or more floors! Forests of tower construction cranes were everywhere to be seen in the cities. In Suzhou I counted 22 visible from our hotel window. Highways were generally excellent with many new bridges, overpasses, etc, under construction, including several major bridges across the Yangtze River.

In spite of the frantic pace of construction, China is taking strides in beautifying the cities. Most of the main roads and highways have carefully tended flower beds and trimmed box hedges along the centre dividers and are bordered with freshly planted ornamental trees for as far as the eye could see. Many new parks have sprung up, planted with immaculately kept flower beds, shrubs and trees. In two weeks of travel I never once spotted an example of graffiti. The streets and parks generally were the cleanest I have seen anywhere, with virtually no litter in evidence. Smog in the cities however is a persistent and noticeable problem. The hotels we stayed at (4- and 5-star) were excellent, and food (all Chinese, except for hotel breakfasts, which offered Western style buffet breakfasts as an option) was tasty, sumptuous and varied.

In all the tourist areas helpful signs were posted in Chinese and English. For enthusiastic devotees of Chinglish (among whom I count myself) there were many examples of hilarious translations. Buffet hotel breakfast included "Corn flanks, walfees and gilled tomatoes". Glimpsed highway signs warned "Beware, Fowl Weather", "Do Not Drive Tiredly", "Oversize Vehile to Right", "Overload Control Puarantee Safety" and "Sedimentation Observation". The latter was spotted in a rock cut and presumably should have been translated as "Watch for Falling Rocks".

One of my favourites, sighted in a park: "Grass Smiling. Please Let It Alone". Two more signs spotted in a public toilet: "Toilet Seat, Carefully Fragile" and "Please Waste Paper in Trash". Signs posted on a stair in a Shanghai restaurant: "Beware of Slippery" and "Carefully Slide". At the bottom of the stairs was a Take-out Food counter, advertised as "Outer Sell". A sign in Suzhou at a boat loading dock warned would-be passengers: "Do not frolic when visiting". Another on a low stone arched bridge over a

canal advised : "The Bridge Opening is too low. Please take care of your head". Sign on a high wall surrounding a monument: "Civilized Watching, No Climb". Finally, some helpful advice beside an airport metal detector: "Please Accept Inspection Consciously".

Just imagine if we posted our public signs in English and Chinese the hilarity that would be provoked among Chinese speakers as a result of a few carelessly rendered brush strokes!

Chinese paper currency bears the image of the Great Helmsman, Chairman Mao. Having said that, in two weeks of travelling through China I only recall seeing two photos of Mao. One of course was the large iconic portrait dominating Tiananmen Square in Beijing. The other was a photo on the wall in a souvenir shop. Only once did I spot the Hammer and Sickle insignia, on a red banner somewhere. Our Chinese guides, who were well-informed, assured us that most educated Chinese are embarrassed by the excesses of the Red Guards and the Cultural Revolution. In their eagerness to erase the old and build a new Workers' Paradise, much damage was done to some historic monuments and temples (most of which have since been restored), not to mention the widespread persecution and forced re-education of intellectuals and other perceived counter-revolutionaries. No-one, it appears, wants a return to that kind of revolutionary fervour.

China has of course opened up to the West and, in the last two years, has relaxed its relations with Taiwan. Mainland Chinese are now visiting and investing in Taiwan, and the Taiwanese have built hundreds of factories in China. Students from mainland China now attend universities in Taiwan and, we were told, some 720,000 people have relocated from Taiwan to Shanghai in the last 10 years. I was even surprised to see copies of a biography of Chiang Kai Shek for sale in an airport bookstore.

Foreign brand cars, all built in China, are everywhere (Volkswagen, BMW, Honda, Toyota, Ford, Buick, Peugeot, etc.). Major American fast-food chains and retail giants are represented in the larger cities (McDonalds, KFC, Starbucks, Dairy Queen, Walmart, The Gap, to mention a few). UK's Tesco was spotted, as well as all the major US hotel chains (Ramada, Hyatt, Holiday Inn, Sheraton, etc.). There was even a knock-off Haiyatt Hotel sighted somewhere (or maybe the large sign at the top of the building was misspelled). Mao would be spinning in his mausoleum if he could see what his beloved Workers' Paradise has become!

The Chinese we met were all friendly and many were curious. On several occasions a Chinese family would approach us to have our photos taken with them. Everyone in the cities appeared to be well-dressed and the young all fashionable with their jeans, iPhones, iPods and other assorted Apps (?). The streets were clogged with cars, all appearing to be almost new, with hardly a scratch to show. In view of the unconventional driving habits and cheerful disregard for traffic rules, this was surprising. In two weeks of travelling I only recall seeing one minor rear-ender, in Beijing I believe. Not that many bicycles to be seen but hordes of motorized scooters abound, most of which appeared to be battery-powered.

There is much more to recount (visits to two world class museums, the Olympic stadium in Beijing, a silk factory (can't resist describing the marketing of dried and powdered silk worm poo for use as an anti-snoring remedy!), the superb acrobatic show in Shanghai, etc.). At least the above should give you a flavour of the country, admittedly from the point of view of a brief, first-time visitor.

Suffice it to say that China is indeed a country well worth the visit. ■

Poetry

GRAND DESIGNS: studies of the inner workings in Ars Poetica *Stuart Newton*

[There is colour up on the heather, purple and white flora, according to the patch you find]

Gentile poverty (GP), still a contentious disorder,
much like PTSD, PPD or the DT's --
and Branwell was an early victim...

So how would you like to be interned in a big ole
parsonage – without any money, without means
to travel, entertain, or enjoy things a little...?

There is nothing at home, except father's books
to read – or innumerable housekeeping chores.
Even their leafy surrounds are restricted zones;
because daughters of the clergy cannot roam
freely in the village and they not really equipped
to wander the moors in lady's apparel...

Then it was back to their study room at evenings;
with a bit of secrecy/rivalry, serious play and proud
effort; to follow bracing outings round the adjoining
paddock field – scribbling an' fraternizing/fantasizing
together...

Even young ladies, eventually see an unending circle/
cycle of chores and such, much like a prison treadmill
and simply stepping-off this device is not enough --
There has to be a counter measure (not merely a
distraction); requiring a whole-hearted yearning, full
expression and recognition...

What if Branwell had been born another girl...?
But after a promising start, he was later without the
happy company of his sisters, alone or unsuspecting
and often blasted in front of Pater!

Only Patrick lasted in this solid stone homestead, tenured
for them by the church.

His hard-scrabble upbringing developed into a marathon discipline -- lessons he could not parlay to any offspring...

The Bronte sisters had few options, so they welcomed the one avenue offered, as good escape even from themselves. They only had each other and those tomes in the house,

more accessible than anything else – for them to propagate, belong to and favour...

Branwell was collateral damage (a modern euphemism), regarding congested family-life; surviving infant risks and childhood afflictions, succumbing to an existential threat...

['Do no harm' – guides the doctor, to attend both rich and poor, the privileged and doomed].

N.B. PTSD – post traumatic stress disorder, PPD – post partum depression, DT – delirium tremors

Montana Silence

Rod Baker

The empty land lays in a trance
 Numbed by its lost children.

No flesh tears in the sacred dance
 No buffalo beat the hoof drum.

Wind-whispered echoes of the past
 low thunder on the butte.
 Hunter and hunted running fast
 Now both are still and mute.

Spirit brothers of this land
 Your summers have all gone.
 The arrows in your quiver
 Loosed off one by one.

Member Bulletin Board



This is a new feature in our newsletter! The NSWA is 80 members strong, yet not everyone gets a chance to attend all meetings. Since one of the main goals of the NSWA is for members to share knowledge, experience and resources, the new Member Bulletin Board is a space and opportunity for you to network with your fellow NSWA members.

Do you have a writing or publishing question? Are you looking for a writing group in your genre? Post your question here and find responses in the next newsletter.

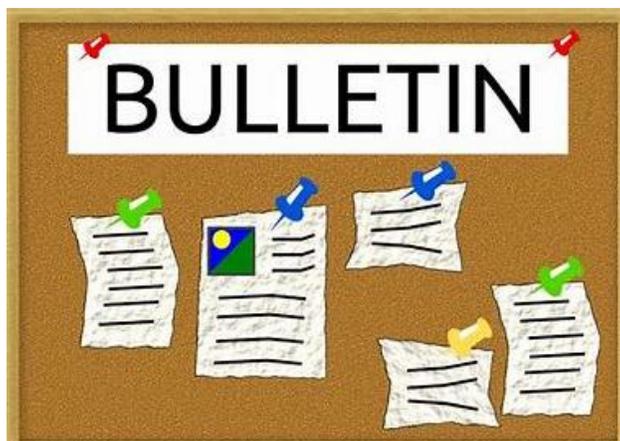
Here's how it will work:

- Send your question to editornswa@gmail.com or NSWA PO Box 37549 Lonsdale East, NV V7M 3L3. If you would like a quick response, indicate that you would like to be contacted by email by other members directly.
- If you have good advice or resource to share, send it to the editor at the above addresses.
- Responses will appear in the following newsletter under Member Bulletin Board.

Here is a question from one of our members:

Patrick Hill is interested in learning more about the self-publisher IngramSpark.

If you have any info to share, please contact Patrick directly at hphill@telus.net and cc editornswa@gmail.com. Thanks!



Advance Notice – Local Authors Book Fair

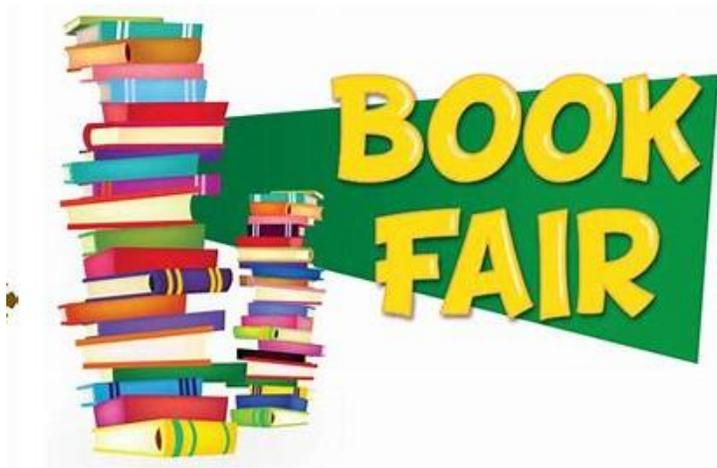
2019 North Shore Writers Festival

Heads up, authors!

Interested in being part of the Book Fair at the 2019 North Shore Writers Festival? Keep your eyes on the NSWA website “Announcements” Section for news about the 2019 Local Authors Book Fair!

Feedback from NSWA members and other local authors indicated that more notice is needed for those who would like to be considered for participation. We listened. So, the Call for Submissions for the Book Fair will go out to NSWA members in December, and it will be posted on the website at the same time. You’ll have more time to get your submission in and, if successful, to get yourself organized to be part of an event that has become a literary “must-attend” on the North Shore. The Call will be in a few other places as well, to give non-NSWA members a chance to be included.

If you have any questions about the Book Fair, bring them to the October meeting. See you there!



Treasurer's Report

Doug MacLeod

North Shore Writers' Association

Year End Financial Report

August 31, 2018

Revenue

Membership Fees	1,680.00 *
Workshop	670.00
Contest	530.00
Gala (incl bar)	<u>505.00</u>
Total	3,385.00

Expenses

Meetings	948.00
Workshop	645.00
Contest	1,408.75
Festival	792.50
Gala	553.95
Newsletter printing	655.42
Miscellaneous	133.35
Post Box Rental	185.85
W.V. Arts Council Membership	<u>100.00</u>
Total	5,422.82

Current bank balance in the NSWA chequing account is **\$6,522.89**.

* Membership fees for 2018-2019, collected before September 2018, have not been included in this total

Executive 2017-2018

President (and Director)

Not currently filled

Vice-President (and Director)

Rod Baker

Secretary (and Director)

Not currently filled

Treasurer/Member Relations (and Director)

Doug MacLeod

Library Liaison

Sonia Garrett

Newsletter Editor/Archivist

Wiley Ho

Speaker Coordinator

Vacant

Writing Contest Coordinator (and Director)

Doug MacLeod

Dare to be Heard Host

Mark Turris

Member-at-Large

Joanna Gould

Executive Support

Promotion & Webmaster

Kelly Hoskins

Library Bookings, Harmony Arts Liaison

Carl Hunter

North Shore Writers Festival Liaison

Cathy Scrimshaw

*Many thanks to all our volunteers for their
dedication and hard work!*

Here's to 2018/2019!



"Remember to turn everything off once a week - including your brain - and walk somewhere quiet." - unknown

Events Calendar

September 10: *Dare to be Heard*

September 17: *NSWA Annual General Meeting*

September 26: *Writing with Writers (Sonia Garrett: Child's PoV)*

October 1: *Dare to be Heard*

October 15: *NSWA general meeting with guest speaker John Mavin*

November 5: *Dare to be Heard*

November 19: *Christmas Social*

December 1: *Newsletter submission deadline*

December 3: *Dare to be Heard*

December 5: *Writing with Writers (Lawrence Verigin: Thrillers)*

January 7: *Dare to be Heard (bonus one!)*

January 21: *NSWA General Meeting with guest speaker Aaron Chapman*

The Last Page

Cathy L. Scrimshaw

I'm happy autumn is finally here. I'm taking perverse pleasure in the fact that, as I write this, it's actually raining. I don't like the summers we've had these past few years. I long for the moderate, more predictable Julys and Augusts of my youth, when lazing around at the lake didn't necessarily mean burning to a crisp, when evenings almost always involved sweaters, and rain would fall at least a few times to keep B.C. green and welcoming. But the summer of 2018? Ye gods! Not only did we have heat and drought yet again, but wildfire smoke as well.

Still, our trials on the south coast paled in comparison to what people in the fire zones dealt with. The news was full of stories from the front lines: evacuees fleeing while walls of fire closed in around them; ranchers and farmers staying to defend their homes and animals; First Nations groups determined to save their communities with little or no outside help; villagers fighting bureaucracy in an effort to join the battle against the fire. And all the while, the smoke travelled across the entire country and crossed international lines.

Then there was the off-beat news—like the movement south of the border to mount enough fans on the roofs of houses to blow the smoke back to Canada. You can't help but smile at that one, especially after hearing that the organizers were also raising money to assist B.C. residents who'd been forced out of their homes by that very same smoke.

I found myself wondering how in the world people in the fire zones found the strength to get through this summer, not least because we're now being told to get used to this. It might be the new norm. Every year, or almost every year, residents of rural and wilderness areas might have to face these monsters, fight all over again to save their homes and livestock and preserve their way of life. What drives human beings to stand their ground in the face of such raw, destructive elemental power? Is there something we writers can learn from such strength and fortitude, such stubbornness in the face of nature's rage?

On his website, our October speaker *John Mavin* writes that his stories often begin with a small kernel of truth, events that inspired, angered, shocked or scared him. He then uses that event to develop an innovative piece of fiction that entertains, and, I like to think, might also illuminate an aspect of human

existence. At least one story in his collection, *Rage*, involves an inhospitable environment.

Our world, and our climate, is changing. The new extremes scare me. The reality is, in some areas, at some times, people are being asked to do heroic things on a daily basis (and I hate the overuse of the word 'heroic'). That reality is going to affect more of us each year, testing our ability to persevere through difficult situations. I think we writers can learn from that. If we listen to those on the front lines, to their frustrations, their hopes and struggles, their aspirations for themselves and their children, we can learn how deeply rooted human motivations can be, even against overwhelming odds. I think we can use that understanding to go beyond the superficial and write more complex, compelling stories with characters who are fully evolved human beings, not just chess pieces we throw onto a stereotyped story board.

And I think John Mavin can help us get there. So come and join us in October for his presentation on Story Origins, and learn how to take your storytelling to the next level. See you there!

