



No. 14: March 2019

Upcoming Meetings

March 18

General Meeting with
Guest Speaker
Julie Salisbury

April 15

General Meeting with
Guest Speaker
Shauna Paull

May 27

General Meeting with
Guest Speaker
kc dyer

June 17

Year-end potluck social
Silk Purse

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

Put simply, we are writers. Whether writing as a hobby or professionally, we all put word after word after word down on paper. It can be a solitary pursuit. However, for twenty-five years, the North Shore Writers Association has brought like-minded wordsmiths together. Take a look at the talent and variety in each newsletter. You'll see how many creative minds there are in this little corner of heaven. Our aim is to nourish this literary community through the teaching and sharing of skills. So, let's see how we are helping each other on our writing journeys.

Essentially, every writer is sole proprietor of her/his endeavours. We each have a special job title, CHIEF CREATIVE. We develop our own style, choose our genre and search for our voice. Come to our General Meetings and hear how authors have carved out their creative space. Shauna Paull is sure to challenge us during April's Poetry Month. She's inspirational in her willingness to take risks. How many of us would attempt to publish a book with no page numbers, no capital letters and no titles to our poems? Then in May, kc dyer returns to motivate us with

tales of her perseverance and successful novel writing career.

Next, we're our own DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS. In order to improve we must challenge ourselves, learn new skills and step outside our comfort zones. The Writing with Writers series will help you roll your sleeves up and get writing. Why not try your hand at braiding, the skill of combining multiple strands of narrative into a powerful piece of creative non-fiction with Joan Boxall?

Don't forget your role as MARKETING OFFICER. Where can you find your audience? Do people still read? Is anyone out there? Come along to the North Shore Writers Festival to hear our panel discussing how they got their work out into the world.

Finally, we're our own ENTERTAINMENT OFFICER. All work and no play would make us a very dull group. Don't forget to join me at The Silk Purse for our year-end gathering. Together, let's celebrate our successes.

There's so much happening. Join in and make the NSWA part of your creative journey. ■



A Note from the Editor

“Hello, sun in my face. Hello you who made the morning and spread it over the fields. Watch, now, how I start the day in happiness, in kindness.”

On January 17th of this year, I happened to be reading *Upstream, Selected Essays* by Mary Oliver. I remember the date because later that day I heard on the news that she had died. I felt a jolt run through my body and then sadness. Even though I’d never had the pleasure of meeting the late, great American poet, she’s touched countless lives, with her words and her philosophy on life and writing.

I’ve heard Mary Oliver described as a poet for the layperson. This seems apt to me since I neither read nor write much poetry. But I am drawn to her poems and her lean prose – always incisive and vibrant with scenes of nature, life’s goodness and – despite a traumatizing early life – reasons to be joyful.

Whenever I’ve cast about with my own writing, gotten frustrated and slammed my notebook shut, sighing, “What’s it all for?”, Mary Oliver’s words have comforted and brought me back to my own work.

We writers experience bouts of writer’s block, negativity and sometimes even desperation. Writing is challenging work, no doubt about it. As we near spring, the season of renewal, I will let Mary Oliver remind us all of why we write:

“I decided very early that I wanted to write. But I didn't think of it as a career. I didn't even think of it as a profession... It was the most exciting thing, the most powerful thing, the most wonderful thing to do with my life.”

Write on, everyone,
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.

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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 600 words) are discouraged.
- Member writing that appears in the NSWA newsletter is eligible for submission to the NSWA writing contest.
- 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 or the NSWA.

Upcoming Meetings and Guest Speakers

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*.

Monday
April 15

**Meeting plus Guest
Speaker Shauna Paull**



Shauna has worked extensively with migrant and refugee women in areas of labour and mobility rights, poverty alleviation and legislative reform. Her latest work is published in *Forcefield: 77 Women Poets of British Columbia* (mothertongue, 2013) and is forthcoming in a global women’s anthology out of Washington, DC, in the spring of 2019.

In April, Poetry Month, Shauna will lead us through a series of exercises designed to help us access the impulse to act for the common good and to translate those impulses into meaningful poetry.

Shauna Paull is a poet, educator and community advocate. She completed an MFA in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia in 1999. Since then, she has led creative writing workshops at the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts in Deer Lake Park, Burnaby and the Emily Carr Institute of Arts and Design.

Monday
May 27

**Meeting plus Guest
Speaker kc dyer**



One of the best parts of being a writer is the chance to hit the road in the name of research. Author kc dyer has been doing just that for more than a decade, and she’s coming to NSW to share the fruits of this experience with you.

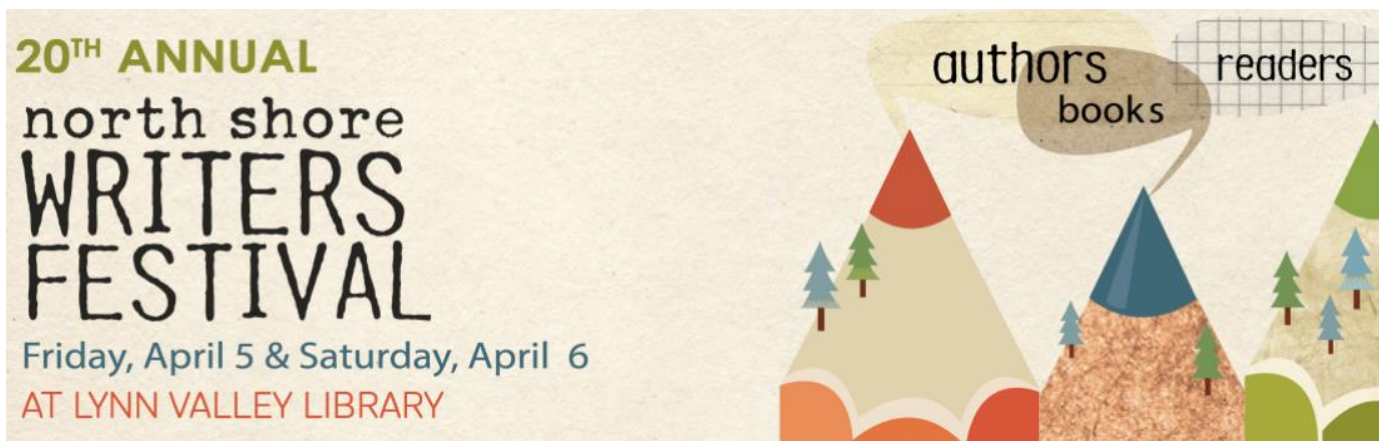
Where to go? What to pack? Who to travel with? What can you deduct? Pack up all your questions about peripatetic pen-smithery and kc will do her best to steer you in the right direction!

kc dyer is the author of several books for teens and adults, including *A Walk Through a Window*, *Ms. Zephyr's Notebook*, and the *Eagle Glen trilogy*.

She resides in the wilds of British Columbia in the company of a wide assortment of mammals, some of them human. Visit her at kcdyer.com.



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



It's time to celebrate! The 20th North Shore Writers Festival is just around the corner, and there's an amazing line-up of presenters for this commemorative year. Once again, the NSWA will open the Saturday programme with a panel presentation, and many of our members are showcasing their writing in the Local Authors Book Fair. Here's a taste of what the festival has in store. For a complete schedule of festival events, visit <https://northshorewritersfestival.com/schedule/>

Literary Quiz Evening - Friday April 5

Put together a team and test your literary knowledge. Register your team at nswftrivia@gmail.com.

North Shore Writers' Association Panel Presentation: Finding Your Audience Saturday April 6, 10:00 – 11:30am (with Q&A time)

You've spent years honing your skills, months drafting and re-drafting, weeks editing and re-editing. All you need now is an audience. How do authors find their readers and how do readers find new authors? There are many paths leading to publication. Come and join Mahtab Narsimhan, Rod Baker and Wiley Ho as they share their successes and challenges in getting their editorial articles, short stories, non-fiction and fiction works out into the world. This presentation is a must for readers who want to find exciting new work and writers who have a book, story or poem waiting to be sent into the world.

The Writers Café 1:00 – 2:30pm (TBC)

This is your opportunity to sit down with Mahtab, Rod and Wiley over lunch and talk about all things related to the world of writing and publishing. Come and chat with our panelists from the NSWA's morning presentation and learn more about how they took their work from the very first page to the finished, published piece. Lunch will be provided. Bring your questions and comments, and prepare to relax and enjoy the break between events.

Local Authors Book Fair and Marketplace 12:00 noon – 4:00pm

Come and visit our local authors. This is a great place for established and aspiring authors to network with other writers and the reading public.

Writers & Readers Reception

Plan to stay right to the end. Join presenters, attendees, festival organizers and volunteers for refreshments at the Writers & Readers Reception – featuring music, door prizes and the announcement of the winners of the 23rd North Shore Writers' Association Writing Contest.

See you there!

20th Annual North Shore Writers Festival Panelists



Mahtab Narsimhan is the award-winning (Silver Birch Fiction Award, 2009) author of *The Third Eye*, a fantasy-adventure based in India and the first book in the Tara Trilogy.

The Tiffin, based on the dabbawallas of Mumbai, received critical acclaim and was shortlisted, among others, for the SYRCA, MYRCA and Red Maple Fiction Awards.

Mission Mumbai and *Looking for Lord Ganesh* were published in Spring 2016 by Scholastic Inc. and Lantana Publishing, respectively.

Her latest novel, *Embrace The Chicken*, was published by Orca Book Publishers in January 2019.

Mahtab lives in Vancouver and is deeply committed to representing diversity in her stories. For more information, please visit her website at www.mahtabnarsimhan.com. You can also connect with her via Twitter @MahtabNarsimhan



At age 16, **Rod Baker** left home to join the merchant navy, and at 21 migrated to Canada. He worked on the tugboats, but in December 1968 the tug he was working on hit a reef in the Haida Gwaii Islands, was crushed by the barge it was towing, and sank. He decided to find employment ashore, and worked as a boatbuilder, marine repair shop owner, psychotherapist, and ran two non-profit mental health organizations.

Since retiring, he became interested in writing and has self-published three books: *Constant Traveller*, *I Need My Yacht by Friday*, and *Where is Belize?* A fourth book is underway.



Wiley Ho was born in Taiwan. Her family immigrated to Canada when she was 8 years old. Wiley identifies herself as Generation 1.5, inhabiting that curious place between the here and there-ness of two countries. She is working on a collection of short stories based on her Taiwanese-Canadian childhood.

Professionally, Wiley works as a Technical Writer. She also writes weekly articles for *Active Living*, the blog of the North Shore Recreation and Culture Commission, covering topics from fitness and wellness to everyday heroes in the community. Check out the blog at [NVRC Active Living](http://NVRCActiveLiving.com).

This is Wiley's third year with the North Shore Writers' Association where she is their current Newsletter Editor.

Camp NaNoWriMo Writing Workshops!

March 26, April 3, April 23 and May 8

Capilano Library, 6:00pm – 7:00pm

Drop in! Call 604-987-4471, ext. 8175 for information



Do you have a writing project that has been waiting for you to actually start it? Or a writing project that's stalled out? Think your life is too busy to commit to writing? Come join us to get the motivation, inspiration, and positive peer-pressure to help you go from *thinking* about writing to *actually* writing.

November's NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) is all about trying to finish an entire novel in a month – but April's Camp NaNoWriMo is the more laid-back, less intimidating version of the program. Pick any kind of writing goal you want and come to our write-ins for motivation and encouragement! Just bring your laptop and/or pen & paper and we'll provide the inspiration!

At the sessions:

- Write to optional writing prompts
- Hear from authors about their writing processes and advice
- Share our favourite bit of writing (optional)
- Make a commitment to our writing goals and next steps

Guest Authors

Rae Knightly is the author of *The Alien Skill Series*, a bestselling science-fiction and adventure series for middle-graders. She lives near Vancouver and is self-published. **John Mavin** is a past nominee for the Aurora Award and the Journey Prize, and the author of *Rage*. He's taught creative writing at Capilano University, SFU, and UBC, with *New Shoots*, and at the Learning Exchange in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. NSWA's own **Janine Cross** was voted by Library Journal as one of the top five fantasy novelists of 2005.

Camp NaNoWriMo dates: March 26, April 3, April 23 & May 8.

Adults, Teens and Tweens all welcome! Attend one or all sessions!

Drop in! Call 604-987-4471, ext. 8175 for information

NSWA Presents

One-Day Writing Retreat Saturday, May 4th!

Give your writing a boost. Dive into craft and write in a creative space with fellow writers.

Topic: Designing your character's arc (and choosing and maintaining POV). There will be plenty of time for writing and discussion too!

Facilitator: April Bosshard (bio below)

Date: Saturday, May 4th 10:00 - 4:00 (includes one-hour lunch)

Venue: Lions Bay (address will be provided upon registration)

Cost: \$50 (includes lunch and refreshments)

This event will likely sell out. Space is limited to 12 people. Register ASAP by emailing editornswa@gmail.com with subject line: Retreat Registration



DESIGNING YOUR CHARACTER'S ARC

Readers are mesmerized by a character's personal journey of transformation told through story. Story is about change. Characters embody change. And true change gives meaning to story. But developing an arc of change for a character is no easy task. It must be believable, compelling, and deftly interwoven with plot.

In this hands-on workshop, writers will examine their character's outer and inner desires, along with their underlying beliefs and values, in order to map out a story-worthy arc of growth.

We will cover: what a character arc is and how it is essential to character-driven stories; strategies to uncover the kind of core character material that gives depth and resonance to a story; and techniques for sketching out a character arc using four stages of development that ensure believability, momentum, and true change.

Additionally, this workshop will include a component on how to choose, compose, and maintain a consistent point of view for your character.



April Bosshard

April is a writer and story coach who works with writers around the world. Her keen awareness of story principles and deep understanding of the writer's craft sheds light on many of the complex issues writers face when it comes to story development and sticking to the writing process. She's presented at the San Miguel Writers Conference and various writing events in Paris, San Francisco, and Vancouver. More Info: www.deepstorydesign.com.

Writing with Writers

NVCL/NSWA *Writing with Writers* Workshops – North Vancouver City Library
Wednesday, June 5th 7:00 – 8:30pm

Braiding: The Power of Creative Non-Fiction (memoir, personal essay or poetry)

Presented by Joan Boxall,
NSWA member and author of *DrawBridge*



“You don’t really have a workable idea until you combine two ideas.” - Twyla Tharp

Have you ever struggled with balancing style and substance in your writing?

Creative Non-Fiction writing does the dance, as field founder Lee Gutkind calls it, inter-weaving scenes with factual information. Gutkind defines CNF as 'true stories, well told'.

Joan inter-weaves many layers in the true story of her and her brother's artful journey, and she'll share tips with participants, along with writing exercises, on how to braid your own CNF.

Bring pen and paper, or laptop, and be prepared to join in, as Joan Boxall, challenges, educates and inspires us.

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, starting at 6:30 p.m.**

Please email Mark Turris, at markth77@telus.net and he will make sure you have a spot on the readers' list.

Dare to share! See you there!

Upcoming sessions: 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



On February 23rd, the Vancouver Public Library downtown hosted Books Alive Publishing Fair. Authors, editors and publishers spoke and exchanged ideas on the current traditional, hybrid and self-publishing options available to writers.

Here is a summary of the big suggestions and tips from various speakers – applicable whether you're self-publishing or publishing traditionally:

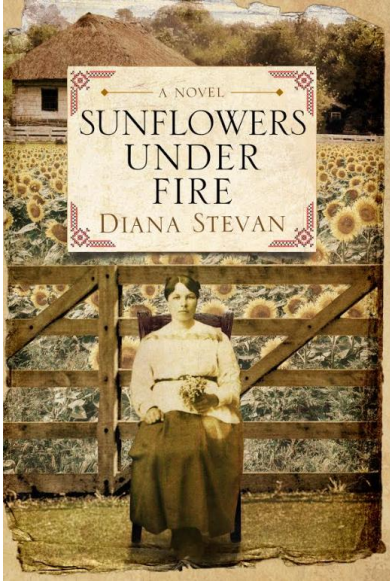
- Covers matter! Titles matter! Initial book sales are often correlated with catchy covers and titles.
- A good editor is worth every penny.
- Consider getting a literary agent.
- Think as an international writer – you can reach your reader wherever there is internet.
- Be flexible about your publishing platform – e-books sell well, and there is more than just Amazon out there!
- Indigo is a Canadian company that promotes Canada and BC books!
- Make it easy for your publisher – offer your ideas on how best to market your book, provide website/social media accounts
- If considering digital publishing, beware cross-border rules and ownership restrictions – read the fine print of the contract carefully!

Self-published authors, the Vancouver Public Library wants your books and ebooks! Find out more at <https://www.vpl.ca/indieauthors>

Check out BookNet Canada, a non-profit organization to serve the Canadian book industry. They offer the latest in industry trends: <https://www.booknetcanada.ca/>

BRAVO!

Congratulations to **Diana Stevan** who will launch **Sunflowers Under Fire** on May 7th. Diana is working on dates for a book tour in Greater Vancouver.



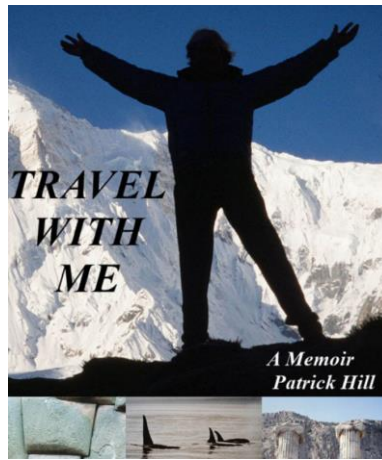
This family saga starts in 1915 and is based on the true stories of Diana's own grandmother. It tells the story of Lukia Mazurets, a Ukrainian farmwife, who delivers her eighth child while her husband is serving in the Tsar's army. Soon after, she and her children are forced to flee the invading Germans. Over the next fourteen years, Lukia must rely on her wits and faith to survive life in a refugee camp, the ravages of a typhus epidemic, the Bolshevik revolution, unimaginable losses, and one daughter's forbidden love.

Diana will be co-presenting on Indie Publishing 101 with JP McLean, an author from Denman Island, plus numerous writing workshops, at the **Creative Ink Writers Festival in Burnaby March 29-31. Details:** <https://www.creativeinkfestival.com>

In February Diana attended the **San Miguel De Allende Writers Festival** in Mexico, where she

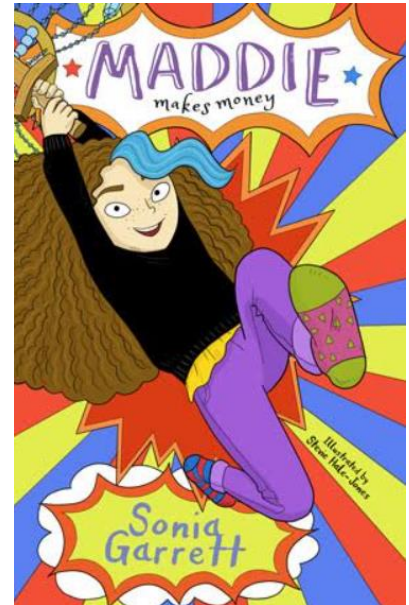
rubbed shoulders with some very notable writers, including Paul Theroux, Jennifer Clement, Adam Gopnik, Susan Orlean, and Sandra Gulland. This has already been a busy year for Diana!

Kudos to **Patrick Hill**, whose memoir and latest book **Travel With Me** has gone into second printing! Patrick has also been busy at the recent Vancouver International Boat Show, promoting his books **Explore the Alaskan Coast** and **How to Save Money When Buying a Used Boat**.



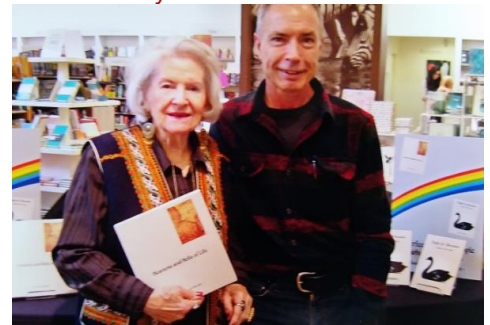
For more information go to: www.patrickhillcruising.com

NSWA President, **Sonia Garrett**, is pleased to announce the upcoming launch of the second book in the Maddie Series, **Maddie Makes Money**. Target audience 7 – 11 year olds, plus the young at heart. Come along and join in the fun: Friday April 26 at Lynn Valley Community Room (part of the library building, Lynn Valley Mall) 5:30 – 7:00pm



"Just finished Maddie...She's a great character. Just the right mix of winning and flawed. She's cheeky, adventurous, determined...and vulnerable. Great work Sonia. I loved it."
Hugh Jackman, Actor.

Congratulations to **Tove Petersen**, who held a successful book signing event on January 11th, 2019 at Indigo Books in West Vancouver, selling 15 books in only 2½ hours!



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

Write on!

100 WORD CHALLENGE

on the theme **The year was 2050**

Travelling to Mars **Rod Baker**

2050, arriving now, flashed the implant in my head
The message bold in golden font, right before my eyes.
I'd spent the voyage reconstituting, laying in my bed.
Took a pill to lift my sagging bits, tighten butt and thighs
A tonic to regrow my hair and de-wrinkle my skin
A potion to de-clog my brain and straighten out my toes,
A powder that would fix my flab, tuck my stomach in
But now I was in perfect shape, I didn't fit my clothes.
And haberdashers back on earth couldn't fix my woes.

Fast Food? **Cinda Morales**

In 1988, Jill got her license and headed to the drive-thru. She timed her visit on her Swatch: three minutes! Totally awesome!
In 2019, she parked in front of that same restaurant and ordered via her smartwatch. The app showed a wait time of 15 minutes. For fries and cola?!?
Then her watch beeped: "WARNING, sudden blood pressure rise."
So Jill exhaled like Darth Vader. And she head-bopped to Bohemian Rhapsody three times, until a carhop brought her takeout.
She wondered how long her order would take in the year 2050.

VACATEX **Carl Hunter**

The VACATEX gorps said we were late. They always do. We had arrived at the terminal in plenty of time for health and personality screening and questions related to political attitude. We'd chosen a De-stress Vacation and both my wife and I were looking forward to the relaxation. We knew that how and where our minds would travel was chosen by the VACATEX system while our bodies would be immobile in sealed environmental tubes; we'd be home in two weeks feeling mentally and physically refreshed. The year was 2050; we were making the most of it.

In 50 Years **Marie Sadro**

In 50 years life's much the same
America's business still will reign
Machines will improve in many ways
Robotics, computers will run our day
Humans in rich lands will have long life
With ill ones and Alzheimers on the rise
Democracy will turn into a media game
Where only billionaires can stake a claim
Our babies are born so helpless and small
How we raise them decides the future of all.

In 2050 **Wiley Ho**

In 2050 the list of jobs that used to occupy humans continued to grow: blacksmiths, lamp lighters, ice cutters, telephone operators, letter carriers, personal assistants, cashiers, translators, writers... "Writers," explained Master Ai to the kindergarten class, "were a curious breed of humans who chewed on lead pencils with faraway looks in their eyes, creating stories from scratch. But thanks to GPT-2*, humans are now free from that necessity." The android's bionic eyes swept the room and caught several children daydreaming. Far from being discouraged, with gazes shining out the window, their minds danced with new stories.

* GPT-2

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/ai-writer-disinformation-1.5030305>

Next 100 Word Challenge:

In for a penny

- ✓ Strictly 100 words max (excluding title, if any).
- ✓ Hyphenated words, contractions and acronyms count as single words.
- ✓ Inclusion of theme words 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 September 1, 2019 (Fall Newsletter)

Nonfiction

Confessions

Stuart Newton

After rereading some Charles Bukowski, the ugly bard from the streets of Los Angeles (1920-94) and his famous quotes; I wanted to make something of a statement, myself, about poetry/writing/publishing... and all the rest of it.

But, no, I don't want to meet-up with other writers, not even famous ones (unless I'm getting a leg-up) – because a lot of writing material is from a personal source – not to be passed round like teenage boasts. I find it degrading to sit around with coffee or drink and rubbish nibbles/tidbits in a smoky backroom corner, to glance at others, thinking to make friends or useful contacts (like in business)...

I prefer to sit at my coffee-time dreaming of somewhere else, to be someone else – because there is no writing persona and it's not normally a useful activity...

Bukowski refers to the great 'whore' of writing and there is something to this – because writing fiction and poetry is peddling something good and beautiful (language) in a way that is not practical or necessarily respectable -- it is peddled for pleasure, my own pleasure and maybe for others. Salons for writers are more like ante-rooms in a whore house; where people with various grades of interest gather for another 'go' at language, or sidle-up to any celebrity who might appear to help. There's lots of impotency about, flaccid ideas/talk; yet these same folk look to the ones who seem to have it – the daring, ego and conceit, desperation and hubris, to grasp at that nettle one more time...

'I don't write for money', I say, 'nothing like that, of course not'. But show me a story of big advances from publishers, how popular authors get rich an-famous and I will devour the copy like a college course. I have sworn to pursue 'real love and beauty, truth'... but show me a literary prize, royalties and select invites; I will forget my vows, my promises and follow the greedy phonies right out the door...

Of course, there's the idea of truth at stake, love-an-romance for the masses, humour and insight into our human situation – but not without a lot of hypocrisy and deceit, avarice and jealousy, ambition and treachery. You must have seen it, even in the minutia...?

'There is no competition, except against myself' I said; 'no winners or losers, don't you know'. But when I seek out comments upon my efforts, then I want a grade: 'seven out of ten' she says, 'there's a few errors in the text'. I want to rise above my pals and acquaintances, be seen ahead of my colleagues and to stand alone on a pedestal up high...

At work, on the street, at home, inside church – I'm a decent sort of guy who tries to say-an-do the right thing. But with my own submissions (writing) I desire to excel above others, to gain acclaim, prestige – and money. Someone once said to me, 'I'm going to get you a nice piece of paper, heavy and tinted, water-marked and type your name all over the page; that's what you want isn't it'? Of course I railed against this, strongly. But the idea is there, it has been out there since the beginning, when I first sent an awful bit of verse to a 'little' magazine. 'Self interest' is an unseen hand in the economy, wrote Adam Smith, and looks like it also drives the creative spirit. ■

CROCS IN COTTAGE COUNTRY

Alex Hamilton-Brown

Toronto can be like a sauna in August. That Monday morning in 2008 was no exception. The temperature was 33 Celsius when I climbed the wooden stairs to my film production office in an old brownstone building on Toronto's East-side.

I had just opened the window for some air when the phone rang. It was the thick guttural accent of Yuri Voronov, a Russian freelance cameraman with whom I had produced a couple of documentaries. Yuri's camera-work was excellent, even if his English took a bit of getting used to. He had come from Moscow to Toronto in 2005 and we had become good friends.

"Hi Yuri, you're back," I said. "How did things go in Jamaica?"

"You know I shoot pilot film about crocodiles," he replied. "Everything okay with filming, but now owners of croc farm have problem. They ship twelve crocodiles to Quebec Zoo, but bloody zoo cannot take them for two weeks. Now they are stuck at Toronto airport. They are in crates and suffer from heat. If we do not get them out of there, Mike, they will die."

I wasn't sure who he meant by 'we.' Without really thinking it through, I suggested, "Maybe, the Humane Society could take them for a short while?"

"I already try them," replied Yuri, "It would make big trouble. They only handle domestic pets.

Can you imagine small dogs and cats in same area with ten-foot crocodile?" I had to admit the image was not a pretty picture. "The crocs have Red Robson traveling with them," continued Yuri. "He take good care of crocs. He is expert." There was a pause on the line. "Mike, you have barn on your cottage property, no?" Straight away, I realized where this was going "You're not thinking of billeting these crocs on my place up north are you?"

"Why not?" replied Yuri. "Quebec Zoo pay all expenses. Red would be with them night and day."

In a moment, when my lack of judgment must have been bordering on derangement, I agreed to meet with Yuri and Red Robson at the airport.

The croc wrangler was a tall powerful looking man with short-cropped orange-coloured hair. I guessed he would be in his early thirties. He had a cheerful smile and spoke with a deep Texas drawl.

"These animals," said Red, "are in a bad way. If y'all agree, I'll bring the crocs to y'or place at night in my unmarked truck. I'll need yo' boys to help me unload the crates."

Call me crazy if you will. In a moment of rash impulse, I said, "What the heck. Why not? Let's do it!" So it was agreed that we would leave that night.

Red's vehicle arrived at my cottage just after 2:00 a.m. When I saw the white truck silhouetted against the black barn, I had an agonizing moment of doubt. Suppose one of the reptiles escaped into a nearby lake? I imagined the headline in the local Hastings Chronicle: *MONSTER SIGHTED IN SILVER LAKE. TERRIFIES LOCALS. RCMP INVESTIGATING.* I thought, *If the village folk were to hear that there were crocodiles on my property, this place would become a three-ring circus overnight.*

But it was too late to have thoughts like that. By 3:30 a.m., most of the crates were unloaded into the cool barn; their muzzles safely bound with wire and burlap. But when Red came to unload the last crate, he let out a long, drawn-out whistle. A pregnant female had laid a clutch of eight eggs inside the crate. Red took the eggs into the cottage and wrapped them in a thick warm blanket. Shortly after that, we were all sound asleep in our bunk beds. Later that afternoon, Yuri and I returned to Toronto.

It was two weeks before we got back to the cottage.

"So, how have things gone, while we were away?" I asked Red. "Jis' fine," he replied. Then, tilting his head, as if to recall; "Oh, there was one thing. While you were gone, a young kid came prying around the barn, said his name was Ray. "That'd be Ray Delaire," I said. Ray was a gangly sixteen-year-old from a neighboring chicken farm. He tended to be a nosey lad, almost to the point of harassment.

"One day," continued Red, "the kid was at the barn door, bendin' his neck, tryin' to adjust his eyes to the darkness. 'It's awful dark in there, he says. 'What's that funny smell?' "He was still tryin' to edge around me when I closed and padlocked the door. I figured I'd stop him in his tracks from snooping around again, so I says to him, A'm gonna level with you, son. A'm keepin' a few bodies in there, but, hey, they'll be gone in a few days. Then he looks at me with his mouth droppin' open, and gives me this scared-lookin' smile and skeddaddles off real quick. That's the last I saw of anyone until the cop arrived."

"What! the police have been here?" I gasped.

"Oh, it's okay," said Red. "The officer was just followin' up on some cockamamie story about there being dead bodies in a barn."

"What you tell him?" asked Yuri uneasily.

"Well, I figured the best way was the straight way," said Red. "So I says to him, look, officer, I've got rare and exotic animals in the barn. They're in transit to a Quebec Zoo. Then I shows him our animal farm brochure. He reads it, shakes my hand, an' says no worries man, 'an wishes me good luck."

Just then, I heard a high-pitched squawking sound coming from my bathroom. "Oh, that'll be the hatchlings," said Red. And there, in my bathtub, were three lively little baby crocs skidding around in an inch of water. Apparently, only three of the eight eggs had hatched.

That afternoon, Red got a call on his cell phone to say the Quebec Zoo was ready to take the crocs.

They have a saying in cottage country: All guests make us happy, some by coming, and some by going. Red was a great guy, but I must admit I was somewhat relieved to see his truck drive off down the highway. Keeping him company, on the passenger seat, were the three baby crocs, splashing and squawking in a basin all the way to their new home in Quebec. ■

Poetry

Long Goodbye

Martha Warren

Dad?

I find you in the armchair,
Staring straight ahead.
The blinds, too low, the bed, too straight.
Stack of books unread.

The name plate and memory box
Outside your bedroom door,
With photos and some trinkets -
You don't know them anymore.

Are there plaques or tangles?
The doctors can't say why.
I just comfort, reassure you.
Dementia is the long goodbye.

It takes you piece by piece,
Invisibly, with stealth,
My daughter says you're same, but
different,
More peaceful version of yourself.

My son, he mourns privately,
Black band around his heart.
His grandfather is dying, he says,
From the inside out.

I need a way to thank you,
To show I love you just the same;
That I'll remember how you were,
Though you don't know my name.

BRACKENDALE EAGLES

Joyce Goodwin

Icy winds whip the Squamish River,
churning white water rattles stones
along the banks, trees of crystal bone,
host hundreds of motionless birds, sculpted
it seems from the frozen limbs they inhabit.

Beneath the leaden sky, a silver thrashing
of salmon draws quickened eagle eyes;
then ravenous raptors spurred by hunger
and prehistoric memory, swoop with talons
curled, to claw the pink flesh of survival.



(Photo: Bing Images)

LANTERN

Stuart Newton

She was from China
and wore a new floppy hat all weekend --
at the hotel, downtown and out to the park
-- to say she was on holiday from her job
and her country.

Her smile was bigger than usual and her
footsteps quickened like a young girl.
But it looked sunny and warm in the photos.
She seemed happy, at ease in front of boats
in a harbour, at the café and with family.
Behind wonderful moments are many things
-- like journeys and work, mishaps and more.
Happiness-and-success are fraternal twins and rise like
mounds along our way, for all to see.

MARCEAU
The Violinist

Alex Hamilton-Brown

How firmly his chin holds fast
The instrument of spectral sound.
With surety of touch his fingers
Fly across imagined strings.

How gracefully his bow is bent,
And soundless sounds engage the ear.
A virtuoso miming notes
That only he himself can hear.

The internationally acclaimed mime artist, Marcel Marceau, died in 2007



Illustration: Adam Hamilton-Brown

Sunset

Wendy Alden

Silently eloquent,
Graceful, tangible.
A dignified farewell
To day's end.

Slowly sliding away
Despite the beauty.
Colours bright, subtle;
Touching eyes, mind, heart.

Glowing orange ball
Soul-filled with warmth.
Dipping suddenly gone
Then only a memory.

Last seconds,
Holding off the dark.
Timelessness;
With shades of sunset
Lasting somehow forever



Photo: Wendy Alden

Current Events

The following article is in response to John Lesow's "Marijuana is Now Legal in Canada", which appeared in the January 2019 newsletter.

Pot Positive *Rod Baker*

In the last newsletter, an article appeared which maligned the decriminalization of pot. For the sake of balance, I would like to point out some positive aspects of selling pot through government sanctioned stores.

1. Banning substances is often done from a moral perspective, such as the women's temperance movement in the US, which banned alcohol. As an illicit substance, fortunes were made and it is generally accepted that this gave rise to the Mafia. Alcohol is legal, but also lethal. If you go into a hospital emergency room and ask what the most dangerous drug, they will tell you, at least until the recent fentanyl crisis, that it is alcohol. Nobody smokes a joint then goes home and beats up their spouse or gets into a street fight outside the bar.
Moral perspectives about drug use are allowed, it's a free country, but it is more expensive when the moralists are running things. The Harper government was against free injection sites because people injecting themselves to feel good was "wrong." However, injection sites save tax dollars by preventing the spread of aids, Hepatitis B and C.
2. When people buy pot from a government approved store, the shopkeeper will NOT be bugging them to buy more expensive, dangerous, and addictive drugs like heroin or crystal meth.
3. In my work as a drug counsellor many clients use marijuana to help them overcome their opioid addiction. Obviously, a lesser evil.
4. Some people breath in marijuana as a medicine. Marijuana is smoked for nausea, vomiting, an eye disease called glaucoma, to increase appetite, to reduce swelling of mucous membranes like those inside the mouth, for leprosy, fever, epilepsy, dandruff, depression, anxiety, sleep, haemorrhoids, HIV/AIDS, obesity, Parkinson's disease, asthma, bladder infections, cough, nerve pain, cancer pain, fibromyalgia, and multiple sclerosis. It is also inhaled to reduce the chance that the body rejects a kidney if it has been donated from another person. In addition, marijuana is smoked to reduce symptoms of Lou Gehrig's disease. <https://www.webmd.com/vitamins/ai/ingredientmono-947/marijuana>

My concern about decriminalising marijuana is that it has been found to lower the IQ of teenagers. Studies are underway to see if this is temporary or permanent.

Walls

Gerhard Winkler

Recent news told us about another Wall project. I wonder if current would-be builders of such projects attended history lessons when they went to school, if they went to school. They might have learned the following:

One of the oldest and best-known walls in the world is called The Great Wall, the Great Wall of China. It is so big it can be seen from outer space. The construction was started in about 260 B.C. with the majority of the existing wall being constructed by the Ming Dynasty from 1368 – 1644. This bull work was supposed to protect the Empire from invading hordes from the North and all other foes surrounding the country. As history has recorded, it did not succeed too well and is now nothing but a tourist attraction with a length of about 50,000 km, equal to twice around the world. I have difficulties imagining the size of that structure.

There was another wall dating back to the Bronze Age around 1200 B.C. It happened during the Trojan War when the Greeks tried to defeat the city of Troy. The Greek army could not get past the wall protecting the city of Troy. In their wisdom they built a giant wooden horse and left it standing in front of the gates of the city. They then proceeded to board their ships pretending to leave. The people of Troy considered the horse to be something to be revered and they dragged the wooden horse inside their city. At night hidden Greek soldiers came out of the horse and opened the gates from the inside. The Greek army entered and defeated Troy. In the end the wall did not protect the invaders. Remember, beware of Greeks bearing gifts!

Other walls in a more recent history were built to keep potential enemies at bay. France constructed a concrete fortification facing Switzerland, Germany, and Luxemburg between 1930 and 1940. It was not continued along the Belgian Border to the English Channel in order not to offend Belgium. It was named the Maginot Line. It proved useless to protect France from the German invasion in 1939 as the attackers broke through Belgium and faced the Maginot Line from behind. Too bad, they could not turn around their guns.

A similar fate befell the German fortification facing France in the West. It was known as the Siegfried Line, built during the 1916/17 period and stretching some 500 km. It was continued before the Second World War and upgraded but could not stop the advancing armies of the Allied forces.

More recently during the Cold War the East German Government, with support of the Soviet Union, built a wall to stop all traffic between West Berlin and East Germany and East Berlin. This happened on August 15, 1961. Many people were still able to cross, defying the barrier while 139 people died trying. The wall was taken down in 1989.

These are some of the countless examples of the futility of walls. No wall can keep all people in or out of whatever they were constructed for. During the Middle Ages cities and townships tried to protect themselves with enormous walls all over the world. Books and stories were written about invaders and defenders.

So, what can I say, somebody is trying to build a wall again. As mentioned above, some leaders never heard about all the other wall projects that turned out to be a waste of money.

There are other walls I could talk about, like trade walls, fire walls, emotional walls etc.

I suppose the most famous wall at this moment is the pending Trump Wall and history will tell if it will do what it hopes to do.

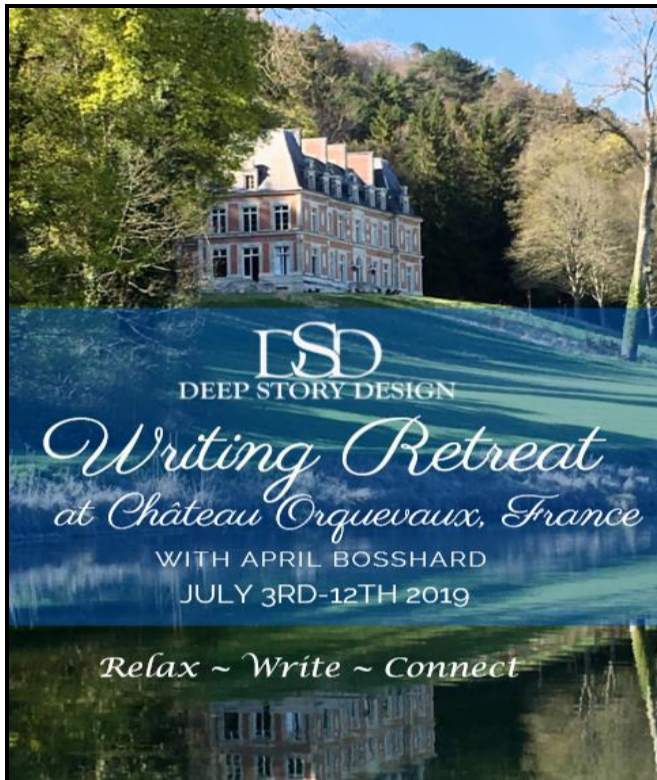
Member Bulletin Board

The Member Bulletin Board is a space and opportunity for you to network with your fellow NSW members. Email your suggestions to editornswa@gmail.com (or by post to NSW PO Box 37549 Lonsdale East, NV V7M 3L3)

the
Creative Ink
FESTIVAL for writers & readers

Don't miss the Creative Ink Festival **March 29-31** at the Delta Hotel in Burnaby:
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***A hearty thank-you to all our
volunteers for their dedication and
hard work!***



Piano Hands © Wendy Alden

Events Calendar

<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 4</i>	<i>NSWA One-Day Writing Retreat</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>
<i>July / August</i>	<i>Summer break</i>
<i>September 9</i>	<i>Dare to be Heard</i>
<i>September 16</i>	<i>NSWA Annual General Meeting</i>

The Last Page

Cathy L. Scrimshaw

Writing is hard work. Outlining, writing, re-writing, editing – all are necessary before your cherished creation is ready to publish. Then what are you faced with?

The Dreaded Public Reading.

The cliché is that writers are introverts. We're not good in front of a group. That's probably true for most of us. But then, there are authors who just *shine* at public speaking. They exude confidence and poise in front of an audience. So how do they do it? Well, it turns out there are some tricks of the trade you can practice if you want to enhance your public reading skills.

JJ Lee, www.jj-lee.com, award-winning journalist and author of the memoir *The Measure of a Man: A Father, A Son and A Suit*, is an expert presenter and public reader. He shared with me his top tips for authors to consider when approaching The Public Reading (no longer to be Dreaded if you follow JJ's advice). Here they are:

Tip #1: Read your work out loud to yourself first. If you bore yourself, change the text to one that 'reads' better out loud. Not every phrase that works in print works in spoken form. Optimize your choice of readings for audience enjoyment. You can do this by simply reading a different passage, or by editing the text to produce a 'reading' version that is slightly different from the printed, published version.

Tip #2: Visualization. See what you're saying. "Become" your

characters as you are reading. Change your voice to meld with your character or fit your descriptive passage. It will give verisimilitude to your presentation.

Tip #3: Now add visual interest to let your audience see your story as well. If a character is waving to another, give a little wave as you read. If someone in your book is leaning into the wind, lean slightly. If a character points at the sky, point to the ceiling. An author who stands ramrod straight and still and reads in a monotone is better at promoting naps than book sales.

Tip #4: Read slower out loud. Don't read quickly to cram more words into your time frame. If you make a mistake – slurring a phrase or a word – *don't* stop and apologize. That interrupts the flow, and also the audience's attention. Just reread the phrase, as if you meant to do that all along, and keep going.

Tip #5: Use movement (in addition to Tip #3) to add more visual interest. Move around the room as you talk or read, even if you only cover a small area of floor space. This does take practice, so do this at home at first. If you pay attention to seasoned readers, you'll notice most of them do this when they can.

Tip #6: Learn your microphone. Make sure you know how to adjust it. Touch it, in front of the audience, when you first begin your presentation. Then, if you have to adjust it in the middle of your talk or reading, it won't be as jarring to the group. Use a hand-held mic.

Learn to read with one hand and hold the mic with the other. This allows you to move around. Get comfortable with a mic that is attached to a cord – if you become proficient at moving around with a cord, you can flip it and add some dramatic flair to your movements.

Tip #7: Don't go over your allotted time. This is the rule most often broken. If you are given 5 minutes, by all means read for 4 minutes, but don't read for 7 or 8, or worse, longer. No one ever complains the reading was too short – but we all know what happens when readings drone on and on. Rehearse at home to make sure you stay within your time frame.

So, there you have it - Author Reading Tips from one of the best. It seems like a lot to think about, but it's all achievable with practice. Now, make sure you come to this year's North Shore Writers Festival, April 5 & 6, to listen to some great writers and see JJ Lee in person. See you there! ■

