



No. 13: January 2019

Upcoming Meetings

January 21

**General Meeting with
Guest Speaker
Aaron Chapman**

February 25

**General Meeting with
Guest Speaker
Robin Esrock**

March 18

**General Meeting with
Guest Speaker
Julie Salisbury**

April 15

**General Meeting with
Guest Speaker
Shauna Paull**

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

Members: Free
Non-Members: By donation

Check out our website:
www.nswriters.com

Write On!

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

President's Message

Sonia Garrett

Happy New Year.

What a pleasure it is to be at the helm of the North Shore Writers' Association. After four years of membership, I am happy to be seeing this New Year in as the NSWA President. A great Executive surrounds me and together we have a fabulous 2019 planned.

Sharon McInnes, our new Speaker Co-ordinator, has a stunning lineup for us. In January, Aaron Chapman, author of *The Last Gang in Town* and *Liquor, Lust and the Law* will brighten even the greyest of days. Robin Esrock, adventure travel writer, author and international television personality, takes the podium in February. I wonder how many of Robin's *Great Canadian Bucket List* adventures you can tick off? Then in March, Julie Salisbury, author, founder of Influence Publishing, Tedx speaker, and publishing coach who has helped over 100 authors become Amazon Best Sellers, will speak on how to be sure you keep your rights when you self-publish.

Inspiration comes in many forms, as do our resolutions. Whether you're determined to get fitter, healthier, or do more writing this year, make sure you take some time to enter the

2019 NSWA Writing Competition. With Doug MacLeod as Competition Coordinator, we know there will be a team of distinguished judges. Whether you want to try your hand at a new genre, or raise the bar on your existing writing skills, competitions are a great way forward. So get writing, editing and make sure your best work is submitted before the deadline.

The Writing with Writers series continues at North Vancouver City Library. Come and join NSWA member Carol Cram, three times published author, as she leads a workshop on Writing Historical Fiction. This series is a joint venture between NSWA and NVCL, a demonstration of the growing relationship we have with libraries and other community groups.

Dare to be Heard continues its monthly opportunity to read your work to a supportive group of fellow writers and listeners. Aply led by host Mark Turriss, you'll hear poets, essayists, fiction and nonfiction writers, get to know fellow members and bathe in the non-critique atmosphere.

The NSWA Executive and members share a love of writing. Invite your friends to events and join me in this thriving community. May 2019 bring you health, happiness and a constant flow of the written word. ■



A Note from the Editor

I spent the month of November trekking in Nepal. It was a delightful and distressing experience all at once. The Himalayas are staggeringly beautiful but uncomfortably inhospitable; the local foods delectable but difficult to stomach; the peoples and cultures gracious yet contradictory.

During the long days trekking in wild temperature extremes, I was awed by the immense vistas that unfolded corner after corner and by the deep generosity of the impoverished communities eking out subsistence living in isolated, medieval hamlets cut into steep mountainsides. I witnessed so much joy amidst so much lack – there is little sanitation or hot water, annual monsoons wash out roads and shut down schools. Yet the kids – grubby clothed with noses perpetually running – roamed freely, laughing among the rock and yaks. Adult villagers – busy herding animals, farming and gathering wood – found time to sit together for lengthy conversations over tea. Somehow, amid every hard-scrabble village I passed, there was a palpable peacefulness, an emotional abundance that could not be seen, only felt.

I realized parallels between my mountain journey and my writing journey – the difficulty and the beauty, the hard work and immense gratification, the highs and lows. Trekking can be tough, so too the act of writing. Each word can be as hard won as every arduous breath taken at high altitude. Yet the results are worth the effort.

Just as only a fellow trekker can appreciate the magic of ice and rock, perhaps only a fellow writer can understand the maddening but satisfying journey of writing – our desire to forge onward, through steep and arduous terrain, to reach the magical kingdoms of our imagination.

Here’s to great writing adventures in 2019!
Wiley Ho
Editor, NSWA Newsletter

Please send your writing news, short stories and poems to editornswa@gmail.com or by mail to: NSWA PO Box 37549, Lonsdale East, NV V7M 3L3.

Deadline for next newsletter: March 1, 2019

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Submission Guidelines

- Submissions can only be accepted from NSWA members.
- Email submissions to editornswa@gmail.com (attachments in Word; pictures in JPEG).
- Space is limited and lengthy submissions (over 700 words) are discouraged (provide website link for long articles).
- 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.

Upcoming Meetings and Guest Speakers

Monday
January 21

**Meeting plus Guest
Speaker Aaron Chapman**



Aaron Chapman is a writer, historian, and musician. He is the author of *The Last Gang in Town*, the story of Vancouver's Clark Park Gang; *Liquor, Lust, and the Law*, the story of Vancouver's Penthouse Nightclub, now available in a second edition; and *Live at the Commodore*, a history of the Commodore Ballroom that won the Bill Duthie Booksellers' Choice Award (BC Book Prizes) in 2015.

He will present a talk that involves all three of his books, as well as speak of upcoming projects. He will talk about how the research for his books have come together, working as a local writer with a local publisher, and some stories (and a few funny anecdotes) that all writers of non-fiction or fiction will surely find interesting and enjoyable.

Aaron will also have copies of his book for sale.

Monday
February 25

**Meeting plus Guest
Speaker Robin Esrock**



Come out for an evening of entertainment, vicarious travel and writing inspiration!

Robin Esrock is an international bestselling author, TV host, influencer and public mentor. Robin has spent over a decade in search of the world's bucket list experiences, sharing his discoveries with millions in print, on television, online, and social media.

His books include *The Great Canadian Bucket List*, *The Great Australian Bucket List* and *The Great Global Bucket List*.

robinesrock.com

Monday
March 18

**Meeting plus Guest
Speaker Julie Salisbury**



Unless you truly “self-publish” (find your own editor, book designer/formatter, distributor, and printer), you may be giving away your rights and a big chunk of your royalties. Most print-on-demand publishers only license you rights to the book for the period of the contract – they own the book. Many also keep on average 40% of your royalties.

How do you make sure you keep 100% of your rights and royalties? Find out at this informative talk.

Julie Salisbury is the Founder and President of Influence Publishing Inc. and InspireABook® publishing coaching. She has mentored and published close to 200 authors and helped over 100 become Amazon Best Sellers. She was a TEDx speaker on “The Gift of Dyslexia” at TEDx Vancouver in Oct 2016. She is the author of *Around the World in Seven Years – A Life Changing Journey*.

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

North Shore Writers' Association

23rd Annual Writing Contest

Categories:

Fiction

Nonfiction

Poetry

PRIZES:

1ST \$75.00

2ND \$50.00

3RD \$25.00

Youth: \$50.00



Contest Fees:

NSWA

Members:

Adults \$15.00

Youth \$10.00

Non-members:

Adults: \$20.00

Youth: \$10.00



Send entries to:

North Shore Writers' Association
P.O. Box 37549 Lonsdale East
North Vancouver, BC V7M 3L3

Deadline February 28, 2019

Writing with Writers

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

Wednesday, February 13, 2019 7:00 – 8:30pm
Living the Past: Historical Fiction for Storytellers

Presented by Carol Cram,
award-winning author of three historical novels



In this hands-on workshop, Carol Cram will provide guidelines for making the past a vehicle for storytelling and share practical tips for writing historical fiction. Carol will also read from her novels, facilitate writing exercises designed to jump start ideas, and answer questions about writing and publishing. Carol has shared this workshop with writing groups all over BC. Here are testimonials from members of the Tri-City Writers' Group about the workshop:

Carol Cram gave a wonderful program to our group on everything a writer wants to know about creating historical fiction. She covered all the elements in a professional PowerPoint presentation, including six guidelines for writing historical fiction ... Her presentation was applicable to writers in any genre, and I highly recommend attending one of her sessions, should it come to your local library or writers' group. Pandora Ballard, Past President, Programs, and Publicity, Tri-City Wordsmiths, Port Coquitlam, B.C.

Biography

Carol M. Cram is the author of three novels of historical literary fiction. Her first novel, *The Towers of Tuscany* (Lake Union Publishing, 2014) and her second novel, *A Woman of Note* (Lake Union Publishing, 2015), were both designated Editor's Choice by the Historical Novel Society in the UK, and both won First in Category for the Chaucer and Goethe awards (Chanticleer Book Awards), with *The Towers of Tuscany* also winning the Grand Prize Chaucer Award for best historical novel pre-1750. Her third novel, *The Muse of Fire*, published in January 2018 by Kindle Press (e-book) and New Arcadia Publishing (print), won the Bronze for Best Historical Fiction from the Independent Publishers' Book Awards and is currently long-listed for the Goethe award.

Carol has also written over fifty best-selling college textbooks in computer applications and communications for major US publisher Cengage Learning and was on faculty at Capilano University in North Vancouver for over two decades. Carol holds an MA in Drama from the University of Toronto and an MBA from Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh. Carol and her husband, painter Gregg Simpson, live on beautiful Bowen Island near Vancouver, BC, where she teaches Nia dance and volunteers for the local arts council after serving as its president for 10 years.

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, **January 7**. 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: 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



Getting your words into print is a struggle these days if you have your heart set on traditional publishing. Few publishers are accepting unsolicited submissions. Even many agents have closed their doors to aspiring writers. Those who still accept over-the-transom queries are inundated with submissions; getting their attention is extremely difficult.

So, how do you make your submissions more appealing? Being able to say, in your query letter, that you've worked with a writing coach and/or you've had your work edited and polished by a professional editor or writing instructor is one way to encourage agents and publishing house editors to read on.

Here are two services you might want to consider, and they're both local:

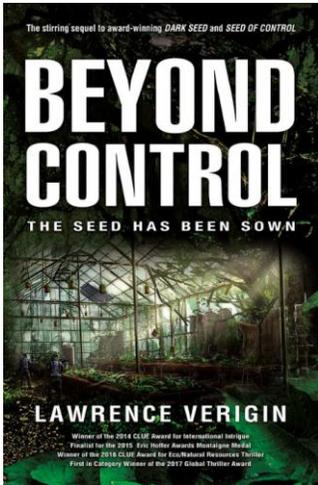
Daphne Gray-Grant runs Publication Coach. Her name isn't new to this space. She's included again because her services really are useful at all stages of the writing journey. You can subscribe to her e-newsletter or read her blog free of charge, or pay for a course or book. She's been around for a while, has presented to the NSWA in the past, and has years of experience as a writer and editor. Have a look at her offerings at: <https://www.publicationcoach.com/>

Eileen Cook (another past presenter for the NSWA), Donna Barker and Crystal Stranaghan are the instructors/mentors at The Creative Academy. Between the three of them—all successful writers and editors—they offer a wide variety of courses and support systems for writers at all levels. Be aware that there is a monthly membership fee for ongoing services, although non-members can take individual courses for a slightly increased price. For more info, check them out at: cscreativeacademy.com/

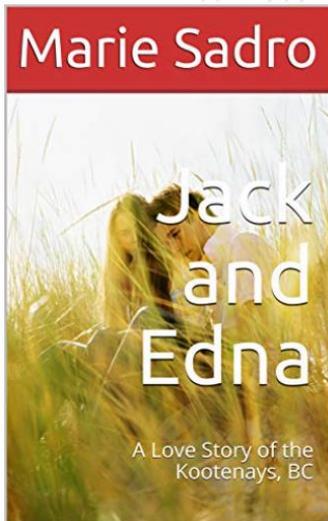
And maybe, with some polishing, this will be the year your book appears in print!

B R A V O !

Lawrence Verigin is pleased to announce the release of his third book *Beyond Control* in the Dark Seed trilogy. Released on November 13, 2018, it's available everywhere you buy books and eBooks \$17.95. For more information go to: www.lawrenceverigin.com



Congratulations to **Marie Sadro** for her latest Amazon Book release *Jack and Edna*, a romantic novelette of a young pioneer couple in Kaslo after the Silver Rush in the late 1890s in the interior of BC. Available in Kindle edition from Amazon.ca.



Brava to **Evelyn Dreiling** for the publication of her e-book *White Jazz / Black Ops*, the second in a series on the lives of Annie, Nicole and Alex at the start of the 20th Century against the background of the Great Depression, the Dirty Thirties and WWII. The first in the series is entitled *At the Fringes of Society* (August 2016). Both are available at www.smashwords.com.



Congratulations to **Sharon McInnes** on the pre-Christmas launch of her first novel *Across a Narrow Strait*. The book is available in paperback and Kobo or Kindle at sharonmcinnes.com. It's also available at the North Van City library.



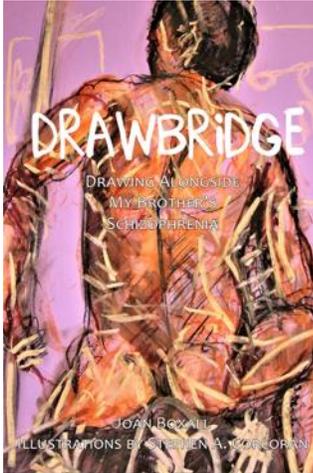
In addition to being an accomplished private pilot, **Janine Cross** is a regular contributor to *COPA Flight Magazine* (Journal of the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association). Her most recent articles include "High School Flying Club Soars", "Sensible Iceland", "Places to Fly West: Alert Bay, BC" (see page 13 for article) and "GA Peruvian Style".



Kudos to **Joyce Goodwin** who was selected as a judge for the 2018 Whistler Independent Book Awards and for the 2018 NV City Library Teen poetry contest. Her poem "*What is Hope*" (see p. 14) was shortlisted as one of the top ten poems in the Vancouver Tagore Society 2018 Poetry Contest. Joyce is also a visual artist and her paintings were included in the NSAG 2018 Winter Sale at the Pipe Shop as well as being on regular exhibition at NSAG Brushstrokes gallery in Lonsdale Quay. She exhibited at the Parkgate Community Centre with the Parkgate Friday Art Group in December.

Congratulations to **Martha Warren** for her story "*Wake Me*", which was shortlisted for the 2018 FBCW Flash Prose Contest on the theme of "How I choose to hibernate" (see page 10 for story).

Joan Boxall honours her brother's life in her debut book **DrawBridge: Drawing Alongside My Brother's Schizophrenia**. The memoir is published by Caitlin Press and will be launched during Canadian Mental Health Week in May. Joan is a regular contributor of non-fiction to *Inspired 55+ Lifestyle Magazine*.



Congratulations to **Erin MacNair** for making the 2018 longlist for the prestigious CBC Non-Fiction Prize for her remarkable piece **"Where Things Rise, Unannounced"**.
cbc.ca/books/literaryprizes/

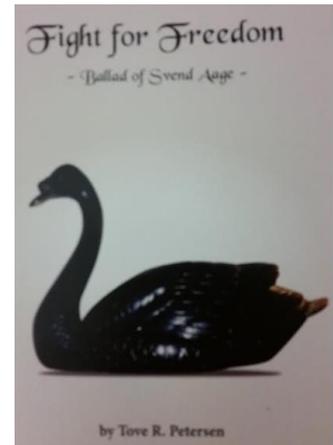
Our decorated poet **Bernice Lever** continues to publish verses to great acclaim, appearing in multiple poetry publications from North America to Asia. In December she gave a feature reading at Moberly Centre in Vancouver. She was recently showcased in an extensive interview highlighting her literary life, philosophy and biggest writing influences. She was interviewed by Ontario Poetry Society's Debbie Okun Hill in **"Chatting with Canadian Poet Bernice Lever"**. Go to: okunhill.wordpress.com/category/canadian-profiles/.



Photo: Ashok K. Bhargava

Bernice is busy working on her 11th book of poetry, expected to be published this year. For a remarkable list of Bernice's published works and awards, check out colourofwords.wordpress.com/

A big ovation goes to **Tove Petersen**, who received a letter from the Queen of Denmark for her book of poetry **Fight for Freedom**.



Copies of this book, as well as **Heavens and Hells of Life**, a collection of poems written from the time she arrived in Canada, will be on sale at **Indigo Books Park Royal South, January 11th from 12:30 – 3:30pm**. Come out for this book signing!

Wiley Ho, your humble newsletter editor, has become a regular contributor to the North Vancouver Recreation & Culture Commission's **Active Living Blog**. Her articles cover topics spanning health and fitness, wellness, creativity and community engagement. Check out her weekly articles at nvrc.ca/notices-events-blog/active-living-blog.

Write on!

PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM WRITERS...

"The pen is the tongue of the mind." – *Miguel de Cervantes*

"Write from the soul, not from some notion what you think the marketplace wants. The market is fickle; the soul is eternal." – *Jeffrey A. Carver*



100 WORD CHALLENGE

The challenge was to produce a story or poem, in **100 words or less**, on the theme **What if?**

What if

Marie Sadro

What if my dog Hector could talk, oh the great times we would have! Dogs are very intelligent, as you know. I could discuss with him books, theatre, politics, and share some gossip on the side. Hector would write and edit my stories and find a good publisher. All he'd ask for in return is a biscuit or a walk in the park. If I'm grumpy or mulling about, "Let's go to the theatre," he'd say. "I'll disguise myself as a human with a coat and shawl." Oh, what a pair we'd be, if only Hector could talk!

Death Needs You to Live

Cinda Morales

What if the Grim Reaper worked at the produce store?

If you tried to avoid her, she'd get in front of you. Then she'd cross her pink-sleeved arms over her green apron. She'd flick her ponytail while shaking her head and guffawing at you.

She'd say, "You narcissist, I'm not here for you today! Look around, do you think those blackberries are alive? That stuff has me run off my feet."

Yes, she'd be busy providing you the ingredients to your Fertility Boost Smoothie.

Without life, she wouldn't exist.

What if

Karen Bower

"What if I told what really happened? Would you scoff, as you did then?"

"Don't be ridiculous. That would never happen," you said.

So I knew never to tell you details—gloss over events. "It was nothing," I'd say. "I don't remember that. Where did you hear such a thing? Not from me surely," I'd exclaim.

Then I would hide more of myself away from you. Withdraw, again. What if you hadn't been like that. Tried a little. Would I have trusted you? What would that have been like? What if you'd listened? Now you wonder why I am silent.

Kathmandu

Wiley Ho

What if you were a kid in Nepal instead of Canada? Would you be less happy, more tormented – or blessed? – by the lack of chocolate, toys, smart phones. Would you miss having friends of the virtual variety?

What if you were happy before anyone pitied you for living in the twelfth poorest nation in the world, for not being able to read and write. Why? So that you can learn the world's bad, sad news and how foreign aid was gobbled up by corrupt officials before reaching your village? What if human happiness doesn't depend on human progress?

What if

Rod Baker

I met her — the one — on a blind date in Horseshoe Bay and, in eight heart-throbbing days, fell in love, only to leave her by the dockside waving, as my ship pulled away for the next port; but I made it back, we got married, moved into an apartment in the West End where we had our first child, followed by two more, and our young family ended up in our own house in North Vancouver where I ran a business and had little time for reflection except occasionally I wondered, what if I hadn't gone on that blind date?

Next 100 Word Challenge:

The year was 2050

- ✓ Strictly 100 words max (excluding title, if any). Hyphenated words, contractions and acronyms count as single words.
- ✓ Theme words inclusion optional.
- ✓ Fiction, non-fiction and poetry are all welcome.

Submit your 100-word masterpiece to
editornswa@gmail.com

or by mail to

NSWA PO Box 37549 Lonsdale East, NV V7M 3L3

Deadline March 1, 2019

Fiction

Wake Me *Martha Warren*

I have heard of this happening to women like me, women too much alone. Once the children are in bed and the business of the day is done, a crippling loneliness sets in. The days get shorter, the evenings longer. We sleep and wake in the darkness of our latitude. The torpor of hibernation leads to madness. I have seen an old woman in the corner of my living room. She is sitting in the overstuffed armchair, knitting. She looks up and smiles. I turn to stand and she is gone, like she was never there.

I know I am lucky to even have a home. So many in this city don't. On the news the other day was a man who, finding nowhere affordable to rent, dug himself a bunker in a wooded area of the city. He dug for eighteen hours a day into the clay, hardening the walls with a heater, and installed plywood, drywall, some hardwood flooring. He said it was warmer underground.

The next evening, the old woman is back.

"It feels good to get my needles clacking again," she says brightly. "Tea?" I put the kettle on, wondering if my nervous breakdown is complete. The old woman stops to count stitches, and notices me staring.

"You have a choice. You can either wallow in your loneliness and misery this evening, or you can have tea and a chat with me." She resumes her knitting. I take a deep breath and turn back to the kitchen to find the tea pot.

I have named her Lavender.

I know it's strange that Lavender is invisible to anyone but me, but I see invisibility at work every day. People see only what they want to see. Women like me, plump, grey, sensibly dressed, are inconspicuous to the world, unworthy of recognition by salespeople in stores, and the yoga-gearred moms at the school gates. What the invisible need is their own superhero. Maybe it should be me. Me, Champion of Invisible Women Everywhere.

I suppose that's why lavender has always been my favourite herb. It's out-of-style, old-fashioned. Outdone today by the trendier lemongrass, the sexier chipotle pepper, and exotic fresh ginger. Lavender is the wife you have been married to for years and come to take for granted. I add it to everything, even my coffee. Lavender lemon cakes. Lavender shortbread. Lavender lemonade. "Lavender gimlets," Lavender has just called out from the corner.

I see in today's paper that yet another task force has been struck to deal with homelessness in the community, this one "a coordinated partnership based approach to addressing issues relating to eliminating and preventing homelessness." And in the same paper, same day, "Residents rally against planned homeless shelter." I can't bear to read on, and drop the paper in the recycling bin.

Now in the long evenings, when the house is enveloped by winter shadows and quiet, at least I have someone to talk to. I hope I don't complain too much. If I do, Lavender is very polite about it.

In bed at night, I still miss the warmth of a body against mine. It's not just that I miss the sex, I miss his smell, the reassurance of his presence.

"I miss him," I confess to Lavender one evening. She looks up from her knitting. "I feel so cold in bed at night."

Lavender arches an eyebrow and keeps knitting. "Then buy some flannel sheets."

Today's newspaper headline is about a man who died when a fire broke out inside the shipping container he'd been living in for almost a year with a bed, chair, hotplate and tv. In response, the mayor has announced a pancake breakfast and roundtable to tackle the homeless crisis.

And in my own home, in my own mind, I feel a disquiet, unsettled by my own seasonal depression. I hear the call to action, to shake off my soul's winter lethargy, and it wakes me from hibernation. ■

Non-Fiction

First Impressions Linger

John K. Nixon

In July 1958 I visited Vancouver for the first time. I was a Naval Officer Cadet at the time in the University Naval Training Division (UNTD) at McGill University. We were commonly known as the “Untidies.” The training included two summers spent at Canadian coastal naval bases. The previous summer of 1957, I had spent at HMCS Stadacona in Halifax, N.S. In 1958, there was a three-month summer stint at HMCS Naden in Esquimalt, B.C. and a three-week cruise to Hawaii on an RCN frigate - my first visit to those islands. While in Esquimalt I entered the following notes in my cadet Journal which I still have:

“4-6 July. Over the weekend I took the opportunity to visit Vancouver, flying there late on Friday and returning on Sunday evening. It was my first visit to the city - one I had long awaited and one which certainly lived up to my expectations. My general impression was of a clean and well planned city, with a prosperous commercial business section, a thriving waterfront and a setting which must rank it among the world’s most beautifully situated cities.”

I attended a Theatre Under the Stars open air performance of the Broadway musical *Showboat* in Stanley Park. Dressed in my Naval Officer Cadet uniform, I purchased two tickets, hoping to persuade some young lady waiting in the queue to accompany me. I could not find any willing damsels to accept my offer, so I watched the entire performance with an aching empty chair beside me. Whenever the music reached a crescendo, or a soprano hit a high note, there was a loud chorus of protesting squawks from a colony of nesting herons in the nearby trees.

Incidentally, a mere two weeks before my visit in 1958 the Second Narrows Bridge over Burrard Inlet had collapsed during construction. I recall seeing the collapsed spans from a distance.

Two years later I married a young Indonesian student whom I had met at McGill. We spent our first years in Quebec where my wife, who had been raised in the tropics, found the Quebec winters unusually harsh. In the summer of 1967, I quit my job, and we moved to Vancouver, where in 1968 we purchased our first house in Eagle Harbour. Since then, for the last 50 years, I have owned a home in West Vancouver or in Lions Bay.

I can truthfully say that Vancouver and its environs are the most attractive that I have seen anywhere, and I indeed feel privileged to live here. ■



(Photo: Bing)

Willow's Wonderland

Wendy Alden

If it had not been for the bookmark, Willow would never have remembered her last visit to Santa, when she still believed. The bookmark had been slipped into a new book she'd bought last week in her local quaint bookstore with the bell which tinkled whenever anyone entered or left. It had been a last minute idea to visit as an idea of finding a good book to read for the holidays ahead. She'd left the store smiling having found a perfect novel by a favorite writer. The bookmark intrigued her as on it was a lifelike drawing of a little girl dressed for winter complete with mittens and toque. She was reaching up to offer a boxed gift wrapped in a red ribbon to a partial view of Santa. Below was printed, "Every gift tells a story." I certainly had one to tell and decided to write mine.

I was only 8 and every year as long as I could remember, my parents would drive from our country farm into the city on December 22nd, my birthday, to give me a chance to have my visit with the Santa in the mall. It was always such an exciting day. Gifts in the morning and then the anticipation of making sure I had the list for the talk with my wishes for those Christmas Day gifts. I always told him I was extra good the preceding year just to ensure I did receive everything I listed. I used to make a special gift for him each year which was put in a small box and tied it with a red ribbon. As I gave it to him, I'd always say there was extra love in the box for him as he lived so far away in the North Pole. He always looks so happy receiving it but the last visit of mine with him I sensed he wasn't the same jolly Santa as in years previous. Being a young child, what did I know.

My parents were always so generous to ensure I did receive my special gifts from Santa. During the year I was 8, I can't remember who it was at school who told me there was no Santa, it was all make-believe but I just had to ask my parents what was the truth. They looked very seriously at each other and then sat me down and broke the news what I'd been told was true.

As a result I never did go for any more visits to the mall on my birthday. I missed them but realized if I didn't believe, it wouldn't be the same and I'd be pretending to believe. I even avoided going near where the children gathered to have their annual visit to what was called Santa's Workshop.

Thinking back as I was holding the bookmark, these 10 years after my last visit, I decided to go and see if the same Santa was at the mall. It seemed right to go on my eighteenth birthday in two days. I was driving by then and was able to drive myself. As I drove the 10 miles, I wondered if the same Santa would even still be there. I arrived early to avoid lining up among a line of children with parents in tow and found the Santa outside the Workshop area.

I realized he was a different man to the one I'd grown to know well from my annual visits. As I introduced myself, I explained my reason for my visit and showed him the bookmark. I explained how the image of the little girl and Santa reminded me of my last visit when only 8 and why the visits stopped. He smiled saying he understood. When I asked him about the older man who used to be the Santa, he said, "That was my dad and he died two years ago; so I applied and was hired." It feels good to see the children who visited with my dad over these recent years. When I explained about my gifts for his dad on my annual visit, he said he remembered his dad bringing them home and sharing them with his mom, him and his sister. He said his dad always appreciated the drawings and little poems I enclosed in the gift box for him. He said he remembered how his dad would say, "The little girl would always tells me there was extra love in the gift for him" and he would smile at the innocent sweetness of the gifts.

Then he said, I have a little story to tell you.

That last year you visited my dad, the real Santa to you, my mom had died suddenly a few months earlier. He didn't know if he was going to be able to be a good Santa that December. My sister and I both encouraged him to see if maybe it would make him feel a little happier. The evening he brought your gift home and told us again of receiving it, he had tears in his eyes. He said, "I know the little girl had no idea how I was feeling when she visited, but her saying the gift had extra love in it meant the world to me." So, because of the bookmark, because it said, "Every gift has a story," I decided to see if there would be more of a story about my gifts to Santa and ended up having a full circle moment in my life. I really think there was, meeting 'my' Santa's son. ■

(Author's note: Written on December 4, 2017 because of having a bookmark as described in this story, placed in a new novel I bought. The hint of a story with the gift by a little girl for Santa sparked my imagination.)



by Janine Cross

A quintessential Pacific Northwest Coast flying experience, the route to Cormorant Island in British Columbia often involves dodging heavy rain showers in a mix of marginal VFR and IFR conditions. In all but the driest summer months, threading up the narrow Johnstone Strait means weaving around shoals of clouds that are as grey and ponderous as humpback whales while, not far below, heavy spectral mists lift from the cedars and hemlocks of the channel's dozens of sparsely inhabited islands.

Situated between Broughton Strait and Pearse Passage off the northeastern coast of Vancouver Island, Cormorant Island boasts a 2900-foot airstrip (YAL), as well as a water aerodrome in the village of Alert Bay. When on approach for runway 09, the skeletal trees of the island's eerie marshland ecological park are clearly visible to the left.

At the threshold of runway 27, on the north side, the Alert Bay Cabins are literally a stone's throw from where you can park your plane on a wide grass verge. If you've rented a cabin here, the only thing preventing you from taxiing right to your door is a short but steep slope.

Alert Bay is a haven for kayaking, fishing, whale watching and hiking. A 16-km network of trails covers the island. From the airport cabins, the East Trail wends through the forest, right to the ecological park.

Being traditional Kwakwaka'wakw territory, Alert Bay possesses over 23 totems, one of which is the tallest in the world, towering 173 feet into the sky. Close by, the U'mista Cultural Centre houses a collection of elaborately carved masks and historical artefacts that have been repatriated after years of residing in far-flung museums.

There are a number of cafes in town, easily reached on foot from the airport; they serve everything from pizza to fresh-caught salmon. Before visiting outside of tourist season, pilots might want to check what is open, as some businesses keep limited hours or shut down entirely during the off-season. The cabins at the airport each contain full kitchens, so self-catering is always an option.

(This article was first published online in COPA on October 5, 2018 and is reproduced with permission from the author.) ■

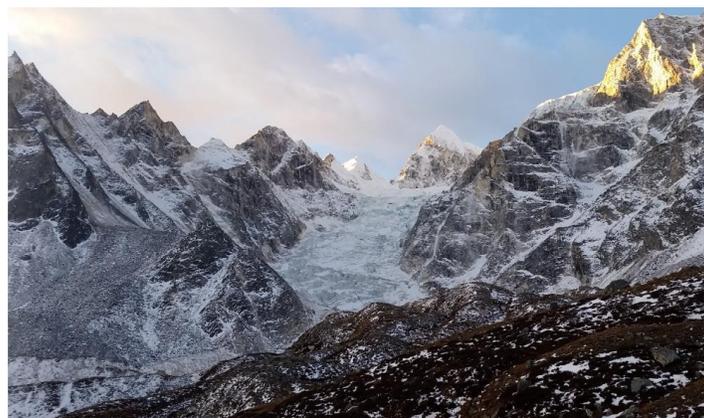
Poetry

ICEFALL

Trish Gauntlett

Glaciers retreat and slide away
And ancient secrets are exposed by fire and
drowned in rising tides
What things are locked in ice?
Things we have never seen or felt or
understood
Cold, enigmatic, remote
Myth, mystery, magic, frozen since time before
time
Tools and trees in stasis for ten thousand
years
Answers and artifacts waiting for a new
Atlantis to emerge
Unlocked where snow meets sea
Ice breaking, falling, splintered
Shapeshifting
Riding the sea lanes
Changing, diminished, gone.

Some things I know were locked in ice.
A human heart and soul
Cold, enigmatic, remote, alone
Exposed by fire
Unlocking solitude
Breaking, falling, splintered
Shapeshifting
Riding the sea lanes
Changing, diminished, gone.



Himalayas (Photo: Wiley Ho)

Snow Angels

Marie Sadro

Angels of snow waft soft and white,
Majestic sprites in winter night.
Exotic pearls in deepest lakes
Don't shimmer like their silky flakes.
No doves, no gulls have feathers
bright
Like snowy angels in winter night.
I'll wrap up in their angel-wings
And hear the lullaby they sing,
And when I'll sleep I'll dream of love
And sigh to the cold sky above.
I want a love as bright as snow,
As pure as snowflakes in a row,
As delicate in shape, design,
And then I will have peace of mind.

What is Hope

Joyce Goodwin

Hope transitions from chrysalis to butterfly
translucent it is as hesitant as a hare's breath
on succulent grass or as raindrops balanced
on a leaf;

it is the music of songbirds
the high-pitched scream of eagles
awaiting the salmon's return.

Hope is a rosebud surrounded by thorns,
it is the prayer of a caravan of people
displaced and desperately seeking
a better life.

Hope is the heartbeat of our planet,
a promise of life when the guns are silenced.

GLEBE HOLDINGS

Stuart Newton

My new friends could not talk, but
they did make noises understood by each other;
bleating and grunting, bellowing and clucking
-- because they were farm animals.

I stood before them each day, to serve with food
staples and bedding, fencing and protection
-- because I was the farm boy in the hills and tied
to my daily duties for the summer ahead.

My friends did learn to recognize me and make ready
when I approached – piglets nipping at my ankles
and lambs stumbling across my path, cattle jostling at
the gate and hens scurrying off
-- because there was no one else, nobody came; only
myself attending.

Sometimes they were stupid, like running infront of
my tractor, or struggling to get free of my hold;
eating just about anything and escaping their fields
-- because these animals only act on instinct, or they
react in an opposite way.

At other times they are interested and curious with me,
at various chores; getting up-close and eye-balling my
direction, while I continue to labour with good intent
--- because I seem to be like them after a while, foolish
and innocent, restless and confined.

These my first friends after school, turned everything I
knew before, upside down.

I spoke to the farmer at evening and his housekeeper at
lunch time – about meal times, our weekly plans and the
weather of course
-- but my real friends were outside on the hill, in the sheds
or paddocks; waiting and watchful, with a bit of fun -- it
seems -- rubbing-up against me and licking my gear.

I never said goodbye at end of summer; only glanced their
way going to the road for the last time. It was a rude ending,
undeserved and unkind – because they could not follow and
would not remember.



Winter's Morning Snow

Rod Baker

World of fresh dark and light
Wet black roads, trees newly white
All tilted and turned bright
Burnished by the rub of sunlight

Criss-crossing cars crushing slush gently hiss
in the air, chill-trickling on my face a soft kiss
of cool shiny winter and all this
makes a day which is lively and crisp
and hopeful

CRUMBS

Jannette Edmonds

So many glossy smiles,
Like band aids
Covering up the wounds.
And I lie again,
About how you hurt me.

Where is the clarity
I thought would come with age?
You never reach Nirvana.
You just stop caring
That it doesn't exist.

I wrap my dreams of you
Like a shawl around my desperation.
Come, warm me with your precious
words,
Let them rain on me
Like the balm of Gilead.

I catch them in my heart
Like ration cards
That have to last me
Til the next dearth season
When you are far away again.

You limit me to the crusts
And hoard the bread of joy,
Keeping it for close family and friends.
But I can nibble happily
On the crumbs, for a very long time.



reallifescaldrawings.com

Current Events

John Lesow

Marijuana is Now Legal in Canada. On October 17, 2018, recreational use of marijuana became legal in Canada. Earlier in the month, the government delivered flyers to Canadian residences to herald the news.

If your government is going into the business of officially sanctioning a previously illegal activity, it is a good idea to first **soften the terms** for the more cautious members of the public. Particularly the skeptics among us that may question the idea that allowing "recreational use" may not be in the best interests of "protecting the health and safety of Canadians" as the flyer suggests.

So "**marijuana**" is now "**cannabis**". Just as "**gambling**" was softened to "**gaming**" when the government decided it wanted a piece of the action. Words matter. You are unlikely to hear the terms, "pot" or "marijuana" in future government pronouncements. They are all so 20th century.

The preamble in the flyer speaks to "**Keeping cannabis out of the hands of youth and to keep the profits out of the hands of criminals and organized crime**".

Wow. Ambitious-sounding boiler plate for sure. It's also **unproven theory**. Just another unsubstantiated talking point from a government that is not shy about using a scare tactic to close a deal. Not a word about any tangible health benefits of "cannabis". Just the threat of gang violence if we don't let the government legalize pot.

Author's comments on the bullet points in the flyer:

> "**Must be 19 or older**" This may have some impact on commercial purchases, but very little effect on possession or use. Besides, pot cookies and candy are relatively easy to conceal. These "edibles" can be ingested without lighting a match.

> "**Strict penalties for providing cannabis to youth**" If consuming cannabis is bad for you, why is the government selling this stuff in the first place? Will "health effects" deter Junior from consuming a pot gummy? In an earlier era, the "health effects" of tobacco products were pretty evident. If Junior swallowed that plug of chewing tobacco or snuff, Junior got sick. These "health effects" were a not-so-subtle deterrent. But if Junior consumes a few dozen "edibles" because they taste good, he may likely wind up endangering his health. Or the health of others from his erratic behaviour.

> "**Don't drive High or Work Impaired**" Meaningless. In the same category as "don't text while driving" and "look both ways before crossing the street". Anyone who does not appreciate these basic rules of modern life has no business driving. Or working in most of today's demanding jobs. Many progressive companies have a zero tolerance for drug use on the job, and for good reason. Would you board a plane if the pilot was high? A bus? Would you employ a machinist operating an expensive piece of capital equipment if his judgment was compromised? A mistake in any of these workplace examples would endanger the health and welfare of others.

> "**Store cannabis away from children, youth and pets**". Inane suggestion. However, your lockable gun cabinet might be an option.

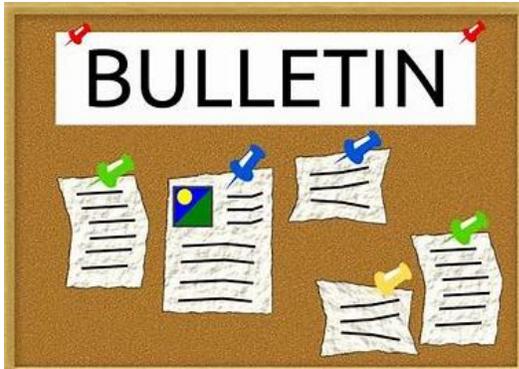
> "**It is illegal to take cannabis across the Canadian border, whether you're leaving or coming to Canada**". This is a valid point. Particularly since the Washington State border crossings at Peace Arch, Pac Highway Truck Crossing and Point Roberts have the highest volumes of traffic along the entire International Border. Federal customs laws are in force at U.S. border crossings, and Customs Agents have a wide range of authority when questioning you.

Let's assume that sometime in your life you have smoked marijuana. You are returning to the States from a visit to Canada. The U.S. Border Patrol Agent asks you, "Have you ever smoked marijuana"? If your answer is "yes" you could be denied entry back into the United States. As well as a permanent mark on your record that will follow you forever. If your answer is "No"---and your record suggests otherwise---you have committed a federal Customs violation. Not for smoking marijuana, but for lying to a Customs Officer. The final judicial verdict on this fundamental denial of Due Process is far from settled. In the meantime, to assume you can lie about your past and get away with it is foolish.

Prime Minister Trudeau has stated that "this new legislation will provide tools to reduce unsafe behaviour". Right. What could possibly go wrong?

Note: This article has been edited for length. The full article, including reader comments, can be viewed on the website "Writers on the Loose": writersontheloose.com/writers/writer1880/?story=77103

Member Bulletin Board



This is a new feature in our newsletter!
The 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? Would you like to share some writing insight or recent publishing information?

The NSWA is a multi-talented group of creative people, but not everyone can attend all meetings. Since one of the main goals of the NSWA is for members to share writing knowledge and resources, this is just another way for us to support each other.

Email your question or suggestion to editornswa@gmail.com (or by post to NSWA PO Box 37549 Lonsdale East, NV V7M 3L3) and it will appear in the following newsletter on this page.

Question:

Who has experience with the writing software Scrivener? Do you recommend it and why (be specific and include how you use it). Please email your response to editornswa@gmail.com.



Facebook is back!

We are pleased to report that the **NSWA Facebook page** is once again up and running! Check it out to for upcoming NSWA events and contests, as well as events of interest from other literary groups and notices of member book launches and readings.

Do you have something to share on the NSWA Facebook page? Please send it (edited and ready to copy/paste) to Sharon at sharon9320@gmail.com. Photos must be in jpg or png format.

(Note: In order to give everyone a chance to be featured on the page, new books by NSWA authors will be posted only once on Facebook and will not include external links.)

Let's create a vibrant and useful Facebook page together!



Call for Submissions – Local Authors Book Fair



You are eligible to make a submission to the Book Fair Committee for consideration if you are:

- A local author
- Have a published book (either self-published or traditionally published) in either hardcover or trade paperback format
- Have a book with a copyright date 2013 or later
- Are able to volunteer your time to help with the Book Fair and staff your own table

Book Fair Hours: Saturday, April 6th 12:00 – 4:00 pm

Featured authors must set up and take down their own tables at the times decided upon by the organizing committee (TBA). No exceptions. Authors will be responsible for the contents of their own tables, including books, money and all personal possessions; the Festival Organizers, the NSWA, the Book Fair Committee members and the North Vancouver District Library cannot be held responsible for any lost or stolen items. Featured authors must also agree to abide by all guidelines and conditions set by the Book Fair Committee, to be communicated to successful applicants.

The North Shore Writer's Festival has grown into a signature event for the literary community of the North Shore, and this is a wonderful opportunity for local writers to promote themselves and their books, as well as to engage with other writers and local readers. If you would like to take part, please send your submission, containing the **following information only in the body of an email (no attachments)**, to sonia@soniagarrett.ca

- Name of author
- Title of book (or books if more than one), and a one-sentence description of each
- Format (hardcover or trade paperback), fiction or non-fiction for each book
- Date of copyright/publication for each book
- If traditionally published, name of publisher, for each book
- Author's website address, if applicable

Submission Deadline: February 22, 2019

The Book Fair Committee will announce the names of the successful applicants by March 15.

All committee decisions are final. Successful applicants must be prepared to submit a 50-word bio plus photo (preferably headshot) for the festival website, and to have an adequate supply of their books to sell. Please do not pad your submission with additional information. Unrequested attachments will not be opened. If you are not sure if you qualify for the Book Fair, please bring your book(s) to the NSWA meeting on January 21 and see Sonia Garrett for clarification.

Executive 2019

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Vice-President (and Director)

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Writing Contest Coordinator

Doug MacLeod

Members At-large

Joanna Gould, Christine Gowan, Barbara Reardon

Additional Support

North Shore Writers Festival Liaison

Sonia Garrett

***A hearty thank-you to all our
volunteers for their dedication and
hard work!***



Photo: Winter Bench
© Wendy Alden

Events Calendar

<i>January 7</i>	<i>Dare to be Heard (bonus one!)</i>
<i>January 21</i>	<i>NSWA General Meeting with guest speaker Aaron Chapman</i>
<i>February 4</i>	<i>Dare to be Heard</i>
<i>February 13</i>	<i>Writing with Writers Workshop with Carol Cram</i>
<i>February 25</i>	<i>NSWA General Meeting with guest speaker Robin Esrock</i>
<i>February 28</i>	<i>NSWA Writing Contest Deadline</i>
<i>March 1</i>	<i>Newsletter submission deadline</i>
<i>March 4</i>	<i>Dare to be Heard</i>
<i>March 18</i>	<i>NSWA General Meeting with guest speaker Julie Salisbury</i>
<i>April 1</i>	<i>Dare to be Heard</i>
<i>April 5-6</i>	<i>20th North Shore Writers Festival</i>
<i>April 15</i>	<i>NSWA General Meeting with guest speaker Shauna Paull</i>
<i>May 6</i>	<i>Dare to be Heard</i>
<i>May 27</i>	<i>NSWA General Meeting with guest speaker KC Dyer</i>
<i>June 3</i>	<i>Dare to be Heard</i>
<i>June 17</i>	<i>Year-End Wrap Up Party (TBC)</i>

The Last Page

Cathy L. Scrimshaw

It's the start of a new year, and maybe a resolution or two about how to be a better writer. I asked five of the NSWA's successful authors for some advice on how they navigate that difficult, often stressful, sometimes magical journey of The Writer's Life. Here's what they came up with . . .

Where to get those ideas, how to find an original take on an old subject, is one of the most common questions asked. **Erin MacNair** (www.erinmacnair.com), an award-winning writer whose work has been published in *The Walrus*, *Room* and other literary journals, had this advice: "All writers get stuck. I like to run myself a bath, ask "what do I need?" clearly in my head, and then *not* think about it. In the warm water, submerged and only half conscious, the answer comes. It worked for Archimedes! Although, I wouldn't run through the streets naked, shouting. You don't want your "eureka" moment all over the internet."

Then what? There's so much competition out there; how do you get the energy and enthusiasm to run with that idea despite the odds? **Joan Boxall** (www.joanboxall.com), travel writer, poet and author of the upcoming non-fiction book *DrawBridge*, offers this advice to help you develop the confidence you need: "After probably 7 or 8 years attending monthly NSWA meetings and listening to authors, it can be daunting: i.e. 'they' are so together; 'they' are so dedicated...'they' are so hardworking... And one forgets that

I, too (that's the collective 'I am') am also 'together, dedicated, & bum-in-the-chair hardworking' when I want to be. So, gather those thoughts that are unique to YOU, value them, and dedicate yourself to the work of creating... a reading, an essay, a book. Give yourself permission TO BE YOU."

Okay, so far so good. You've got your idea, you understand the self-confidence and work ethic you need, and you're ready to start. Now comes the actual writing. How do successful writers approach this very important stretch of the journey? **Lawrence Verigin** (www.lawrenceverigin.com), author of the award-winning *Dark Seed* trilogy, came up with succinct and highly practical advice for all of us: "Put your head down and finish the first draft. You can edit and re-draft to your heart's content afterward, but first you need to complete the first draft. Otherwise it's too easy to get stuck revising parts of the story and never fully conclude it."

Of course, as **Erin** says, "all writers get stuck". What to do then? Go back to **Erin's** advice to rev your creative juices back up – and repeat as necessary throughout the process.

Once you've got that manuscript finished and polished, you have a decision to make. What type of publishing vehicle are you going to pursue? Many first-time authors are opting to self-publish, aka Indie Publishing. It's a great way to get your work out, and to maintain control of that work once it leaves your desk. **Karen Dodd** (www.karendodd.com), author of *Deadly Switch* and *Scare Away the Dark*, says this: "In deciding

whether to self-publish or query traditional agents and publishers, I decided that at my stage in life I could either collect rejections over the next 3-5 years or, I could have 3-5 books out there for people to read and enjoy. I chose the latter and have never looked back. Remember, if your book does well, a traditional publisher could notice you. Harder to do the other way round."

So you've taken an idea, made it your own, put your bum in the chair and your fingers on the keyboard, you've stuck with it until it's complete, and you've got a published book of your very own! Now you have to take it out there and promote it. But most authors are more introverted than extroverted. **Jackie Bateman** (www.jacbateman.com), author of the award-winning *Lizzie* trilogy, volunteered this: "Being the archetypal hermit writer with a true love of isolation and quiet, I get antsy and nervous before a public reading or talk. The thing is, there are no wrong answers. People want to know what you think, how you work, and what you write about. Easy. Everyone is there to support you, unless they are truly crabby, in which case who cares what they think? If you want further moral support, I would recommend reading the book 'Mortification: Writers Stories of Their Public Shame.' I've never laughed so hard."

So, there you have it – advice to live by for the coming year, from some of our most excellent and successful writers. I hope this helps you on your personal journey for 2019! Happy New Year, and Happy Writing! ■