



No. 26: March 2022

**Upcoming Meetings**  
**In person! New location!**

**West Vancouver  
Memorial Library**  
1950 Marine Drive, West Van  
Due to capacity restrictions,  
**RSVP is required.**  
First come first served.  
**Email: [rsvp@nswa.org](mailto:rsvp@nswa.org)**

**March 21**  
Guest Speaker  
*Lara Campbell*

**April 25**  
Guest Speaker  
*Renée Sarojini Saklikar*

**May 16**  
Guest Speaker  
*Frances Peck*

**June 20**  
Year-end Social  
*TBC*

The North Shore Writers' Association thanks the West Vancouver Memorial Library for their generous support of NSWA events and all local writers and readers.

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

# Write On!

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

## President's Message

*Janine Cross*

We are returning to in-person meetings!

I'm so pleased to announce that for our March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, we'll once again be able to mix and mingle while sharing our stories in the physical company of fellow writers. We'll be following PHSA guidelines regarding masks & social distancing, and we ask that all attendees have their vaccination proofs with them in the event that the library asks to see them.

Our guest speaker for our first 2022 in-person meeting is Dr. Lara Campbell, an award-winning author, university professor, and researcher, whose latest book *A Revolutionary Wave* has been lauded as "absorbing storytelling and compelling analysis" on the suffrage movement in British Columbia.

We are very thankful that the West Vancouver library has generously offered the Welsh Hall West for our meeting room while the North Vancouver City Library undergoes renovations in the rooms we previously used. We'll be starting at 6:30pm (a little earlier than we usually start), to accommodate their 8:30pm closing time.

A return to in-person events means we are also looking at resuming our annual summer get-together in June. Keep your eyes peeled for future emails regarding details!

If you're not yet ready to return to in-person events, have no fear: we have plenty of Zoom events still planned. Our successful on-line Saturday morning write-ins will be continuing,

and Dare to be Heard will also be held on-line for April 4<sup>th</sup>.

On March 29<sup>th</sup>, the Federation of BC Writers will be Zoom-hosting an event where I'll be inviting three of our members to read from their work and talk a little about their writing: Erin McNair will discuss how to find markets for flash fiction & read one of her recently published pieces; Sonia Garrett will provide tips on self-publishing kids' books and will read from her latest novel, *Harriet Hall and the Miracle Cure*, and Frances Peck will give pointers on how to find a home with a traditional publisher after reading from her forthcoming literary novel, *The Broken Places*.

In addition, on April 30<sup>th</sup>, we'll be Zoom-hosting last year's phenomenal guest speaker, Tetsuro Shigematsu, to close out the week-long virtual North Shore Writers Festival. I've no doubt he'll again provoke tears and laughter in equal measure with another stellar reading-performance-interactive lecture.

At this time of year, those of us on the board are thinking about next season and the exciting opportunities our annual election brings to members. No one is too young or too old to become president or newsletter editor, and enthusiasm is far more important than experience. New faces on the board mean new ideas and initiatives. While trying something new might be outside of your comfort zone, small leaps of faith can take you places you never expected to go! I guarantee you won't regret the connections and friends you'll make.

*"What would life be if we had no courage to attempt anything?"*

*- Vincent van Gogh*

## A Note from the Editor



(Photo: Bruce Ewart)

*No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn. - Hal Borland*

It's not surprising that spring is a favourite season for many. It is energetic and excitable. A little aggressive even. The air comes alive with birdsong and – my irritated sinuses tell me – pollen. As buried bulbs awaken and reach green shoots up to the chilly air, their vibrant pushiness serves as a reminder that change is inevitable. Unstoppable.

Our writing practice tends to have seasons too, cycling through sleepy and active periods. With a little push, we have the power to bring what's dormant alive and to shift the darkness into light. Many of the contributions in this newsletter underscore the renewal and hope of the season. Keep going. Let's keep emerging, resting, and re-emerging.

Our next newsletter will be the Winning Edition in May, featuring the winning entries from NSW's Annual Writing Contest. Kudos to all who entered!

Soak in the sun, the rain, and write on,  
*Wiley*

Wiley Wei-Chiun Ho  
Editor, NSW Newsletter

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## Newsletter Submission Guidelines

1. Submissions from NSW members only.
2. Share your latest writing news (e.g., recent publications, book launches, author readings).
3. Poetry, short fiction or nonfiction up to 600 words. No op/ed articles.
4. Email your submission to [editor@nswriters.org](mailto:editor@nswriters.org) (preferred method), or mail to NSW, PO Box 37549 Lonsdale East, North Vancouver, BC V7M 3L3.
5. Contributors are responsible for the accuracy, originality, and reliability of their content. Please check spelling, grammar and punctuation prior to submission. Word attachments preferred over email text. Accompanying photos belonging to the writer or open-source welcome.
6. Writing that appears in the NSW newsletter is eligible for submission to the NSW writing contest.
7. Publication in the *WRITE ON!* newsletter is at the discretion of the Editor, in consultation with the Board of Directors.

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

## Upcoming In-person Meetings and Guest Speakers

**Note: RSVP required due to 20-person capacity limit!**

**Please email: [rsvp@nswriters.org](mailto:rsvp@nswriters.org)**

**March 21**

**Guest Speaker  
Lara Campbell**



**Lara Campbell** is professor of gender, sexuality, and women's studies at Simon Fraser University. She was awarded the Lesley Cormack Teaching Award in 2010 and the Dean's Medal for Excellence in Academic research, teaching, and service in 2015.

Lara is the coauthor of the seventh edition of *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History*. Her first book *Respectable Citizens: Gender, Family, and Unemployment in Ontario's Great Depression* was received with high acclaim.

*A Great Revolutionary Wave: Women and the Vote in British Columbia* is her most recent book; it was commended for the 2021 Lieutenant Governor's Medal for Historical Writing, and won both the 2021 Clio Award and the 2021 Basil Stuart-Stubbs Prize for Outstanding Scholarly Book on BC.

**April 25**

**Guest Speaker  
Renée Sarojini Saklikar**



**Renée Sarojini Saklikar's** ground-breaking poetry book about the bombing of Air India Flight 182, *Children of Air India*, won the Canadian Authors Association Poetry Prize and was shortlisted for the Dorothy Livesay Prize.

Renée's second book, *The Revolving City: 51 Poems and the Stories Behind Them*, edited with Wayne Compton, was a finalist for the City of Vancouver Book Award. Her book, *Listening to the Bees*, co-authored with Dr. Mark Winston, won the 2019 Gold Medal Independent Publishers Book Award, Environment/Ecology.

She joins us for National Poetry Month to discuss *Bramah and the Beggar Boy*, a novel-in-verse steeped in the tradition of fairy tales.

**May 16**

**Guest Speaker  
Frances Peck**



**Frances Peck** wrote fiction and poetry until her early twenties, when the realities of adulthood and rent steered her toward a career as a freelance writer, ghostwriter, editor, and instructor. Known for her writing and workshops on the finer points of language, she's the author of Peck's English Pointers (an online writing tool), a co-author of the *HyperGrammar* website, and an occasional essayist and blogger.

Frances returns to her first love, fiction, with *The Broken Places* (NeWest Press, April 2022), part of Nunatak First Fiction Series. Her debut novel takes place in Vancouver and explores what happens to strangers thrown together after the earthquake and the unpredictable ways in which disaster can shake up lives and test personal resilience.

[www.francespeck.com](http://www.francespeck.com)

## Welcome to New Members!

It's been over 25 years since a group of interested writers gathered at the North Vancouver Lucas Centre for a newly announced event sponsored by the NV Schools Continuing Education program. This inaugural event was hosted by Peggy Trendell-Whittaker (now a deacon at St. Clement's Anglican Church). Peggy talked about her vision for forming the North Shore Writers' Association to a turnout of about 25 eager writers. She asked for volunteers to form a board of directors and some hands-on work. Then the group wrote for a stint of 10 minutes. After only one meeting at a member's home, the NSWA moved to the Capilano Library (The Potlatch Room) for the next 17 years. About six years ago, NSWA moved to our current location (pre-pandemic) on the third floor of the North Van City Library at Lonsdale and 14<sup>th</sup> Street. For the record, there are still three or four of our current members who were part of the august crew who founded our association. Janine Cross, our current President, is one of the founding members!

In normal years, we meet monthly at the NV City Library from September to November before winter break, and then January to May. Our June meeting is traditionally a "pot-luck" event at the Silk Purse's oceanside venue. Each regular meeting offers a short bit of business, an opportunity for members to announce book launches, a short break for wine and chat followed by a guest speaker. The speakers are selected carefully to cover a range of writerly interests, from established authors and poets, to writing teachers and coaches. They share their stories and tips on publishing, writing craft, and offer insights and inspiration to stay motivated with our own projects.

In this challenging COVID year, we have continued to bring our members together virtually, via Zoom. You are warmly invited to participate in readings at Dare to Be Heard on the first Tuesday of each month, join our regular meetings with guest speakers on the third Monday of each month, participate in our brand-new Critique Boutique to give/receive feedback on drafts (see page 6), join in the monthly Saturday Write-ins, and submit your writerly news, prose and poetry to be included in our quarterly newsletter. Our Editor Wiley Ho welcomes member submissions for consideration (see page 2 for submission guidelines).

Last, you will receive regular emails from Carl Hunter, the NSWA Membership Coordinator, with upcoming NSWA and local writing and reading events, writing contests and Zoom links. Periodically, Carl also forwards notices from the Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Authors Association and other writing organizations, which reciprocate the signal boosting.

So, congratulations on joining a nurturing writing community on the North Shore! Dig in!

Welcome, one and all,  
*Carl Hunter*  
*Membership Coordinator*





***Dare To Be Heard***  
**on the *first Monday* of each month!**



If you're a writer and would like to read your work to a non-critical audience of other writers, why not attend the next Dare to be Heard Literary Evening? Reading our writing out loud is helpful for improving our work. Dare welcomes all different genre writers at all stages of the journey and interested listeners, too. Dare to share! Hear you there!

***April 4 via Zoom:***  
***Start time: 7:00 pm***

***Zoom link – copy and paste into your browser***

***<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81570178724?pwd=OTVHY2tDQXVFeFZ4TFk3YVlNeU5nQT09>***  
***Passcode: DARE***

***May 2 in person at West Vancouver Memorial Library***  
***1950 Marine Drive***  
***Start time: 6:30 pm***

**From Dare's Host, Rosemary Gretton:**

Hope your writing is going well. The next meeting via Zoom will be hosted by Doug MacLeod in a shortened session from 7:00-7:45 pm on April 4. Writers are welcome to read for 5-10 minutes in a supportive environment. If you'd like specific feedback on your writing, you are also welcome to ask the other participants.

With the easing of restrictions, NSWA is looking at returning to in-person meetings. May 2 is the last Dare to be Heard until the fall. Look forward to seeing you at 6:30 pm at the West Vancouver Memorial Library. – Rosemary

**Saturday Morning Write-in!**

*10 am – 12 pm via Zoom*  
*Next sessions: April 9, May 14*

*Next sessions: April 9, May 14*



Our Saturday Morning Write-ins have become a regular virtual space for members to get together and get some writing done!

We start by saying hello to one another, complete a short a 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.

So, fill up your mug, grab your favourite writing implement and...

*Join us for the next session on April 9<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon!*

Zoom link (same each month):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87105551221?pwd=WjM2UVA3V0ZFZ1RNNnovbXFVK01Sdz09>

Passcode: NSW A

The logo for the North Shore Writers Festival is displayed on a dark teal rectangular background. The words "north shore" are in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. Below them, the words "WRITERS" and "FESTIVAL" are in a larger, white, uppercase, sans-serif font.

# north shore WRITERS FESTIVAL

## **North Shore Writers Festival April 26-30, 2022**

This year's festival features talented authors such as Kim Thúy, David A. Robertson, André Alexis, Tetsuro Shigematsu, Amber Dawn, and more! Check the festival website later this month for registration details and full schedule:

[northshorewritersfestival.com](http://northshorewritersfestival.com)

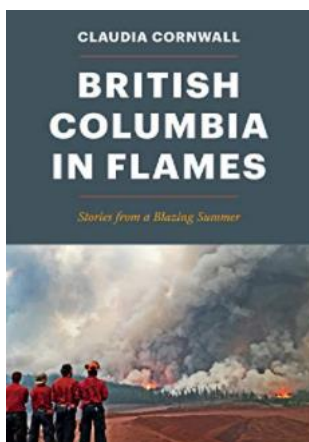
### **NSWA will be hosting a workshop on Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup> “All the Feels” with Tetsuro Shigematsu**

Described by The Georgia Straight as “one of the city’s best artists,” Tetsuro Shigematsu tells stories across an array of media. He is an author, playwright, broadcaster, and filmmaker. A former writer for CBC Television’s This Hour Has 22 Minutes, in 2004 he became the first person-of-colour to host a daily national radio program in Canada when he took over The Roundup on CBC Radio. His solo-work, *Empire of the Son*, has played in 18 cities to over 20,000 people, and was described by Colin Thomas as, “one of the best shows ever to come out of Vancouver. Ever.” His most recent work, *1 Hour Photo*, published by Talonbooks, won a Jesse Award for Significant Artistic Achievement and was nominated for a Governor General’s Award. Tetsuro recently signed a book deal with Penguin Random House to write his memoirs.

He will be leading a lively seminar/workshop entitled "All the Feels." You know emotions when they hit you: your eyes mist with tears, your heart aches with sorrow, and your breath quickens with desire. Human emotion is the electricity that powers our existence. But how do we harness this energy to capture our readers? This interactive event will include a reading/performance of his own work. Be prepared to laugh, cry, learn, and enjoy!

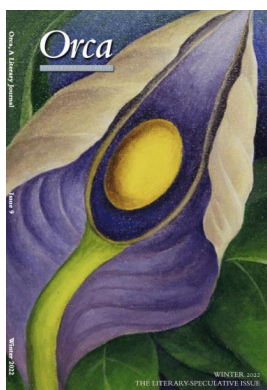
# B R A V O !

Hats off to **Claudia Cornwall** whose non-fiction book ***British Columbia in Flames*** was nominated for the Jeanne Clarke Award for local and regional history! The award is presented annually to individuals or groups for outstanding contributions in the preservation and promotion of local and regional history in the categories of publication and service. [www.claudiacornwall.com/](http://www.claudiacornwall.com/)



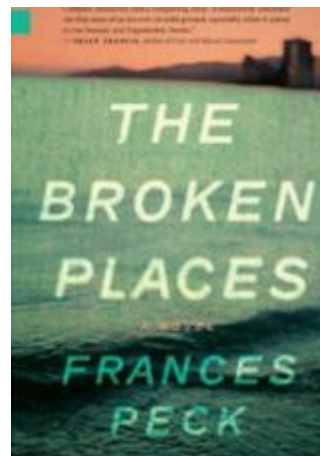
Kudos to **Erin MacNair** for a hat trick of recent publications:

- “Statute of Limitations” in *Fiddlehead* #289
- “Piranha” in *The Antigonish Review* #207
- “The Trade” in *Orca* magazine, 2022 issue 9.



Brava to **Bernice Lever** who continues to be an active poet and contributor to literary community. On Feb 13, 2022, she read 10 of her poems at the **Royal City Literary Arts Society A - Zoom Poetry Reading**. She encourages all poets to read at poetry readings and to participate in supportive events like NSWA's Dare To Be Heard.

Congratulations to **Frances Peck** for the publication of her debut novel ***The Broken Places***. See page 16 for details of her book launch in North Vancouver on April 13<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Everyone is invited – see you there!



**Wiley Wei-Chiun Ho** is pleased to have her short story “**Call Waiting**” published in ***Ricepaper*** magazine. Read the story here: <https://ricepapermagazine.ca/2022/02/call-waiting-by-wiley-wei-chiun-ho/>



Wiley also contributes regularly to the **North Vancouver Recreation and Culture's** blog **Active Living**, interviewing community members and showcasing local talent, community resources, and everyday heroes. Here's a recent article [Shades of Understanding | North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission \(nvrc.ca\)](https://www.nvrc.ca/shades-of-understanding/)



# 100 WORD CHALLENGE

The challenge was to write a story or poem, in 100 words or less, on the theme **with arms akimbo** and here are your creations.

## Names

**B.R. Bentley**

Witharms Akimbo stood quietly. He knew how this was going to go long before the teacher got to him. Why couldn't his mother have given him a common name.

His older brother had faced the same ridicule, but at least he could blame the book. That damned book. There were other books in the small village library – why that one. Tarzan would have been better.

'Akimbo'

'Yes, Sir.'

'I had an Akimbo in this class last year. Your brother?'

'Yes. Sir.'

The teacher shook his head and smiled. 'Any other brothers or sisters?'

'No, Sir. Just Withnail and I.'

## Untitled

**Rose Dudley**

I have used that phrase, "with arms akimbo," many times throughout my life, without really knowing what it meant to have one's arms akimbo.

When composing this piece for the hundred-word challenge, I was forced to find out, and I knew where the answer was readily available.

"Hey Alexa, what does akimbo mean?" I shouted. Immediately, she responded, "With your hands on your hips and your elbows up." Well, I thought, my husband and children have seen me in that position often enough. They couldn't have described it in words either, but they never doubted what that pose meant.

## With arms akimbo

**Shannon Hare**

Business emails don't have exclamation marks

He said

Watch out for upswing in your voice

He said

Don't show uncertainty

Send me your powerpoint

And wear a black blazer

He said

My husband liked him. They chatted at the Christmas party.

*We support the same team. He bought me a drink.*

*He's not so bad.*

A linen tablecloth hid the truth. I focused on the centerpiece as the hand crawled up my thigh. Three poinsettias dusted with gold glitter.

Fancy

Take your power pose advice

and stick it

I said

You are only one line

in my resume

I quit



**Untitled**  
**Karen Bower**

Sadistic cold-eyed tactician astride his horse,  
rides shirtless.  
Macho politician, arms akimbo he wrenches on  
the reins  
Lusts for more power, control, empire returned.  
As tyrant he gobbles up land not his to claim  
And threatens the world with his quiver of lethal  
nukes.

Regardless the language, NO is not a word in his  
vocabulary.  
Never satiated.  
His goal? Being the next Tzar of Russia  
Then the world.  
One small country, one small bite at a time.

What can be done with a bully?  
Stand together, arms akimbo linked shoulder-to-  
shoulder  
In unity, resistance to his call to war.

**With Arms Akimbo**  
**Lisa Bagshaw**

With arms akimbo  
And legs affirmed  
I see the ache  
And hear the yearn

I know the heart  
I feel the breast  
In darkened nights  
I see the rest

If it weren't for love  
On Iorn's lost way  
I'd give an armful  
And let them pray

I see not why  
And hear not so  
We are all one  
Is all I know

**Next 100 Word Challenge (for Fall Newsletter):**  
**contents under pressure**

- ✓ 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 all welcome. Have fun with it!

*Submit your 100-word masterpiece to [editor@nswriters.org](mailto:editor@nswriters.org)*

*"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*

# Poetry

Poems and Photos by *Linden Carroll*

## SNOW DROP



Oh, pretty flower, with your mantel so white  
Etched with collar of green, in contrast so bright,  
Upon a landscape so bare, a sight to behold  
When the month of February begins to unfold.

‘Snow Drop’, well named that you are  
Likened to pearls but more precious by far.

Scattered like snowflakes in shady dale,  
So strong and hardy, yet perceived as frail.

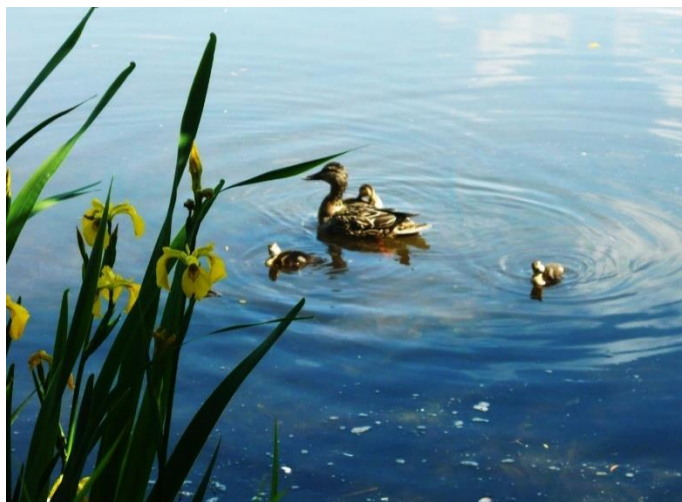
Arriving with gusto to welcome the spring  
And swaying in concert as the song birds sing.

## IRIS

Iris with petals of pure gold you bear;  
Along the shores of Lost Lake your beauty you share.  
Your golden face to the heavens you raise  
And visitors to the lake raise their hands in praise.

Your leaves so green support you well  
As you stand by the lake resisting the swell  
Of life-giving waves of water so pure,  
Should your leaves dry they moisten and cure.

What a pity the show you provide is sparse,  
What a show, what colour, not to last  
But while you are here beside the lake  
All eyes on your beauty will partake.



# Poetry

## Life Is

*Rosemary Gretton*

Life is pain, loss, and sorrow. Life is joy, love, and laughter.

Life is a shy smile and a big hug.

Life is weighted and waiting. Life is a balance that is always tipping.

Life is dealing with indifference and feeling numb and finding passion.

Life is green grass and grey skies and silver linings and golden sun and black and white and seeing red and sometimes blue.

Life is purple prose and paintings and beautiful blossoms.

Life is music and dancing.

Life is creating and recreating. Life is falling down and taking the hand that helps you up again.

Life is hope and peace and forgiveness.

Life is bitter and so sweet.

Life is.

## LENT

*Bernice Lever*

I want to be lent  
to a cause  
that I choose,  
not caused to be  
bent and broken  
from another's  
profits and pleasures.

I will be a good aide.  
Let me be invited to  
peaceful causes!



(Photo: Rosemary Gretton)



## Feature Artist

NSWA's current Treasurer Steve Rayner is multi-creative. In addition to his literary pursuits, Steve is a talented painter whose works have been in solo and juried exhibitions. Here is a sampling from his warm weather collection. For more, visit [www.steverayner.ca](http://www.steverayner.ca)



***Salt Spring Water*** – Acrylic on canvas 12"x 36"

Trees crowd the shoreline of a well-known Gulf Island, leaning out over the waters of Georgia Strait



***Long Hot Summer*** – Acrylic on 16"x 20" Cradled Board

Begonias adorn a ceramic planter in a cool corner of an English garden



***Last Rays Walk*** – Acrylic on canvas 12"x 24" Late afternoon sunlight filters through trees and foliage in woods below Grouse Mountain.

## Bulletin Board



### Looking for a writing group?

Join us for a special meeting to connect, plan, and ultimately create the North Van Library Writer's Circle. There will be no workshopping at this planning discussion. Instead, we will have an NVDPL librarian moderate so that we can figure out:

- How often should we meet and when?
- What kind of writing will members be doing?
- What the best way to share and give feedback about other's writing?
- What kind of community guidelines will be needed to ensure a welcoming and productive environment?

*Registration required. Register online at <https://nvdpl.ca/node/5350/register> or call 604-987-4471, ext. 8175. The Zoom link will be sent to those registered in advance of the meeting date.*

This meeting will be held on Zoom.

**What you'll need to attend:** a computer with microphone (or headphones) and webcam, or your smartphone/tablet.

**Tuesday, March 29, 2022 - 7:00pm to 8:00pm**

### An update on plans for New Arts and Cultural Centre in West Vancouver

For many years, the West Vancouver Council has discussed building a new arts and cultural centre as part of the district's commitment to promote an engaged community that embraces arts, creativity, and lifelong education. This is exciting for artists of all types across the North Shore!

In 2019, WV District Council created an Arts Facilities Advisory Committee to assess the need for a new arts facility and determine the requirements to meet the demand for the next 20 years. After a review of public and privately owned sites in the Ambleside area, public consultation on shortlisted sites took place from May 18 to June 16, 2021 via virtual meetings. Questions were raised, no site was selected, and further consultation is now in the works.

This multi-phased project will take several years of planning before it's realized. Council is still in the early stages of the process and is currently exploring additional community-wide engagement regarding the next steps, the development of a governance model, a fundraising plan, and a facility concept.

Interested in attending future meetings to ensure the voices of literary artists positively impact the design of this future facility? You can read more at: <https://www.westvancouverite.ca/artsplanning>. If you have questions, you can also contact Christie Rosta, the Cultural Services Manager of the District of West Vancouver, via email at: [arts@westvancouver.ca](mailto:arts@westvancouver.ca)

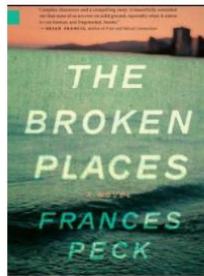
## Bulletin Board

### Member Book Launch!



Come celebrate the launch of

*The Broken Places*



Frances Peck invites fellow NSWA members to a reception, reading, book sale, and author signing to celebrate the launch of her debut novel, *The Broken Places*. Special guest John Clague, Professor of Earth Sciences at SFU, kicks off the event with a short talk about earthquakes.

#### When and where

- Wednesday, April 13, 2022
- Start time 7:00 pm
- The new [Museum of North Vancouver](#), 115 West Esplanade, North Vancouver
- Book sales by [32 Books & Gallery](#)

**Vancouver Public Library** is seeking a **Writer in Residence** to host a 4-month Fall Residency, to highlight the importance of Canadian writing and creativity.

Deadline: March 31, 2022

For info, go to: [Writer in Residence | Vancouver Public Library \(vpl.ca\)](#)



## Executive 2021 - 2022

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### ***President (and Director)***

Janine Cross

### ***Vice-President (and Director)***

Doug MacLeod

### ***Secretary (and Director)***

Christine Cowan

### ***Treasurer (and Director)***

Steve Rayner

### ***Memberships and Member Relations***

Carl Hunter

### ***Library Liaison***

Alicia Peters

### ***Speaker Coordinator***

Janine Cross

### ***Dare to be Heard Host***

Rosemary Gretton

### ***Newsletter Editor/Archivist***

Wiley Wei-Chiun Ho

### ***Webmaster***

Kelly Hoskins

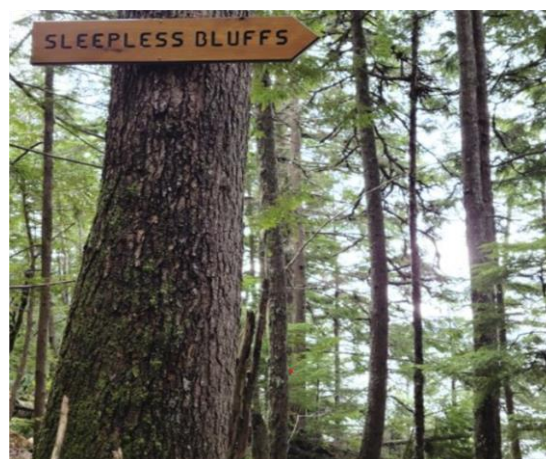
### ***Writing Contest Coordinator***

Barbara Reardon

### ***Member At-large***

Vacant

***Call for new volunteers! Consider joining a  
fun and friendly Executive for the  
2022-23 season.  
Elections at AGM Sep 19***



(Photo: Wiley Ho)

“But the true nature of the human heart is as whimsical as spring weather. All signals may aim toward a fall of rain when suddenly the skies will clear.” - *Maya Angelou*

## Events Calendar

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***March 21***      ***Guest speaker Lara Campbell***

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***April 4***      ***Dare to be Heard***  
***April 9***      ***Saturday morning Write-in***  
***April 25***      ***Guest speaker Renée Sarojini Saklikar***  
***April 26-30***      ***North Shore Writers Festival***

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***May 2***      ***Dare to be Heard***  
***May 14***      ***Saturday morning Write-in***  
***May 16***      ***Guest speaker Frances Peck***

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***June 20***      ***Year-End Wrap Up Party TBC***

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

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***September 19***      ***AGM and Election for  
2022 – 2023 Executive***



# The Last Page

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I was asked recently what inspires me in these times of uncertainty and upheaval. It's simple: I've made a decision to turn away from the dark and move toward the light that life still has to offer.

Easier said than done sometimes. We can't completely divorce ourselves from the world around us. I certainly can't. I've been a news junkie most of my life. But these past few years the news has become too much. It's easy to become disillusioned. Anxious. Depressed. To lose perspective.

So, I decided to start concentrating on what's good, without completely ignoring the rest.

I've written before about how uplifting and inspiring walking with my dog, Glee, can be. People are upbeat when they're out walking with pets. That's contagious. But there's more to it than that. Studies have long shown that getting out in the fresh air, walking daily, is as beneficial to mental well-being as it is to physical health. Our brains need oxygen as much as our hearts and lungs do. We also need to get away from concrete and wood walls. We need to see greenery. Especially trees. Nature bathing is the latest term for the benefits of just being in a natural setting. A city park or tree-lined street will do. Walking in forest trails is

even better. Either one will foster feelings of calm, serenity and creativity.

While you're out, practise smiling and saying hello to the people you encounter. It's amazing how quickly people respond. We're all social creatures, and every positive connection with others, even if only for moments, helps lift our mood for the day. *Social snacking* is the term psychologists are using to describe these short interactions. We've all done more of it during the last few years. It's a good idea to make it a permanent habit.

Stay positive! Positive thoughts lead to positive actions; smiling releases endorphins, which elevate our energy levels. Other studies have shown that those positive thoughts and extra energy often lead to greater inspiration and creativity.

I've stopped rushing so much. Yes, we all have deadlines. But I now build in more time for each task that I need to accomplish. I prioritize better. I try to schedule the day so I do what I want to do at a time I want to do it. That way, it gets done better. Usually faster, too. So, I end up with more spare time. More time to dream, or daydream, feeds inspiration.

Reading is extraordinarily inspiring. My reading tastes have expanded as I've aged. A good thing, I think. I read novels in several different genres. I read

more non-fiction now, in all fields, especially history and anthropology. I try to entertain myself and learn at the same time. It's made me appreciate how lucky I am to live in this particular time and in this country. And the literary works of others inspires me in my own writing.

I have Ukrainian heritage. My Ukrainian grandparents were war refugees, over a century ago. They were amazing people. Always smiling and laughing. Always working hard, always helping others. They knew how to throw a great party, too. One of the things I still have from them is an apron Baba (my grandmother) sewed for me when I got my first apartment. When she died, I put it away, because I didn't want it to wear out. I wanted to keep it in memory of her. Recently, I resurrected it. I wear it now almost every day. It reminds me of their strength, resilience, humour and love in times of uncertainty and upheaval. How, despite everything they went through, they were inspired to keep going. To build a good life. If they could do it, so can I.

Every morning is the dawn of a new day. That's not just a cliché. It's a truth. Each morning, we have a choice. Between the darkness or the light. It's not always an easy choice. But it *is* a choice. And choosing the light is the best path to inspiration I know of. I wish you all an inspiring season.



‘Morning, 1954,’  
by Tetyana Yablonska (1917-2005), Ukrainian painter