



No. 17: January 2020

Upcoming Meetings

January 20

Guest Speaker
Jean Teillet

February 24

Guest Speaker
CC (Chris) Humphreys

March 16

Guest Speakers
*Linda Demeulemeester
and Janine Cross*

April 20

Guest Speaker
Aislinn Hunter

May 25

Guest Speaker
Tilar Mazzeo

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!

I hope this newsletter finds you healthy, happy and finding fulfillment with your writing projects.

As President of the North Shore Writers' Association, I have used the holidays to reflect on our little pocket of creativity tucked away between the sea and mountains. Here are three things that worked for me in 2019.

Our hardworking executive

Rod Baker, our Vice-President, keeps us in line and steps into gaps as they appear. Wiley Ho brings us this amazing newsletter four times a year. Janine Cross took over from Sharon McInnes as Speaker Coordinator and continues the NSWA tradition of bringing us an inspiring range of visiting authors each month. Doug MacLeod headed up another successful writing competition. Carl Hunter has worked tirelessly to get news to members. Kelly Hoskins is our dedicated webmaster. Mark Turris hosts Dare to be Heard each month and brings his artistic flair to NSWA publicity materials. Steve Rayner has joined the executive as treasurer. Christine Cowan and Barbara Reardon, our members at large, help behind the scenes and brought us fantastic social events including our Summer Social and Christmas in November. Thank you for all your hard work.

We have more time to socialize

Many of you asked for more time to meet fellow wordsmiths and socialize during monthly meetings. Listening to the buzz in the North Vancouver City Library each month indicates the new

social time is appreciated and working well.

The NSWA is forging closer links with local libraries

North Vancouver City Library continues to provide free meeting rooms. Together the NVCL and NSWA hosted four Writing with Writers workshops. The NSWA were involved in the North Shore Writers Festival with a panel discussion on the main stage and organizing the Book Fair.

On November 21, 2019, seventy-five local authors celebrated the launch of the North Shore Authors' Collection. This joint library initiative aims to connect local readers to local writers. In its inaugural year there are over one hundred and twenty books, a great indication of the large number of gifted writers in our midst. Congratulations to the many NSWA members who have books in this collection.

Let's continue to build on our successes. To do this we need to look at the things that could work better.

We need more volunteers

Many hands make light work. Make 2020 the year you volunteer.

There are more writers on the North Shore than members of the NSWA

Do you know a writer who isn't a member of NSWA? Invite them to a General Meeting, carpool to Dare, spread the word about our annual competition and help get the word out that the NSWA is thriving.

We are writers helping writers.

Challenge yourself and encourage others by being an active member.

Finally, my wish for you is that the coming year will be filled with magic, dreams and creativity. ■



A Note from the Editor

The year 2020 has a momentous ring to it. It feels like a good year to get serious about writing.

With so much overwhelming, negative news so early into the new year, I find it increasingly necessary to read good books, finely crafted stories that transport me to different worlds and other possibilities. Storytelling has always had to the power to provide solace and insight into the human condition. When I read a beautiful piece of writing, it encourages me to keep writing.

A great teacher once told me, “The act of writing is not complete until you have sent it out to the world to be read.” Many writers, she went on to say, suffer from “fear of completion,” which is really fear of failure. If the work is weak, it might drop into a void but an echo will return to you to keep at it. If the work is good, it will find a place in the world. But how will you know unless you send your work out into the world?

Compiling your writing news for this newsletter, and reading your poetry, prose and 100-word stories, I am inspired by your acts of writing completion. For those of us who might need a nudge, the 24th NSW Annual Writing Contest is now open for submissions until February 29th. It is a worthy target to aim for polishing that final draft. For more great writing contests in 2020, check out <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-contests/>.

Here’s to 2020 and writing completion.

Wiley

Wiley Ho
Editor, NSW Newsletter

Deadline for next newsletter: March 1, 2020

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Newsletter Submission Guidelines

- Submissions from NSW members only please.
- Send writing news (recent publications, book launches, notices, etc.) and your creations (poems, short fiction or non-fiction pieces up to 600 words) to editornsw@gmail.com, or by mail to NSW, PO Box 37549 Lonsdale East, North Vancouver, BC V7M 3L3.
- Writing that appears in the NSW newsletter is eligible for submission to the NSW writing contest.
- Contributors are responsible for the accuracy, originality and reliability of their content.
- Check your submissions for spelling, grammar and punctuation prior to submission. Word attachments are preferred over email text.
- Publication in *WRITE ON!* is at the discretion of the Editor, in consultation with the Executive.

Disclaimer: Any views contained in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or the NSW.

Upcoming Meetings and Guest Speakers

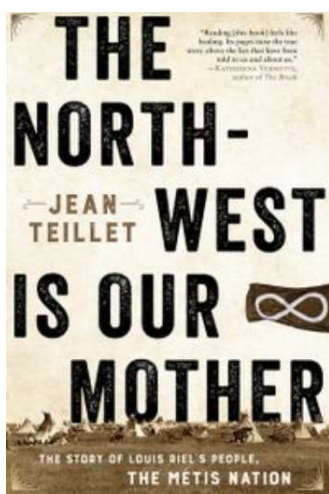
January 20

**Guest Speaker
Jean Teillet**



In 2002, **Jean Teillet** became the first recipient of the Law Society of Upper Canada's Lincoln Alexander Award for her work "as a mentor and teacher and her commitment to advancing Aboriginal issues". Ms. Teillet is the great-grandniece of Louis Riel.

Jean will read from *The North-West is Our Mother* and talk a little about the process of researching and writing about the Métis Nation.



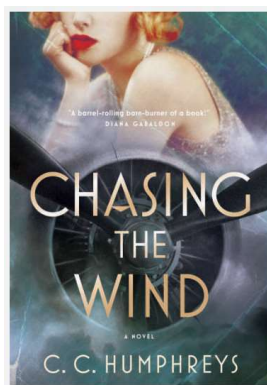
February 24

**Guest Speaker
CC Humphreys**



CC (Chris) Humphreys, author, actor, swordsman, has written ten historical novels. All have been published in the UK, Canada, the US and many have been translated into various languages, including Russian, Italian, German, Greek, Spanish, Portuguese, Czech, Serbian, Turkish and Indonesian.

Chris will talk about the published/self-published duality of his novel, *Chasing the Wind*, and what led him to this path. He has acted all over the world and appeared on stages ranging from London's West End to Hollywood's Twentieth Century Fox.
www.cchumphreys.com



March 16

**Guest Speakers
Linda Demeulemeester
and Janine Cross**



Linda Demeulemeester and **Janine Cross** will host a panel discussion on the topic of agents: who they are, what they can and can't do for you, and when/if you need them.

Linda Demeulemeester is the author of seven novels for middle-graders, and author of the critically acclaimed Grim Hill book series. *The Secret of Grim Hill* won the Silver Birch award in 2008.
<https://grimhill.com/>

Voted by Library Journal as one of the top five sci-fi/fantasy novelists of 2005, Janine Cross is the author of the internationally published *The Dragon Temple Trilogy*, and the literary novel, *The Footstop Cafe*. She's sold fiction and non-fiction to various magazines and has taught workshops at writing festivals, conventions, and in secondary and elementary schools.
<http://janinecross.ca/index.html>

North Shore Writers' Association

24th Annual Writing Contest

For more info go to: www.nswriters.com

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 Ave. East,

North Vancouver, BC V7M 3L3

By February 29, 2020.

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! 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 to share! See you there!

Upcoming sessions: Jan 6, Feb 4, Mar 4, Apr 1, May 6, Jun 3

Venue: The 2nd Floor Boardroom, North Vancouver City Library

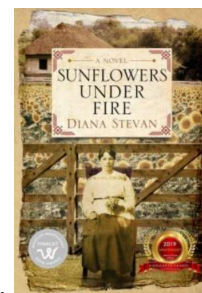
Time: 6:30 p.m. - 8:45 p.m.

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

How to record an audiobook

by Diana Stevan



If you've ever thought about recording an audiobook,

the North Vancouver Library has a recording studio, complete with computer with Audacity recording software installed, mic, headphones and pop filter for those explosive 'p' sounds. I was thrilled to discover this resource, free to use for any library member.

Before you start though, establish an account with ACX, the home of Audible. It's where you submit your audio files for their technicians to organize in the production of an audiobook. It's also where you insert your bank and tax information in order to be paid.

It took me 29 hours to record 315 pages of my novel *Sunflowers Under Fire*.

Though I'd done some recording in the past, both as a writer-broadcaster for CBC television and as an actor in CBC radio dramas, I'd never recorded non-stop for a few hours at a time. My mouth ran dry after only a few pages. And there were times I stumbled over words and had to re-record those sentences. Every chapter needed its own file. Even the title page, acknowledgements, dedication, about the author, copyright—they were all separate files.

ACX gives clear instructions on what's required for these audio files to pass their inspection. Because a technician at the library had set me up, I merrily went along thinking all the knobs were set where they were supposed to be.

When I finished narrating the last chapter, I breathed a sigh of relief. I thought I was done, but I was wrong. I hadn't realized how much lip smacking and heavy breathing I needed to edit out of my story. As well, I had to make sure each chapter began and ended with the right amount of room noise (that sound in the room when no one is talking or doing anything). It took me over 60 hours to edit, which included correcting some errors.

It turned out that I still wasn't done. The ACX check plug-in that I'd uploaded on Audacity showed that every file I'd recorded failed to meet ACX technical requirements. Did I want to cry? Yes! Loudly! Thoughts of hiring someone to fix it or to re-record another 29 hours occupied my mind for days.

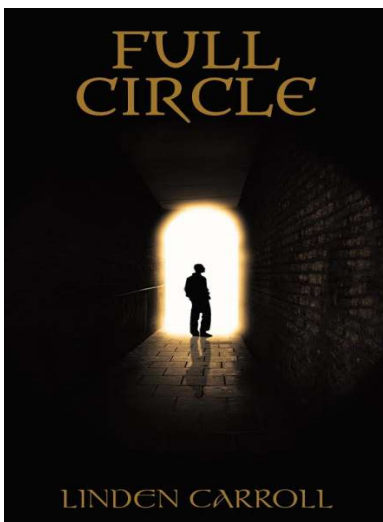
After much hand wringing, I contacted someone who worked in radio and he referred me to a sound studio in town. The sound editor told me that not all was lost. He offered some free advice. I learned how to change each file to fit ACX requirements. But it meant going through each file and ensuring that each file fell within a specific volume range (RMS), and had minimum distortion (Peak Values) and minimal background noise (Noise Floor). It was an arduous task but in the end, it worked. Yay!

I probably could've saved myself a lot of time if I knew how to set all of those requirements at the beginning of my recording. Oh well, if I do another book, I'll make sure that I test the first chapter before moving on to the next. Live and learn. 😊

You can hear the sample chapter [here](#).

B R A V O !

Linden Carroll is pleased to announce the release of her latest book **Full Circle**. Based on actual events, it follows an orphan's path, living on the war-ridden streets of London, England and a love story that spans fifty years. The book is available through Amazon and in bookstores. For more information about Linden's works, go to: www.lindencarroll.com



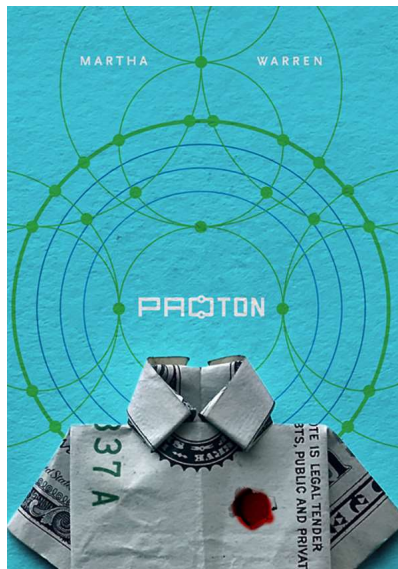
Congratulations to our North Shore authors for the inclusion of their works in the inaugural **North Shore Authors Collection**. A large reception was held at the West Van Memorial Library on Nov 21, 2019.



A big thank you to **Janine Cross** for inspiring writers in our community! In October, Janine gave a **NaNoWriMo** presentation at Capilano Library, encouraging writers, new and seasoned, to write their novels.

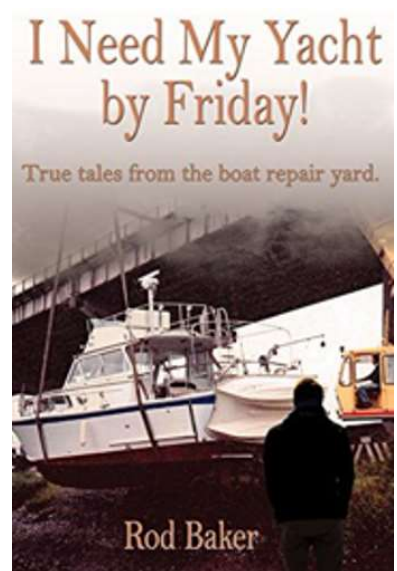


Props to **Martha Warren** for participating in November's **NaNoWriMo**. Not only did she take on the challenge of writing a novel in one month, out of 400,000-plus participants, Martha was one of 30 writers chosen for a customized book cover design. Here's a sneak peek of her book to come!



(Design: Joshua Ege)

Kudos to **Rod Baker** whose second memoir **I Need My Yacht by Friday** was shortlisted for the 2019 Journey Book Awards, a genre division of Chanticleer International Book Awards. The top place finishers will be announced in a special ceremony in April. Best of luck, Rod!



Congratulations to **Mary Chang** for the recent launch of her website, showcasing her published stories and blogs. <https://marychangstorywriter.wordpress.com/>

Brava to **Claudia Cornwall** whose book *BC in Flames: Stories of a blazing summer* is being published by Harbour Books and will be released this April.

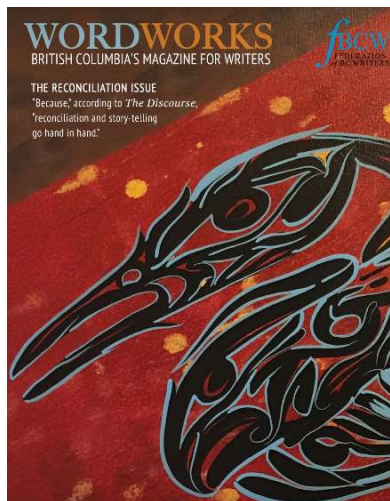


(photo: Eric Depenau)

A freelance writer for over 25 years, Claudia has written six books. *Letter from Vienna: A Daughter Uncovers her Family's Jewish Past*, won the BC Book Prize for best non-fiction. *At the World's Edge: Curt Lang's Vancouver, 1937-1998* was a finalist for the 2012 Vancouver Book Award. *Catching Cancer* was picked by *Booklist* as one of the best books of 2013 and shortlisted for the Canadian Science Writers Association Book Awards. Claudia's most recent book, *Battling Melanoma*, was published in the spring of 2016.

Claudia teaches non-fiction writing in SFU's Writer's Studio.

Wiley Ho is pleased her short story "*Blind Luck*" won the [2019 FBCW Short Story Contest](#).



The story helped her secure a spot in the *2019 Banff Emerging Writers Intensive Workshop*, and will be published in *Chrysanthemum: Voices of the Taiwanese Diaspora, Volume II*, due out in 2020. Recently, Wiley was selected to participate in the *2020 Diaspora Dialogues National Mentorship Program*, where she will complete her first collection of short stories.

In September, Wiley volunteered to be one of the judges for the *2019 NVDPL Teen Short Story Contest* on the theme of "the future".

Among the many inventive tales, the winners were:



First place: *The Book of Knowledge* by Billy Park, featuring a futuristic dystopian Vancouver governed by an oppressive leader, and a few young renegades willing to challenge him.

Second place: *Girls of Smoke* by Annabel Li, a spine-tingling tale about a wicked curse, a tricky witch, and one girl's quest to break a terrible spell.

Third place: *Empire's End* by Yuri Jin-Talbot, a fast-paced dystopia about the effects of racism on a group of friends in a futuristic rendering of the United States.

Winners had their stories published, catalogued and added to the library collection to be checked out! Kudos to the **NVDPL** for nurturing the next generation of local talent!

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



Share your recent writing news by sending an email to editornswa@gmail.com.

100 WORD CHALLENGE

The challenge was to produce a story or poem, in **100 words or less**,
on the theme: **Talk to me**

Talk to me

Susan Koppersmith

bright October leaves
let loose by the sun
frolic round my feet
then
from behind
a furry gold dog
part Pomeranian, no collar
joins in the dance
I almost fall
he prances, stops, looks
waits with head cocked
waits for what?
numb
and not able to speak
I am afraid
he will follow me

he disappears behind a car
(gone forever, I hope)
suddenly he's there again
frantically whirling
around my knees

he stops, looks again
waits

head down
hunkering forward
with a quick look
to the left, then right
I cross
a busy
street



Winter Night

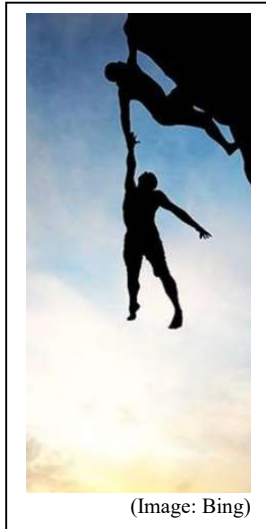
Marie Sadro

Talk to me at the end of day
When we linger by the fire,
Flames dancing with a peaceful crackle,
Talk to me gently,
Soft words like down,
Tell me you are happy to be with me.

A Promise to Keep

Karen Bower

"Quit stalling. Talk to me, Scumbag!"
Silence.
"I give up. Throw him in a cell. "
"Why, Sarge?"
"You deaf? He won't talk."
"OK if I try?"
"Take your best shot Constable Smartass!"
"Fine."
"Mind telling me why you won't talk to the
sergeant?"
"You crazy? I go in a cell if I do. Or if I don't."
"Have you done anything wrong. "
"No. But nobody listens."
"Try me."
"Really?"
"Promise. And I keep them."
"If I talk, he'll kill me."
"Not if I catch your brother first."
"How did you know?"
"He talked. To me."



(Image: Bing)

Talk to me
Elly S.

“Talk to me”, silked the operator
She didn’t sound like a berater, a man-hater
Her velvety voice glistened in my ears
quelling all my female fears

I opened up slowly at first
I swear I needed to rehearse
was it not for my queasiness
my butterflies of uneasiness

I would have asked her for a date
but it was too late
my loss of words in haste
were second-hand rate

Talk to me
Peter Woodbridge

From a bundle of old blankets peered a hooded face. “Got a light, sir?”

With civic pride, I contributed my toonie, receiving a surprisingly warm smile and thank you. A gentle, educated voice: someone fallen on hard times.

Around us, festive lights heralded time ahead with family and friends. A chance to tell them you love them: that they give meaning to your life. Happy faces of children and grandchildren.

“Doing well?” I saw his cap of coins.

“I don’t need the money so much,” he said. “It really feels good when people stop by and talk to me.”

Next 100 Word Challenge:
From a distance

- ✓ 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

Non-Fiction

That Lady *Rod Baker*

On July 18, 1817, two hundred and two years ago, a family in Winchester, England, attended a funeral to grieve the loss of their daughter and sister, a 41-year old spinster. The cause of her death is unknown. Her father had been a priest who retired early. The deceased lived in a small English village and chose to share a bedroom with her only sister until her death.

This appears to be the story of a short, unremarkable life. Yet, years later, so many people sought out her simple grave that a verger of Winchester Cathedral asked if there was “anything particular about that lady?” In an era when few women wrote books, *that lady* had published five novels, under two pseudonyms ‘by a lady’ or ‘by Miss Burney.’

If the author had married, no doubt she would have had less time to leave such a daunting literary legacy. Her views on marriage are contained in one of her books: “There is not one in a hundred of either sex who is not taken in when they marry.” Was that insight her reason for staying single or was a life dedicated to writing simply more attractive?

When recently visiting her house, I took a picture of Jane Austen’s writing desk. From this tiny launch-pad she sat by the window and wrote stories that still entertain the world two hundred years later.

In Jane’s house, which is preserved as a museum in the village of Chawton, Hampshire, a quill pen is provided for visitors to try. On average, I got about two words per dip. Her meagre tools of ink, quill pen, desk, and paper make her writing accomplishments truly remarkable. In *Persuasion*, Jane wrote, “It isn't what we say or think that defines us, but what we do.” I must remember this when I sit at my laptop, with a world of information at my fingertips and feel that writing is difficult. Regarding reading, Jane said, “But for my own part, if a book is well written, I always find it too short.”

So, let’s not delay, folks, and get writing on that “well written” book. ■



(Photos: Rod Baker. More photos from Jane Austen’s house available by request to rodvbaker@gmail.com)

Spoil the Rod and Spare the Child

John K. Nixon

“A little bird told me that you went wee wee in the garden today”. There was evident disapproval in my mother’s voice, as well as disappointment, as though I had somehow let the side down. I was mortified to hear that I had been spotted sprinkling the flower bed behind the rose bush. I was about six at the time and had been caught short while playing in the back garden of our house south of London. My embarrassment was however mixed with both anger and puzzlement. Anger that some innocent looking bird had actually ratted on me, and puzzlement as to how on earth my erstwhile feathered friend had been able to communicate with my mother! For some time after that the entire avian community was regarded by me with suspicion.

Beyond a reprimand from my mother and a promise by me that I would not repeat the offense I do not recall any further punishment. In our family such a misdemeanour was rated in the mid-level category. Punishment for less severe infractions was generally administered by my maternal grandmother who was living with us at the time. Failing to put away our toys after playing with them would invariably invite a sharp rap on the side of the skull with a thimble-tipped finger, or occasionally a well-placed and painful slap on the rear. For a lady in her sixties, Grandma had a surprisingly strong wrist.

For more serious transgressions my father would be called in to rule on a sentence and administer the punishment. This could involve loss of some privilege, or occasionally four strokes on the behind from a bamboo cane. A good example of this was the “rotten turnip caper”.

Our part-time gardener Mr. Parsons (known invariably to us children as “Mr. Parsnip”) had recently dug up a dozen or more rotten turnips and had tossed them onto the compost heap in one corner of the back garden. The pile of putrefying vegetables was soon discovered by my younger brother and me. Before long we had devised a contest to see who could lob the turnips furthest over the fence into the neighbour’s garden. For some ten minutes we watched in fascination as the mouldy, malodorous missiles arced gracefully over the fence to explode on impact in a burst of turnip chunks and putrid mush. Before long the neighbour’s immaculate green lawn was pockmarked with blotches of pulp and shards of smashed turnip.

Retribution when it came that evening was swift and effective. The irate neighbour had quickly traced the source of the errant missiles to our compost heap and had complained bitterly to my parents. As I was the oldest of us three children, I was deemed to be the ringleader and sentenced to four strokes on the posterior with my father’s bamboo cane. The next day, after my father left for work, I started hunting for the offending weapon. After some searching I discovered it concealed in a cupboard under the stairs. Triumphant I carried it into the garden and spent the next half-hour attempting to break it into pieces. This proved surprisingly difficult as I tried propping it between two large stones and jumping up and down on it. Finally I succeeded in snapping it into two pieces, which I surreptitiously hid in a trash can. To my untutored mind it was simply a case of “Spoil the rod and spare the child”.

In any case my act of defiance (you could call it my Cane Mutiny) was to no avail. For future punitive encounters my father switched to a leather belt! ■

Non-Fiction

Searching for a New Adventure

Patrick Hill

Now, as I approached the 5,300-tonne ship, it looked enormous, dark, and efficient with its on-deck handling gear, single red funnel, and large bridge with lines running everywhere. Little did I know that later in life I would be the development manager for a port in Chile to load massive 250,000-tonne iron ore freighters.

I slowed as I came to the ship's gangway and as my hand grasped the handrail, I looked across the length of *my* ship for the next two weeks and had the sudden realization that I was about to step into another world. I was about to leave my English life of 24 years behind. How would I react to all the new experiences? A shiver of excitement and apprehension surged through me as I imagined the new adventures I might encounter.

The two-week trip in the middle of winter was at times a new and wild experience. Luckily, I had 12 seasick pills which quelled my worst nausea as I managed to survive the winter gales. I spent much of my time on the bridge, listening to how they operated and navigated the ship by sextant readings as there was no GPS. Being winter, there were times when this small ship crashed forward into one sizable wave after another, and spray smashed and rattled on the bridge windows. Certain windows had revolving circular glass sections which threw the water aside and provided a clear view forward. The whole hull was often vibrating as if it was being shaken by some monster hand. I could feel the vibrations through my feet. As an engineer I found the experience disturbing and wondered how the ship designers could take into account the forces that the steel structures were being subjected to by the vibrations. The forces were strong enough to make the captain and crew curse from time to time.

Being the only passenger, I could eat in the officers' mess at the captain's table. He was a Geordie with a strong accent from Tyneside in northeast England, and it took me three or four days before I could grasp exactly what he said. I wondered if my grandfather had the same accent. Sometimes I played bridge with the captain, the first officer, and the chief engineer, which helped pass the time. Most of the day, I read or spent time on the bridge discovering how the first officer calculated where the ship was by taking sun-shots. Crew members might come by for a chat about their plans, girlfriends and happenings on the boat. Of course, we had a traditional Christmas dinner on board, but afterwards all the officers and I had to go into the galley and serve up dinner to the deck crew. With the violent motion of the ship, the scene in the galley was utterly chaotic as utensils, food, cutlery, and anything loose slid across counters or fell on the floor while we tried to keep our footing and fill the plates.

On my last night, as the ship ghosted into Port St. John on New Year's Eve 1956-7, I remember slipping onto the bridge, noticed by the captain but allowed to stay. It was an impressive sight standing on the darkened bridge watching the slow movement of the ship amid the maze of coloured navigation lights; I wondered what they all meant. Finally, she was berthed. It was time to go.

I said my thanks and goodbyes to all, grabbed my suitcase and walked in minus 22 degrees to the rail station to get my ticket to Toronto for the next adventure. ■



Poetry

Roker Pier

Stuart Newton

He walked the harbour pier all summer long and marvelled at the great idea of granite and railings, concrete and steel – to reach a lonely lighthouse standing at the very end.

It took a half-hour to begin at the beach-head and continue along a lovely parabolic curve, out to the North Sea; where everything was made strong and true, to impress us and inspire.

Seagulls rake the skies above the fishermen, young couples brave the wind to walk by hand-in-hand, as sailboats enter the scene with style and pride –

Everyone had a story for the pier, because it stood over time as beacon for the town; a lasting legacy of Victorian industry and a local work force; defying the winter storms, icy waters and the angry intent.

He finally reached the round walkway at bottom of the light and pondered new sightings of boats and sky; a sinking sun falls behind a curtain of blue-black cloud. He looked across this way-an-that, to become fearful and enthralled at such an enormity --
'How many fish you caught' he kept asking?
'What's biting out there tonight' he wondered!
'Where you from, not round here' they replied?

He was the man with all the questions, but none of the answers. He was the man who did not fish and did not belong; because he was not happy with the pier and its ramifications, not really safe far out into the sea's domain. For it was the natural world they encountered – full of strength and surprises, ancient but not wise, big and cruel...

He skipped across the paving stones coming back and began to plan a solitary evening again -- to regain his own strength, to re-find his purpose and his place.

The Last Gardener of Aleppo

Joyce Goodwin

(for Abu Wad and his son Ibrahim.)

In his Aleppo garden Abu Wad grew roses, this guardian of the flowers, this gardener. "Flowers help the world, there is nothing more beautiful".

These words he spoke as he nourished hope, even planting flowers on city roundabouts and public streets.

He kept planting between each blitz of barrel bombs, cluster bombs, precision missiles, dropped from the militarized sky, onto cratered ground below.

"The world belongs to ordinary people who rebuild what has been destroyed". He told his son Ibrahim. When citizens came to buy his flowers, it was an act of faith, a belief that life and beauty would return to their once beautiful, beloved city.

Abu Wad said he heard the violent explosive crescendo as a Beethoven symphony. One day a barrel bomb exploded near his garden and he died during that grand finale. Bloodied roses, crushed by steel, shrivelled into ruined ground, velvet petals seeped outrage, as word of the death of Abu Wad, gave voice to universal grief for the last gardener of Aleppo.



Poetry

Scam

Elly S.

A giant surf-like wave engulfment
pushin', downin', suffocation', drownin'
Oscillating waves of sadness
cascading down my face like a waterfall.

This recent incident called 'scam'
unsuspecting, stressed, and late-night hours
They deploy secrecy, time pressure, and emotions
Me, dealing with after-effects of visionary fog
energy draining from my body and soul
takes me away from writing Toastmasters Rant
plus other important tasks
Day after, shock and depression sets in
Sitting like a lump on a log soaking rays of light peeking amidst clouds
and shades of green to soothe me
gentling, easing my Spirit, slowly
No anger, no frustrations, just 'blah' presence, blah blob
No washing dishes or laundry or even self
Staring with wide and at times teary eyes into the ethers
Thank God for privacy of a quiet street!
If I swear due to passion, the edge being anger
I rant for injustice, inequality, and stupidity
all fairly equal on the balance scales
I rant for intolerance and bigotry
for two-faced cowardice and common sense-less
Who the F*** claimed common sense common?!
I rant for lack of respect of youth to elders
or at least those of age as parents like me
Whatever happened to my generation's values
decrepit, fallen by the wayside
awashed and wasted on oceans' floors
I rant for the sorrow in my heart is troubled by tomorrow
if today is what it is

My spirit has to kick back, punch, defend...why?
against all this unfairness, this un-just-ness
Poetry or rap may soften the blows
but my heart grieves
seems somewhat hardened
by no narrow escape
from those houndsters
Wounds festering raw and deep like infected pus
Why am I treated like a criminal?!
Oh yeah! The 'Criminal *Justice* System'
Justice for the criminals, not me!

Japanese Fan

Marie Sadro

Girl with ebony eyes
And butterfly waist,
Fluttering a fan,
What is your fate?

The gentle world of sunsets,
Coral clouds, quaint lovers
Walking side by side
Under cherry blossoms
And trilling birds
Put there by artist's hand?

Is it your magic fan-world
That keeps you entranced
As you flutter it at will
With your dove-like hand?

Or is it yonder world
Beyond your bamboo screen
With its winds and rugged hills,
Roaring surf and broken ships,
Wicked men, sly women,
Love, hatred and death,
That makes you so still?

And can you escape
Into your fan-world at will?



(Image: Bing)

Bulletin Board

Creative Journaling for Self Care

Sunday February 23, 2020

TIME: 1:00PM-6:00PM

AGES: YOUTH TO ADULT

INSTRUCTOR: NICOLLE NATTRASS

We all have within us the ability to practice self-care through journaling. This Creative Journaling for Self-Care workshop will show you how to tune into your truth, find clarity, and experience the joy and beauty in your daily life. You will be guided through writing exercises that will nurture your spirit and re-connect you with yourself. No writing experience necessary, and you will not be asked to share your writing unless you want to. Writing materials are included in your registration fee.

Registration: <https://northvanarts.ca/education/creative-journaling-for-self-care/>

Writing Your Life: Find Your Stories

CityScape Community ArtSpace

Sunday March 1, 2020

TIME: 2:00PM-4:00PM

AGES: YOUTH TO ADULT

INSTRUCTOR: SARAH TURNER

In this interactive 2-hour workshop, we will spend time exploring where stories come from, what makes a good story, and how to find what it is you really want to write about. We will use writing prompts and other tools to bypass the inner critic and help you uncover your stories waiting to be told. We will also talk about the importance of keeping a writer's journal. Please bring a notebook and a pen and be prepared to do some writing.

Registration: <https://northvanarts.ca/education/writing-your-life-find-your-stories/>

Attention: Poets & Volunteers

Poets Corner

(formerly Poetic Justice), a volunteer-run collective that has been running continuously for over nine years, is looking for a small group of willing and caring poetry enthusiasts to continue Poets Corner and the monthly reading series at Massy Books in Vancouver.

For information, please contact

james@poetscorner.ca

www.poetscorner.ca



North Vancouver District Public Library

invites all interested **young writers grades 8-12** to attend NVDPL's monthly writing group, which meets in **Lynn Valley on the third Thursday of each month from 6:00-7:15pm.**

Email Jessie @ hawkesj@nvdpl.ca with questions!

The [NSWA Facebook page](#) is up and running! Check it out for upcoming NSWA events, information of interest from other literary groups, and notices of member book launches and readings. It's a great place for our members to publicize their latest writing news. Several outside groups have already contacted our members through it!

Do you have something to share on our NSWA Facebook page? Please send it (edited and ready to copy/paste) to Janine at janinecross@shaw.ca. 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.)

Executive 2019 - 2020

President (and Director)

Sonia Garrett

Vice-President (and Director)

Rod Baker

Secretary (and Director)

Vacant

Treasurer (and Director)

Steve Rayner

Memberships and Member Relations

Carl Hunter

Library Liaison

Sonia Garrett

Speaker Coordinator

Janine Cross

Dare to be Heard Host

Mark Turriss

Newsletter Editor/Archivist

Wiley Ho

Publicity & Webmaster

Kelly Hoskins

Writing Contest Coordinator

Doug MacLeod

Members At-large

Christine Gowan, Barbara Reardon

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



I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way (s)he handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights.

– Maya Angelou

(Image: pixabay)

Events Calendar

January 6 *Dare to be Heard*
January 20 *NSWA General Meeting with
guest speaker Jean Teillet*

February 3 *Dare to be Heard*
February 24 *NSWA General Meeting with
guest speaker CC Humphreys*
February 29 *NSWA Writing Contest Deadline*

March 1 *Newsletter submission deadline*
March 2 *Dare to be Heard*
March 16 *NSWA General Meeting with
guest speakers Linda
Demeulemeester and Janine Cross*

April 6 *Dare to be Heard*
April 20 *NSWA General Meeting with
guest speaker Aislinn Hunter*
April 24-25 *North Shore Writers Festival*

May 4 *Dare to be Heard*
May 25 *NSWA General Meeting with
guest speaker Tilar Mazzeo*

June 1 *Dare to be Heard*
June 15 *Year-End Wrap Up Party (TBC)*

The Last Page

Cathy L. Scrimshaw

It's another New Year, and we're so lucky to be writers and members of the NSWA.

Why?

We live in tumultuous times. On the political front, we have ultra-nationalist interests—the kind that have caused massive damage in the past—again becoming vocal and visible, even seizing power democratically. Economic disparities, both within and between countries, are widening rather than disappearing. On the evening news, we hear stories of intolerance, corruption, despair and fear—fear of change, fear of anyone different, fear of what the future might bring. Then there is climate change, and all the dire warnings from scientists about what price future generations might pay if we don't start working toward cleaner energy, now.

And that is nowhere near a complete list of all the issues facing individuals, nations and the world community.

But there is a flip side to all that negativity.

We seem to be on the cusp of real, positive change, fuelled by both grassroots groups and large organizations. I'm thinking of Greta Thunberg and her growing movement of youth for the environment. She has captured the hearts and minds of young and old with her determination and courage; maybe, because of her and the people she inspires, governments around the world will

begin to act as well as pay lip service to climate issues.

I'm also thinking of the humanitarian groups whose members voluntarily walk into danger to help others. Doctors Without Borders, who move medical mountains to heal the sick and contain horrific diseases under conditions most of us will, hopefully, never have to face ourselves. World Vision and Plan International, who match sponsors with children in Third World Countries to give them a fighting chance at a better life. I've been a foster parent with Plan for over four decades now, and I can personally attest that it really does make a difference. Then there is Red Cross, in all its incarnations in many different countries and religions, who are always one of the first on the ground when help is needed in a disaster zone.

On the local level, search and rescue teams, community policing volunteers and people who freely give of their time to local service and not-for-profit groups—like our own NSWA executives—are all part of the solution to society's ills.

And that is by no means a complete list of all the people who give their time and energy to help create a better world.

So, with all its problems, the world is still a beautiful place, with so much to be thankful for. You don't have to look far to see evidence of that—the soft glow of a sunrise or sunset on a clear day; the visual poetry of a bald eagle soaring over Burrard Inlet or Howe Sound; the glitter of frost on a cold winter morning. Sit on a park bench or in a

coffee shop and watch the parade of people go by: happy and hard-working parents with children full of innocence and potential; at walkers and their dogs, revelling in the sheer joy of being outdoors; at retired seniors, relaxing with friends and neighbours, enjoying their hard-earned leisure time.

But who knows what lies beneath the surface? What secrets can be unearthed with a little imagination and time, or what a little research can discover? What stories can be woven with such rich and colourful threads?

So much material for a writer to work with! We can do whatever we want with it. We can write articles on politics, ecology, humour, animals. We can write fiction or non-fiction, short stories, novels or trilogies. We can use our writing to highlight both the good and the bad in our world, to educate and entertain. We can champion success, challenge destructive forces, celebrate both differences and similarities, show the strength of the human spirit alongside its frailties—and we have the NSWA to help and support us along the way.

Now, don't you feel lucky? So, let 2020 be a great year for you and your writing—and a Happy New Year to all! ■



(Image: Bing)

*Write
for the
love of it.*





Check us out!

 North Shore Writers Association

 @nswriters

North Shore Writers' Association
www.nswriters.com

- ★ Join a welcoming community of writers!
- ★ Receive info about upcoming writing events!
- ★ Membership only \$40 per year!

Sign up at a meeting or send cheque for \$40 and application form to:
 NSWA
 Box 37549 Lonsdale East, North Vancouver, BC V7M 3L3

Benefits of membership:



Meetings and Guest Speakers

3rd Monday of every month (except Dec, July, Aug) 7:00 - 8:45 pm
 3rd Floor meeting room, NV City Library
 Network with other writers in your community!
 Guest speakers on topics of interest to writers!

Dare to be Heard

1st Monday of each month 6:30 - 8:45 pm
 2nd floor conference room, NV City Library
 Read your work (prose or poetry) to supportive listeners.
 Not a critique group but enthusiastic support is provided.

Quarterly Newsletters

Get beautiful newsletters with member stories, writing news, book launches and reading events. Exchange writing tips and celebrate local writing!

Community Events

NSWA participates in the Writing with Writers Series and the Annual North Shore Writers Festival

Membership Application

Full name:

Email address:

Phone number:

NSWA Mandate

The North Shore Writers' Association is a fellowship of writers at all stages of writing from novice to professional, published and unpublished. It is a registered non-profit association dedicated to nourishing the literary community through teaching and sharing of skills.