



No. 23: June 2021

## Upcoming Meetings

**June 21**

Year-end Celebration!  
Details on p. 3

**September 20**

Annual General Meeting  
Election for 2021-22 Board  
Mix and Mingle

**October 18**

General Meeting with  
Guest Speaker  
Karen Lam

**November 15**

Holiday Social

Starting with the AGM, our meetings will be in person at the NV City Library – provincial public health guidelines permitting!

*Check out our beautiful website for regular updates and past newsletters!*

[www.nswriters.org](http://www.nswriters.org)

### Hyperlink tip!

If your computer does not open hyperlinks, copy and paste the website address to your browser.

# Write On!

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

## President's Message

*Janine Cross*

This newsletter wraps up the NSWA's 2020/21 season, and what an incredibly full and successful season it has been! We launched a new website, met monthly via Zoom and listened to some great speakers, sponsored a panel session at the North Shore Writers Festival, held a writing contest that received entries from across Canada, filled four newsletters, hosted an interactive writing workshop and Saturday morning write-ins online – and increased our membership by 20%.

At our monthly speaker events, we presented award-winning and best-selling authors, poets, journalists, and scriptwriters.

None of this would have been possible if not for our members, whose enthusiasm and loyalty make the NSWA a vibrant community.

Special thanks to those who volunteered this year as Board Directors: Rod Baker (Vice-president & go-to-guy for new member inquiries); Christine Cowan (Secretary & Contest Committee member); Steve Rayner (Treasurer extraordinaire); Carl Hunter (Member Communications & Liaison), Sonia Garrett (Library Liaison); Elly Stornebrink (Dare-To-Be-Hard host); Wiley Ho (Newsletter Editor); Kelly Hoskins (Webmaster & Contest Committee member), Doug MacLeod (Write-in host & Contest Coordinator); and

Barbara Reardon (Director-at-large & Contest Committee member).

The dedication of our volunteer Executive members is matched only by their professionalism and unflagging good cheer. At the risk of not mentioning someone who has been a great support behind-the-scenes, I'd also like to thank Cathy Scrimshaw for her sparkling articles on The Last Page and Mark Turriss for creating the wonderful artwork for our contest.

As we head into the summer, I'd like to invite members to consider joining this fantastic group of individuals who are the driving force behind this organization. If you like to plan, plot, laugh, form friendships, network, learn, and share a passion for all things literary, as of September you'll have a chance to do so as an NSWA board member.

If you're hesitating because you feel you might not have anything to offer, I can assure you that you do. Don't underestimate the value of your energy and enthusiasm! As a group, we can achieve goals that would elude us if we worked alone. Please signal your interest by contacting Rod Baker (see p. 4 for details).

Hope to see everyone at the Year-end Celebration on June 21<sup>st</sup>. Otherwise, have an excellent summer and see you in September!

## A Note from the Editor



The insects have been busy in the garden and I've been busy observing them – in particular, the mason bee. They are the smaller cousins of the honey bee but much more efficient pollinators. Just 2 or 3 can pollinate an entire apple tree! Mason bees rarely sting since they have no hoard of honey or queen to protect, live solitary lives, and rarely stray far from home. The females spend their lives stashing pollen into hollow reeds. They lay one egg at a time on a tiny mound of pollen and seal each precious load behind mud. The eggs go through complete metamorphosis, subsisting on the pollen, before emerging as new mason bees ready to start the whole life cycle again.

It seems to me the writing life is not unlike the life of the mason bee. We quietly take in ideas from the world around us, stash them away in the recesses of our minds, brood on them and wait for our imaginations to take over. After a period of latency, new life emerges in the form of stories and poems. While some might not make it very far, a few of our creations manage to buzz forth into the world and perhaps even pollinate a fresh crop of ideas.

I have enjoyed receiving your submissions and writing news. It's impressive how productive many of us have been during this pandemic. I wish you a relaxing or busy summer of your choosing, and look forward to your next creations. Take it in and write on.

Wiley Ho  
Editor, NSWA Newsletter

**Next newsletter submission deadline: Sep 30**

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## Newsletter Submission Guidelines

- Submissions from NSWA 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 [editor@nswriters.org](mailto:editor@nswriters.org), or by mail to NSWA, PO Box 37549 Lonsdale East, North Vancouver, BC V7M 3L3.
- Writing that appears in the NSWA newsletter is eligible for submission to the NSWA 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. Accompanying images welcome.
- 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 NSWA*

## Upcoming Meetings and Events!

*Monday  
June 21*

### Year-end Celebration!



Save this date for a long awaited in-person meeting! This will be a great opportunity for new members to meet the group and for everyone to re-connect and chat about our writing and summer plans! Free event! All members welcome!

**Venue:** John Lawson Park (near the picnic shelter) - look for green and white balloons!

**Time:** 6pm onwards

**Bring:** your own chair and refreshments for this event (as we slowly and safely ease back to normalcy)

Come out and share your stories and a laugh with your fellow writers!

NSWA will follow the latest provincial health guidelines and proceed in accordance with the most current BC Restart Plan

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/cov/id-19/info/restart#step-two>.

In the event we cannot meet in person or are rained out, members will be notified by email.

*Monday  
September 20*

### Mix and Mingle Election of 2021-2 Executive Membership Renewal



Speak up and be counted! Make sure you attend our Annual General Meeting. We will be electing a Board of Directors for 2021-2022 (nominees on next page), accepting volunteers for upcoming activities, and renewing memberships.

#### **Membership Renewal 2021-2022**

The membership rate for September 1, 2021 through August 31, 2022 is \$40.00. Payment via Interac e-transfer to [nswamembership@gmail.com](mailto:nswamembership@gmail.com) is the preferred method; however, payment can still be made by cheque or cash at the meeting, or posted to: NSWA PO Box 37549, Lonsdale East, North Vancouver, BC V7M 3L3.

This will be a lovely evening to mingle with other members of NSWA, catch up after the summer, and swap stories or writing tips! See you there!

*Monday  
October 18*

### Guest Speaker Karen Lam



**Karen Lam** has worked full-time in the film and television industry since 2000.

Starting her career as a producer and entertainment lawyer, Karen has since written and directed eight short films, two music videos, series directed a true-crime documentary series for Investigation Discovery (US), a web series "Mythos" (2015) created for TELUS, and three feature films -- "Stained" (2010), "Evangeline" (2013) and "The Curse of Willow Song" (2020), which premiered at the Vancouver International Film Festival in September 2020. The film won Best British Columbia Feature Film and Karen received a Best Director award at the British Columbia Leo Awards for her work.

Karen has also written television scripts for SYFY and Netflix on the series Van Helsing and Ghost Wars.

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 information on the latest resources and events, go to [www.nvcl.ca](http://www.nvcl.ca)*

## Nominees for Board of Directors 2021 - 2022

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**President (and Director)**

Janine Cross

**Vice-President (and Director)**

Vacant

**Secretary (and Director)**

Christine Cowan

**Treasurer (and Director)**

Steve Rayner

**Memberships and Member Relations**

Carl Hunter

**Library Liaison**

Vacant

**Speaker Coordinator**

Janine Cross

**Dare to be Heard Host**

Vacant

**Newsletter Editor and Archivist**

Wiley Ho

**Webmaster**

Kelly Hoskins

**Facebook Coordinator**

Vacant

**Writing Contest Coordinator**

Doug MacLeod

**Member At-large**

Barbara Reardon

***If you wish to be considered for the positions on  
this slate, please contact Rod Baker***

[rodvbaker@gmail.com](mailto:rodvbaker@gmail.com) or 604.281.1954

***Volunteers do not  
necessarily have the time;  
they just have the heart.***

***– Elizabeth Andrew***

### **A parting note from VP Rod Baker:**

*Dear NSWA members,*

*Seven years ago, I met Karen Dodd, a new friend and neighbour at a party and confessed to her I was thinking of writing a book. She suggested I attend a meeting of the NSWA with her. I wouldn't have gone alone, and even going with Karen, I felt like an intruder into the world of real writers. I sat at the back of the room.*

*But that first evening was like opening a jar of tasty new spread. Enthused at being among writers, even if I wasn't one yet, I took notes from the speaker's presentation and noticed my fellow attendees seemed like friendly people, all eager to learn writing skills. I joined at the next meeting and volunteered to help at the North Shore Writers' Festival.*

*I was later asked to join the executive as Vice President. My intuition said no, as I had been in management for 30 years and wasn't enthused by meetings. However, I wanted to give back to the organization I believed in and said "Yes." I was pleasantly surprised that meetings are short and businesslike, with a friendly group of volunteers looking out for the well-being of fellow writers and the future of the NSWA.*

*Five years later, I'm stepping down as Vice President but have offered to help find new people to join the NSWA Board of Directors.*

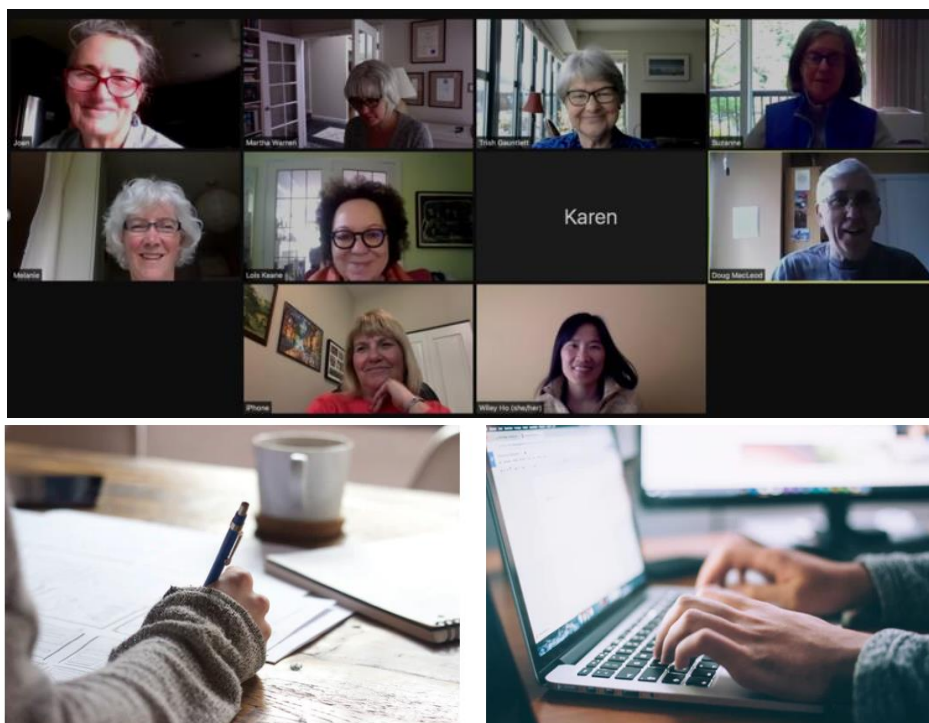
*Please consider stepping up and helping. I'm sure, as I did, you will find it worthwhile knowing you are helping our vibrant writers' group by offering a little of your time and creativity. Contact me if interested in any of the vacancies.*

*Best wishes, and fruitful writing!*

*Rod Baker*

## Saturday Morning Write-in!

*Next session: June 12th @ 10am*



Writing doesn't always need to be a lonely activity. Why not write with other writers? Working together gives us energy and discipline that we can't get toiling at our desks alone. Grab a coffee and write together via Zoom.

NSWA members have discovered the joy of writing together. On the second Saturday morning of each month, a group of us meet on Zoom and write. At our first session on January 9th, six enthusiastic writers participated. The idea has caught on and every month one or two new writers have joined our group.

We start by saying hello to one another, complete a short warm-up exercise and then get down to working on our individual projects. There's a 5–10-minute break halfway through and a wrap-up at the end. Sharing of work is optional. You'd be surprised at how much writing you can do in a couple of hours.

***Join us on June 12th, from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon!***

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87105551221?pwd=WjM2UVA3V0ZFZ1RNNn0vbnhFVVK01Sdz09>

Passcode: NSWA

*(After the summer break, monthly Saturday Writer-ins will resume October 9<sup>th</sup>.)*

## Dare To Be Heard

**Returns in October on the *First Monday* of each month!**



If you're a writer and want to read your work to a non-critical audience, why not attend the next Dare to be Heard Literary Evening? Dare welcomes all different genre writers at all stages of the writing journey and interested listeners, too. Dare provides an excellent and gentle space for writers to share poetry or prose – and support!

The plan is to return to Dare in person at the NV City Library, on the **first Monday of each month**.

Dare to share!  
Hear you there!

**Mark your calendars:**

***Oct 4, Nov 1, Jan 10, Feb 7, March 7, April 4, May 2***

***Start time: 7:00 pm***

### **A parting note from Dare Host Elly Stornebrink:**

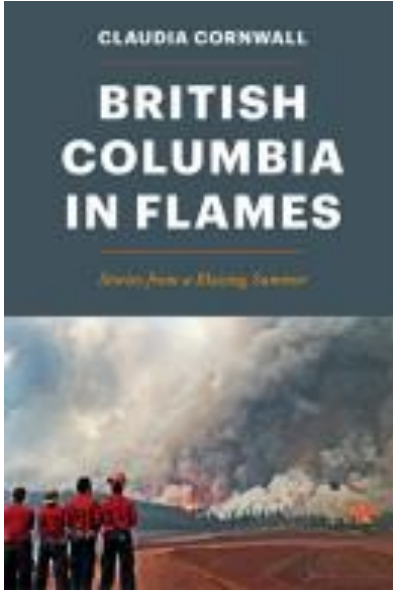
*Thank you, members, for allowing me to be host for the NSWA Dare group for two years. I appreciated the familiar friendly faces as well as those who dropped in to check things out. Thank you to all who shared work. It was an honour and privilege to hear your writings. May each of you continue to be blessed and supported in your work. It is now time for me to honour myself by creating space in my life for me, which includes writing.*

*DARE to be Heard is a small community of writers who wish to share work and ask for feedback, if desired, and/or listen to others. As writers, you can practice reading your work out loud and support others in providing feedback, and improve your writing skills.*

*Regards, Elly*

# B R A V O !

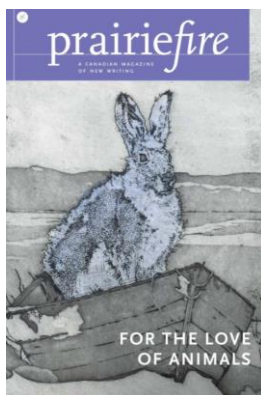
Congratulations to **Claudia Cornwall** whose non-fiction book *British Columbia in Flames* is



a finalist in the 2021 BC and Yukon Book Prizes, for the Roderick Haig Brown Regional Award, which is awarded to the author of the book which contributes the most to the enjoyment and understanding of the province of British Columbia.

The final winner will be announced in September! Go, Claudia! Claudia's book is available at [Claudia Cornwall - Harbour Publishing](http://Claudia Cornwall - Harbour Publishing)

Hats off to **Erin MacNair** for recent publications in two literary journals!! Her story "Nesting" appears in *Prairie Fire, Spring 2021* issue. Another story "It Can Be Done with Words," a story about what happens when future readers go back in time to cheer their favourite author on to greatness, was published in *Pulp Literature, Spring 2021*, issue 30. Erin is currently working on a short story collection and a novel. Find her work at [www.erinmacnair.com](http://www.erinmacnair.com)



A big round of applause for **Bernice Lever** who, at 85, is active and creative as ever. In the first half of 2021 alone, Bernice has had several of her poems anthologized in four literary anthologies, including The Ontario Poetry Society's (TOPS) 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Anthology *The Celebration of Poetry* and *Literature for the People, Issue No. 2*, a biannual literary magazine [www.literatureforthepeople.com](http://www.literatureforthepeople.com). In addition, Bernice has appeared at online poetry readings, sharing her work at various poetry events. Read one of Bernice's poems on p. 17.

Brava to **Joyce Goodwin** for receiving Honourable Mention for her poem "Altered State" in the 2020 Ontario Poetry Society Chapbook Anthology contest. In the bi-annual Ontario Poetry Society *Versé Afire* publication, Joyce won the Most Favourite Poem award for "Storm". Four of her 4 poems "The Spirit of Trees," "Rings of Sorrow," "Momentum," and "What the Wind Knows" have also been accepted for publication in the *TOPS 2021 Anthology By the Wishing Tree*. Besides being a celebrated poet, Joyce is a talented nature painter. For a taste of her beautiful work, go to p. 16.

Kudos to **Christine Cowan** for receiving Honourable Mention in the Royal City Writing Contest for her short story "Peppermint." This, on the heels of her poem "My Cat Watched Us" which won Second Place in the 25th Annual NSW Writing Contest.

**Joan Boxall** has been writing about inspiring seniors for *Inspired 55+ Lifestyle Magazine* (formerly Senior Living) for over a decade. Check out some of Joan's creative nonfiction pieces, such as 'Stepping Up and Out' about Ronald McDonald House volunteer Patrick Hartney, and many others at: <https://www.seniorlivingmag.com/joan-boxall/>

Congratulations to **Chris Vetterli** for her new novel ***Inherit the Fire***, available now on Amazon.

A few weeks before Christmas in 1972, little Johnny Vatruman suffers a fire-related trauma that marks him for life. The thought of lighting a match terrifies him, but in his quest to conquer his fear, will he swing too far the other way? *Inherit the Fire* will draw you into Johnny's world. Join him on his journey as he must learn to control his impulses before he loses everything.



encountering whales and dolphins, and relishing the rugged beauty of a remote part of the British Columbia coast with fellow sailors.

In May, your Newsletter Editor **Wiley Ho** had fun taking part in the Federation of BC Writers Red Carpet Gala to celebrate contest winners. She read from her short story "**Masquerade**" which won the 2020 BC Yukon Short. The story is available online at: [WordWorks 2020 Volume III](#) (pp. 18-19).



Another of her short stories "**Pets**" was longlisted for the 2021 Alice Munro Short Story Contest.

Wiley contributes regularly to *the North Vancouver Recreation and Culture's **Active Living*** blog,

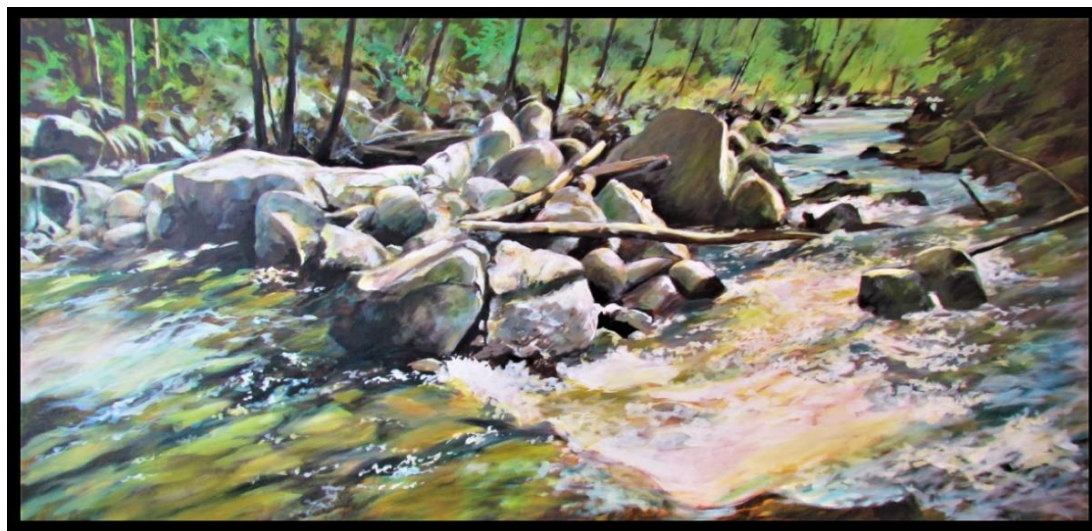
which showcases community resources, local artists, and upcoming cultural events. Check out [Active Living Blog | North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission \(nvr.ca\)](#).



Hats off to **Doug MacLeod** whose article "**To the Broughtons With the Gulf Yacht Club**" is being published in ***Pacific Yachting*** magazine (July 2021 edition).

Doug recounts a summer voyage to the Broughton Archipelago in the company of a dozen sailboats from the Gulf Yacht Club, running tidal passages,

**A collective BRAVO to all you wordsmiths out there - sung and unsung. Several of our members are multi-disciplinary artists! Enjoy their writing and artwork / photography throughout this newsletter! Write on!**



"Fresh Water"  
by Steve Rayner  
(original painting  
30x60)

# 100 WORD CHALLENGE

on the theme **Wanderlust**

## **Wanderlust**

*Rod Baker*

My mind needs grabbing and shaking, it's dried up like a crust,  
Cobwebs cover dark corners, a hiding place for dust.

I've gotta plan to fly the coop, the jail of everyday sights.  
I yearn for the unfamiliar, new lands, new skies, new lights

Tomorrow I'm gonna leave my home, escape my daily care  
jump in the car, grab tasty snacks, head south to God knows where.

Drive till I drop, no need to stop, adventure here I come.  
Speeding alone, along blacktop roads, it's starting to be fun  
Yes, I've bailed, left town, you see, escaped the dreaded humdrum!



(Photo: Joshua Woroniecki, Unsplash)

## **Wanderlust** (revisited)

*Rod Baker*

I wandered lonely as a cloud, through empty streets that once were loud,  
bursting with humanity, unbound, unmasked, and worry free.

A scourge has fallen on our lands, no hugs, no kisses, no shaking hands.  
Covid-19 everywhere, affecting all, unchanged by prayer,  
fills the news and ICUs, halted sports, closed cruise-line ports.  
Debate, debunk, blame and sorrow, bad news today, then worse tomorrow.  
Scientists racing for a cure, politicians peddling horse manure.  
Train trips, plane trips, plans to travel — thrown in disarray, all unravel.

But now, with two shots in my arm, I plan, my friends, some holiday charm!

## **Wanderlust**

*Karen Bower*

Every year it began,  
June 1, a countdown to school's end.  
Fidgeting. Restless. Eager to leave.  
For a change of air, of scenery, of pace.  
Unsettled as the days tick away.  
Plan the trip. Gather maps. Seek out the guides. Check the car.  
All is ready.  
One foot out the door, shoulders relax anticipating the coming adventure.  
Years later the urge for escape remains.  
Now, to leave *this* place. *The* year. *This* life.  
To escape the unseen plague. Is it waning?  
Or promising to return?  
Relax? Or, adjust to The New?

## Wanderlust

*Edythe Anstey Hanen*

Walnut Creek to San Francisco  
over the Oakland Bay bridge,  
highway weary, I sleep  
all the way to Union Square. Cable cars  
rattle down Grant Avenue,  
Market Street, through  
Chinatown, spice sellers, dried fish,  
like old rice paper, crumpled  
in the wind, shouts  
falling  
onto rain-glazed streets.

Shoulders carry the weight of my  
dusty backpack, pimps  
scour the YWCA lobby, dream-sellers  
looking for tender fruit, flashing  
gold teeth, eyes  
claiming territory.

In the City Lights bookstore, I search  
for old ghosts: Kerouac,  
Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti.

Today I wear that long ago  
memory, sweet and  
light  
as a coat of wind.

### Wanderlust (a haiku) *Wiley Ho*

Yearlong wandering  
North, south, east, west – in my ‘hood.  
Free at last! Where to?

#### Next 100 Word Challenge: Fall

- ✓ Strictly 100 words max (excluding title, if any).
- ✓ Hyphenated words, contractions and acronyms count as single words.
- ✓ Inclusion of theme word(s) optional.
- ✓ Fiction, non-fiction and poetry are all welcome.
- ✓ Have fun with it!

*Submit your 100-word masterpiece to  
editor@nswriters.org*

*or by mail to NSWA PO Box 37549 Lonsdale East, NV V7M 3L3*

***Deadline September 30, 2021***

*"When forced to work within a strict framework the imagination is taxed to its utmost - and will produce its richest ideas. Given total freedom, the work is likely to sprawl." – T.S. Eliot*

# Fiction

## On the Other Side of the Lavender Forest

*Alicia Peters*

If you travel through the lavender forest, you might stumble upon a red fairy house, where you'll most certainly be invited in for tea.

Cakes with buttercream icing and coconut flakes, cookies with gooey ruby jam centres, tiny lemon drops the size of your pinky that leave icing sugar on your lips, a flowing three-tiered chocolate fountain with dark, milk and white chocolate, cherries and apricots piled to the wood beamed ceiling, jube jubes that burst with flavour and stick to your teeth, creamy cucumber sandwiches with sprigs of dill and a lemonade river whose drink puckers your lips and leave you instantly refreshed.

Fairy hospitality is legendary, but it's not easy to find yourself a guest of the fairies.

You see, not everyone can imagine themselves to be small enough to enter the lavender forest or even to see it as anything but a herb.

If you do step foot in the fragrant forest, then the fairies already know you are there. They can sense imagination – it's the forcefield that protects them.

Oh, and how do I know all this, you ask? I was there once, before I grew up and out of my imagination. Before I learned how the world was supposed to work. That an alarm clock starts your day instead of the gentle kiss of mom or the wet tongue of your dog. Before I learned that ice-cream was only for good little girls and boys who did their homework. And before I grew heavy from the responsibilities of being an adult.

You see, every rule you learn takes away from the space for your imagination. It seems that the older I got, the more rules I needed to remember. Now, many rules are good and important, but I never did make it back to the lavender forest and I'd much rather have tea with fairies than wake up to an alarm.

Sometimes, on a lazy weekend or after a long vacation, when I'm rested and closer to my younger self, when I'm lying in the grass, I can hear the buzz of fairy wings, and I dream of the decadent tea on the other side of the lavender forest.



(Photo: Mona Hamm, Unsplash)

# Non-fiction

## Early in the Morning

*Linden Carroll*

It was early in the morning and summer was still young. A flute carried the strains of the purest, clearest melody echoing and whispering through the trees. She was drawn to the sorrowful, poignant music, reminiscent of the highland pipes carrying their sad lament across the Atlantic Ocean from the Scottish shores. On that day, however, those like sounds were emanating from Canadian shores.

The northern canine moved silently with her as they cut through the trees bordering the park. Quickening her step, anxious to find the gifted musician who played with such dexterity, she was rewarded suddenly when he came into view. Sitting beneath an ancient tree, perched between its gnarled and upended roots, the pair were not immediately visible to him, as his eyes were closed in a trance-like state, having given himself over completely to his music. Instantly fully alert, he ceased playing and black eyes scrutinized her, boring into her very soul, it seemed. Then, rising to his feet, he bowed eloquently and extending good wishes formally, he bade her stay awhile.

“I wrote this special piece, it’s my favourite and my pleasure to play it just for you,” he said. “The title is *Early in the Morning*.”

She moved to leave but the man was compelling; the melody unique and mesmeric. The dog moved a little closer to the flautist; unusual for him, being wary and aloof with all strangers. A broad smile of kinship broke across the man’s swarthy face as he took up his position again. The flute rang out loud and true, rising to the mountain tops, falling to the soft green valleys. Her spirit soared, climbing unreachable heights; falling to bottomless lows.

Back through the years she journeyed, along woodland trails, across fields and by babbling streams. Back through the years she ran again to the gypsies’ favourite camping grounds, dancing and singing with them to their music and lyrics, as they played their haunting tunes. So many different odours tantalised the nostrils. The cooking pots simmering on the open fires, the earthiness emanating from the horses nearby as they munched the pure, sweet verdure of early summer and the heavy, musky perfume of the brightly-clothed women, all pervading the air, all heightening and enriching the senses. So many different sounds of music, the jingling of gypsy bangles, the tiny bells on the horses’ harnesses ringing, the crackling and spitting of the fires, and the soft dialect spoken in the background, all pleasing to the ear.

\*\*\*\*

He had absolutely nothing to offer but his music and song; nevertheless, her frozen heart melted and she was moved to tears, an emotion she never allowed; forbidden lest it weaken the defences built up against life’s trials. He repaired her spirit and made her whole again. And yes! He had everything to offer to sustain her soul.

Shivering slightly, she pulled her jacket around her tightly; it was, after all, still early in the morning and to be expected. Even though summer was about to take flight, there was a cold breeze coming up the rise from the ocean. Her furry friend, sensing a change in mood moved back to her side, raising his head, nostrils quivering, catching the ocean scents wafting up the hill.

As they slowly took their leave, the flute came alive again and pausing a while longer, she allowed it to cleanse and wash over her as the spray from the incoming tide, transporting her to another dimension.

*Early in the Morning* was the unforgettable name of the melody.

# The Pandemic Traveller

*Wendy Alden*

For the past fourteen months, I've travelled to places I'd never have considered were it not for the pandemic. So many places to choose from in different continents. Places rich with cultures I've never seen and historic sites which have been visited for decades. It's also been possible to tour cities, art galleries, universities and sail over oceans. I've enjoyed watching wildlife in Africa or the camels in the Sahara Desert. Then within a few weeks watch marine life in oceans of the Pacific, Atlantic, Indian seas and many others. The choice was mine and mine alone where I would travel next.

So many ways to travel with rail being my favourite of all the choices. Being able to watch new scenery of fields, forests whizzing by as trains gathered up speed until arriving at the destination of a new city to explore. Once there, a walking tour is the best way to see both a city and the countryside.

Where have I gone? From the Nile to the Seine, from the Icelandic shores to the hills in Wales. The tour of the Louvre in Paris and the art on show in the National Portrait Gallery in London were both so worth the visit. So many times, I was able to study masters' paintings of both the French and British artists hanging on the walls of these landmark galleries. Experiencing the views from a gondola ride on the canals in Venice was such a unique time too.

I feel there are no limits to my travels now. I've a hoped to explore the coastline of New Zealand and the famous coral reef of Eastern Australia. Despite the restrictions of the pandemic, I feel unrestrained and free. Perhaps it's due to the magic of the internet's YouTube. I'll leave you to guess if I'm a rule breaker or an armchair traveller.



## Do It Soon, Do It Now Trips

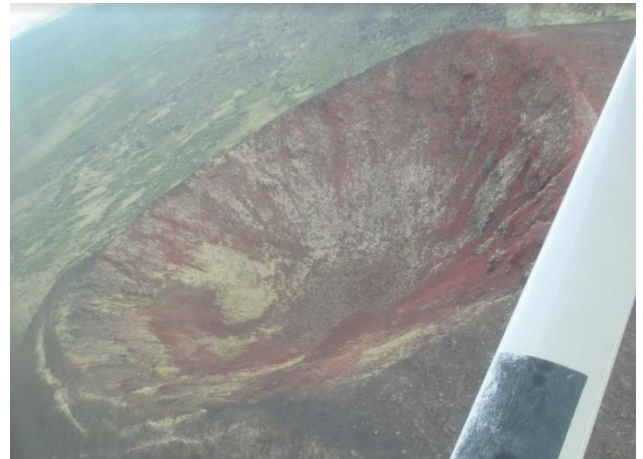
*Patrick Hill*

### *Nass Valley*

Over a year ago, I had been reading in *British Columbia* magazine an article titled “50 Things You Should See or Do Before You Die” and saw a giant crater. Bearing in mind I was then 87, I thought I had better get going before it is too late. Further, there was a break in my writing and our travel habits had not been restricted yet (in 2020), so for some relief my wife and I jumped in our car and started a 6-day trip. In Smithers, we stayed a night with friends. Next day, we took a flight over the local mountains landing in an unfrozen lake and had an interesting chat with the Swiss pilot who owned the flying company. He wanted to fly in Papeete so gave him a copy of our book about when we had sailed there.

After the flight, we drove into New Aiyansh. This is Nisga’a territory in the Nass Valley where, in 1700, there was a massive volcanic eruption causing a 40 km of lava flow which wiped out many of the Indigenous population in the area.

Since the bus that took us up a logging road was full of children, the owner took us in his truck 9kms up a logging road. Then we set off walking through the woods to see the Tseax Cone which caused the catastrophe. I ran out of steam – the curse of age – and did not get to see the cone but one of the Indigenous locals kindly gave me an aerial photo.



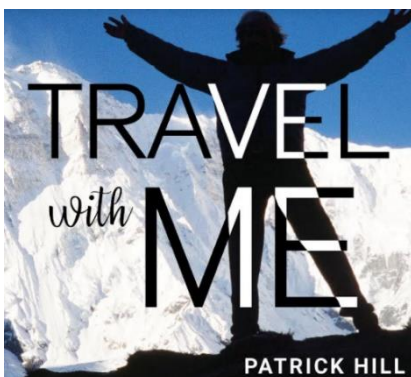
### *Mount Edziza Provincial Park*

Following that, we drove further north to Mont Edziza Provincial Park on the Yukon border. We were seeing more wildlife, bears, foxes, deer, and less and less vehicles, thank Heavens. The Park is covered in volcanic cones. A really fascinating place that we flew over in a float plane owned by our Swiss pilot friend with a glacier on the peak at 9500 ft and many coloured mountains to be seen. No cars are allowed in the park which you can hike across in five days. Float planes do not fly there until ice melts on the many lakes. However, on our next trip up that way, I want to be helicoptered in to land on top of a cone.

*The Vancouver Sun* accepted my much longer article about this trip, titled “Volcanic Sites, A great add to any bucket list” in the Travel section of the Saturday edition some months ago.

### *Drumheller*

A short while later, we decided to view the prehistoric animals in the Drumheller Museum, so we made another “Do it Soon-Do it NOW” trip, leaving Vancouver at 7am and arriving in Golden 12 hours later. The October snows on the mountains were impressive but I would not recommend going any later in the year. Next day, we visited the museum but were not particularly impressed. After a night at Radium Hot Springs, we drove home in a day on the south route to avoid snow, selling 8 copies of my books to libraries on the way.



If it is allowed, I’m planning a trip to explore the Yukon since, at 89, time is running out and because there is so much to see!

Patrick Hill is the author of travel and adventure books: *So Where Do You Go At Night?*, *Explore the Alaskan Coast*, *Cruise the Alaska Coast*, *French Silk on Water*, *Travel With Me* and *A New Life in Canada*.

His books are available on his website: [www.patrickhillcruising.com](http://www.patrickhillcruising.com).

Patrick can be reached at [hphill@telus.net](mailto:hphill@telus.net).

# Poetry

## Three poems by Margaret Witzsche

### *A Loaf of Poem*

This poem is a loaf of bread  
set to rise in warmth  
I will knead and shape  
until smooth  
let sit for a while

magic will cobble it  
whole or is it yeast  
brings to life

the yeast of memory and  
new mornings the way  
the sun shows itself  
on the horizon

poems *are* like loaves  
we take them from the  
oven of our bodies  
they rise there work  
their alchemy on us

like bread  
they feed us

### *Are we born with rules*

No one told me I would  
have to write my own

someone said the other day  
I've never been old before  
so excuse me if I make mistakes

have any of us had the practice  
that we remember of  
being born how do we do that

emerge painfully into light

our first steps we are not  
taught as much as our  
mentors would like to think  
we find our way with help

hold hands that's  
what I need now  
handholds on this  
dizzying path

even though  
I do like to do things  
my own way

### *Still in childhood's back lane*

I write and all I believe  
is the wind in my hair  
my purple and green pinafore  
sun in the back garden

if you went out the gate  
you could pick loganberries  
blackberries huckleberries

my lane now is a dense  
thicket choke cherries  
their blossoms in spring  
sometimes water in a ditch  
down the centre a path

there are wild flowers and  
some garbage but  
it remains fairly pristine

I never walk there  
it's not my lane

I can't to go back  
to childhood's lane  
it's paved now  
community garbage bins  
at the back of condos

ghost of myself innocent  
running barefoot over stones



(photo: Jill Heyer, Unsplash)

**The Loon**  
*Joyce Goodwin*

The wail of a solitary loon disturbs the quiet lake,  
touches my wild heart giving voice to my soul;  
an unearthly calling, only the long howl of the wolf  
can stir the spirit of ancestors in such an eternal way;  
this is music of the universe, a celestial song,  
a cry, a howl, a splash on water, a glimmer  
of moonbeams on a silver surface,  
a longing to know we are not alone.  
A shiver of aspen gives voice to the wind  
as the loon calls out to the spheres.



*Painting by Joyce Goodwin*

## COVID CONSTRUCT

*Jannette Edmonds*

Milling about in a crowd, shoulder to shoulder, comfortable, part of a group.  
Going with the flow, pushed forward by streams of people, into lobbies  
At intermissions, at fairgrounds, at boulevards and book sales and beaches.  
And then the bubble bursts and it is all just a vapour from the past.

Now with wary eyes we scrutinize the other, each one a possible threat.  
Mouths filled with weapons of mass destruction.  
The breath of life becoming the breath of death, as we run for cover,  
Huddle in horror, at the disregard of others, breaking the rules, risking us all.

Each one holds tightly to their security blanket of belief, and increasingly  
There becomes only two sides--mine and yours, right or wrong, law or anarchy.  
Earnestly we try to convince the others of their error, and videos and articles  
And Facebook messages fly furiously back and forth over the wall of the great divide.

There becomes no other topic of conversation, all others hijacked at the first word.  
Numbers, deaths, denial, distrust, vaccines, masks and trying to move on.  
The web of it all pulls tighter over us and at times feels like strangulation,  
And apartment walls inch closer and closer to those hiding out from the plague.

But the trees wave their branches in the wind, Douglas fir sprout bright green growth.  
Birds chirp happily in the sky and flowering trees burst into glorious fireworks of color.  
Clouds sail through the sky unburdened, the sun shines unsullied by it all.  
Breezes blow gently, rain falls when it will and nature dances on ahead of us.

Birds migrate, bees pollinate, hummingbirds hover at feeders and drink at flowers,  
Cats curl up and purr, horses prance and dogs bark at absolutely  
everyone.  
We alone, of all creatures, have been stopped in our tracks, turned  
cautious,  
Oh so cautious, of a world we once had such freedom to roam, such joy  
to belong.

We dream of the day that the construct disintegrates,  
Covid evaporates  
And we can liberally embrace all that is good,  
unfettered by the fear of all that is bad.

**Teddy Bear Ted** (for Ted Plantos)  
*Bernice Lever*

Just envisage Ted now  
sharing cigars and war stories  
with Milton Acorn and Al Purdy  
slurping frothy mugs  
while they argue whose turn  
It is to build their poet's cabin.

Ted calming those two hot heads  
with his gentle, honest humour.  
"If you want to hit something,  
bang that hammer on some nails  
or we'll be stuck out here  
on this white cloud forever!"

# STORYBOX IN SESSION

## ‘WRITE A GOODBYE TO 2020’ CONTEST RESULT

STORYBOX  
IN SESSION

TALK.



**You are a winner.**

storyboxinsession.com

In January, NSWA members were invited to enter a **Storybox in Session** writing contest. I’m pleased to announce the winner was **Rod Baker**. Apparently, the last thing he ever won was a set of frosted glasses at the bingo, so hopefully he will be thrilled with his free 30-minute one-on-one critique with Storybox in Session.

### SO, WHAT’S STORYBOX IN SESSION?

*Storybox in Session* provides affordable support for writers at any level to talk about their craft, one-on-one on Zoom. It’s a consultancy service where you get undivided attention during an online session that’s designed just for you. Come prepared with questions, stumbling blocks, or general woes. You can also send a piece of work in advance to go through.

### TRY A SESSION

Visit [www.storyboxinsession.com](http://www.storyboxinsession.com)



April Bosshard, Story Coach

## DEEP STORY

*Design*

with April Bosshard

Ongoing Online Writing Events

**Writing Together Sessions**

3 hours to connect and write ~ Tuesdays 10 to 1

**Monthly One Day Writing Retreats**

Saturdays 9:30 to 3:30 ~ June 19 & July 17th

Starting in September 2021

**The Drafting Circles**

Mondays 10 to 11:30 ~ Sept 20 to Dec 13

Mondays 3 to 4:30 ~ Sept 20 to Dec 13

**Real Time Revision**

Wednesdays 2 to 4 ~ Sept 22 to Dec 15

Let's write together!

Sometimes I think I have the best job in the world. I get to work with writers creating meaningful stories. Many are working on memoirs, novels or screenplays. Some are working on short stories or non-fiction projects. None of it is easy work. It all takes time and effort. It takes persistence and patience.

Every writer embarks on a personal journey in order to write something meaningful enough to take a reader on a journey. You can go it alone on your personal writing journey, or you can travel with like-minded souls who share your passion and understand your commitment to process despite obstacles and setbacks.

If you don't feel like going go it alone, or if you sometimes feel lonely and discouraged while writing but feel wary of writing groups that are more talk than action, rest assured that these DSD events blend facilitated, thoughtful discussions AND structured work time.

I'm dedicated to helping writers get their work done, so sessions don't focus on reading or feedback. They are designed to ensure that you make significant progress on your chosen project. Groups are small and personal (min 4; max 10). If you'd like to find out more, please email me at [deepstorydesign@gmail.com](mailto:deepstorydesign@gmail.com) or visit the DSD website: [www.deepstorydesign.com](http://www.deepstorydesign.com)



## Executive 2020 - 2021

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Rod Baker

***Secretary (and Director)***

Christine Cowan

***Treasurer (and Director)***

Steve Rayner

***Memberships and Member Relations***

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***Newsletter Editor and Archivist***

Wiley Ho

***Webmaster***

Kelly Hoskins

***Writing Contest Coordinator***

Doug MacLeod

***Member At-large***

Barbara Reardon

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



“If you’re not barefoot, then you’re overdressed.” - *Unknown*

## Events Calendar

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***June 12***      ***Saturday Morning Write-in***

***June 21***      ***Year-end Celebration – in person!***

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***July – August***    ***Summer break***

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***September 20***    ***AGM and Election for 2021-22  
Board of Directors***

***September 30***    ***Newsletter submission deadline***

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***October 4***      ***Dare to be Heard***

***October 9***      ***Saturday morning Write-in***

***October 18***      ***NSWA meeting with guest speaker  
Karen Lam***

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***November 1***     ***Dare to be Heard***

***November 15***    ***NSWA Social***

## The Last Page

Cathy L. Scrimshaw

Finally. The end of COVID is in sight. After 15 months of isolating, distancing, sanitizing, masking and, in the beginning, the infamous toilet paper hoarding and shortage (who would have thought TP would become such a talking point, or, indeed, such a valuable commodity?) it almost seems too good to be true—that it's nearly over. That we might be back to some kind of 'normal'.

But what will the new normal be?

I like to think we, as a society, have learned something during the pandemic. Especially if we've been listening to Bonnie Henry's now-ubiquitous saying: be calm, be kind, be safe.

Many people seem to have taken that to heart.

For myself, I've witnessed extraordinary acts of kindness. Like the time I walked into Save-On Foods, in the early months when fear ran high, only to see a group of masked, gloved employees and customers gathered around an elderly woman, herself masked and gloved. She had collapsed in the entryway of the store. Some of those good Samaritans must have had reservations about helping. The virus, we were told, was deadly and highly infectious. Still, no one walked by without first making sure the lady was being looked after. It turned out she had simply been overcome by the heat and humidity of that August day; soon she was back on her feet and on her way.

Neighbours began shopping for neighbours. Others checked in on the elderly. People I barely know but run into on my daily dog walks

stopped to ask how I'm doing, if I need anything (and here I always thought I look so capable!).

There was the downside, of course. The COVID deniers. The anti-maskers. The agitators who thought they have the right to endanger others with their risky behaviour. The me, me, me crowd. They're always with us, and they certainly made their presence felt over the past year. But I like to think they were in the minority, and I hope at least some of them now realize their mistake, and will be more thoughtful in the future.

With that kindness, calmness seemed to come naturally to many of us. Line-ups, so difficult for a lot of people, became the order of the day, at least for a while. Most settled into the routine of waiting patiently for their turn. It was nice to see the rush subside.

But I'm not so sure about the 'stay safe' part, the third aspect of her mantra. That was necessary to say, and it worked to help keep infections from overwhelming the health care system.

But do we really want to be safe always, especially in our writing?

Taking *cautious* risks might be a better bet going forward, at least for us scribes. We could toss out our old misgivings and apprehensions, the ones that held us back from being better people and better writers, and decide to use our precious freedoms (and we know now how precious they really are) and take some chances.

Always wanted to have articles published in adventure magazines? Get out there, follow your dreams to the top of the mountain or into the wilderness. Better yet, follow an experienced guide, someone you

can learn from and who can introduce you, without unnecessary risks, to new challenges and rewards. Then write that amazing piece and get it out there.

Adventure's not your thing? If writing poetry is your secret desire, but you've never wanted to put yourself out there emotionally, as poets must do, throw caution to the wind and put pen to paper. If you need a guide, there are many workshops and talented poets with published books for you to read and use as inspiration. Just do a few internet searches and you'll have all the help you need.

Got a short story collection or novel that you've been working on through the pandemic, but you're afraid of rejection? Don't be. Being rejected, often many times, is the thing most published writers have in common. Patience, that attribute we've all practiced so much this past year, is what you need here. Then there's always self-publishing, especially for those of you with an entrepreneurial bent. Besides, I'm willing to bet that a lot of us have done our best work during the lockdowns. After all, there weren't many outside distractions, were there?

And do come back to the NSWA as soon as we're allowed to meet again in person. Let the rest of us know how you've been, what you're working on, and where you're planning to take it. I can hardly wait to see everyone, and to hear all the news.

Happy Summer, everyone!

