

# WRITE ON!

Newsletter of the North Shore Writers' Association  
Linking North Shore writers since 1993  
No. 29: November 2022

## Message from the Editor

Welcome members, new and old, to another year of the North Shore Writers' Association! There are so many exciting events in store for you.

My name is Tiffany, and I am the Association's new newsletter editor. Many thanks to Wiley Ho, the previous editor, for showing me the ropes and allowing my creativity to roam free in designing the newsletter.

This edition seems to inadvertently be mostly about cycles, whether it be regarding the seasons, of life and death, or of war and peace. In my own life, I am going through a season of change as well. I have a six-month-old baby who is teaching me much about life. His growth and milestones are a marker of time passing, and I am trying to savour every fleeting moment. As busy and fulfilled as I am with this little one, editing the newsletter has so far been a welcome respite from changing diapers.

If you have any suggestions or comments regarding the newsletter, please feel free to email [editor@nswriters.org](mailto:editor@nswriters.org).

Warmly,  
Tiffany Budhyanto



## Upcoming Events

**Monday, November 21, 2022**

NSWA Holiday Party

6:00-9:00 pm

Queen's Cross Pub

**Monday, January 16, 2023**

Guest Speaker

Christina Myers

7:00-8:30 pm

North Vancouver City Library

**Monday, February 20, 2023**

Guest Speaker

Sareh Farmand

7:00-8:30 pm

North Vancouver City Library

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# 2022-2023 Board of Directors

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## Newsletter Submission Guidelines

You may submit any of the following:

- A blurb about your recent publication, or writing news (e.g. book launches, author readings, writing awards)
- Your poetry or prose (up to 600 words, fiction or nonfiction, and it can be an excerpt from a larger work)
- Artwork or photography befitting our winter theme (please send high-quality JPG or PNG files)
- Writing workshops or resources to share with fellow members
- A submission to our 100-word challenge

Please note:

Only submissions from NSWA members will be accepted.

Poetry, short fiction or nonfiction. No op-ed articles please.

Email your submission to [editor@nswriters.org](mailto:editor@nswriters.org).

Contributors are responsible for the accuracy, originality, and reliability of their content.

Please check spelling, grammar, and punctuation prior to submission.

Writing that appears in the NSWA newsletter is eligible for submission to the Annual NSWA Writing Contest.

Publication in the *Write On!* newsletter is at the discretion of the Editor, in consultation with the Board of Directors.



# North Shore Writers Holiday Party

Let's celebrate our writing together!

When? Monday, November 21st from 6:00-9:00 pm

Where? Queens Cross Pub (upstairs level)  
2989 Lonsdale Ave., North Vancouver

Who can come? Come alone or bring a spouse or guest. Everybody welcome!

What about food? Choose food and drink items  
from the [menu](#)

See you there! No need to RSVP.



# Dare to be Heard

**The first Monday of each month at 7:00 PM**  
with host Rosemary Gretton

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 writers in all genres, at all stages of the writing journey, and interested listeners too. Dare provides an excellent and gentle space for writers to share poetry, prose—and support!

Note: No meeting in December. Next meeting will be on January 9, 2023 at 7:00 pm.

Join Zoom meeting:  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84717256427?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84717256427?pwd=MTFtV3pTUkxVV01RMDhrL2FVSEJhZz09)  
[pwd=MTFtV3pTUkxVV01RMDhrL2FVSEJhZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84717256427?pwd=MTFtV3pTUkxVV01RMDhrL2FVSEJhZz09)  
Passcode: NSWA (same code each month)



## Saturday Morning Write-in

**The second Saturday of each month**  
**Dec 10, Jan 14, Feb 11, March 11, April 8, May 13**  
**10:00 AM–12:00 PM**  
with host Doug MacLeod

Writing doesn't 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 hot drink and let's write together via Zoom!

Join Zoom meeting:  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87105551221?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87105551221?pwd=WjM2UVA3V0ZFZ1RNNn0vbXFVK01Sdz09)  
[pwd=WjM2UVA3V0ZFZ1RNNn0vbXFVK01Sdz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87105551221?pwd=WjM2UVA3V0ZFZ1RNNn0vbXFVK01Sdz09)  
Passcode: NSWA (same code each month)



# Upcoming Guest Speakers

Our Speaker Coordinator Lisa Bagshaw has put together an incredible lineup of guest speakers for the upcoming year. Here are our upcoming speakers. All NSWA members are welcome to attend. The following events will take place on the **3rd floor of the North Vancouver City Library at 7pm.**

**Monday, January 16, 2023**

**Christina Myers** will discuss her novel *The List of Last Chances*, a longlist finalist in the 2022 Leacock Medal.

At thirty-eight years old, Ruthie finds herself newly unemployed, freshly single, sleeping on a friend's couch and downing a bottle of wine each night. Having overstayed her welcome and desperate for a job, Ruthie responds to David's ad: he's looking for someone to drive his aging mother, Kay, and her belongings from PEI to Vancouver. Ruthie thinks it's the perfect chance for a brief escape and a much-needed boost for her empty bank account.



**Monday, February 20, 2023**

**Sareh Farmand** will talk about her first published work of poetry, *Pistachios in my Pocket*. Sareh is a published poet and graduate of Simon Fraser University's The Writer's Studio. Her debut full-length poetry collection tells the story of her family's escape from Iran during the Iranian Revolution and their experiences as first wave Iranian immigrants to Canada.



**Monday, March 20, 2023**

**Tara McGuire**'s book, *Holden After and Before, Love Letter for a Son Lost to Overdose*, is her first volume-length work. It is a hybrid work in memoir and fiction exploring grief and the opioid crisis in the aftermath of the death of her son, Holden.

Tara McGuire is a writer, voice-over actor, and former broadcaster. She is a graduate of The Writer's Studio at Simon Fraser University and holds an MFA from The School of Creative Writing at The University of British Columbia.



# “Never Trust a Skinny Baker,” and Other Delightful Quotes from Rosie Daykin

by Lisa Bagshaw



Who better to launch our speaker series for 2022-2023 than the unstoppable Rosie Daykin, publisher of three bestselling cookbooks, *Butter Baked Goods*, *Butter Celebrates*, and *Let Me Feed You?* And *shhhh*, she just signed a deal to have her fourth book produced.

Rosie shared with us that ever since she used to love to bake as a child, it had been her dream to open a bakery. And that dream came true. She opened Butter Baked Goods and Café in 2007 after being a successful interior designer. What astonished me about Rosie was she had no formal baking experience and no retail experience. Nor did she have any experience as a writer or cookbook creator - but all these efforts were each interdependently a huge success. There were regular lineups winding out the door and around the block for her bakery, and her three cookbooks have all been bestsellers. Oh, and she also opened a marshmallow factory where the marshmallows are sold all over the world.

She humbly credits her success to “timing and well-honed gut feelings.”

I asked her about her branding which is on point in everything she does, whether it is the interior design of the store, the baked goods themselves, the first two cookbooks, and even her own image. She said, “That is where it all starts. Once you figure out your brand, you stick with it, and everything flows from there.” She speaks of “nostalgia,” “quality baking we grew up with,” “real, pure, and honest.” These are perfect descriptions of her former bakery and books. To walk into her shop, or flip through one of her books, or even to meet her, is like being transported back to a time when life was simple and baked goods tasted like your mom used to make.

I was very curious about how the first book deal happened. Did she pursue publishers, or did they knock on her door based on her successful bakery? And either way, how did she have the guts to do it with no writing experience? Again, she recounts, as if a door opened, someone influential suggested she talk to publishers about her story, so in true Rosie form, she picked up the phone and called one here in Vancouver, and next thing she knew she had her first book deal.

“But, how did you know how to write and create a cookbook?” I asked incredulously. Just like everything else she’s been a huge success at, she said she knew she could figure it out. She had confidence in herself. “But what about the writing?” I pressed. “Oh, I just wrote the way I speak, I didn’t know what else to do.” She has written all the books with a delightful tone of easy, casual, wit and whimsy, just like the way she so generously shared with us her inspirational writing and publishing journey.

# Q&A with Erin MacNair

by Linda Mangnall



Erin MacNair received a Canada Council for the Arts grant to create a short story collection of speculative fiction. Erin is widely published, works at 32 Books and has two teenagers. Still, she took the time to meet for a coffee to talk about her grant, the year ahead and her strange and otherworldly writing voice.

*Congratulations, Erin. What does The Canada Council's Explore and Create grant mean to you?*

The grant means the world to me. It acknowledges my dedication and boosts my confidence. Getting the grant was part luck and part hard work. I had enough stories published, many Canadian, to demonstrate that I am serious in pursuing my craft. The grant gives me the added push I need to cross the finish line for my collection.

*Tell us about your year ahead.*

The timing for the grant works well with the timing of my life because my children are older - I now have another driver in the house! About half the book is ready to go and I will write the remaining seven or eight stories within my one-year deadline. Importantly, the grant enables me to hire my mentor and friend, Canadian author, Zsuzsi Gartner, to assist me with the project in the role of editor and encourager.

*Strange and otherworldly. What attracts you to speculative fiction?*

I am not a serious person, even though my writing can be. My stories have an underlying dark humour. The more speculative and stranger I get, the more fun I am having. I like the endless possibilities of the unknown. Speculative fiction helps me process the world's demons through my writing on topics such as climate, environment and technology.

*How deeply do you research these big issues?*

I research the issue I am writing about until I have a base knowledge of the science. I then feel free to fictionalize it in my stories. I am not a science fiction writer, but elements from that genre are in my work.

*"I view the world from an obtuse angle," you say. What does that mean?*

I don't want to fit into a box – I never have. As a child, I was the one climbing up the back of the basketball hoop so I could observe the playground from a wide-angle lens.

*What have you learned from your writing career so far?*

Write for yourself. Otherwise, it can lead to pain and isolation. For every story I have published, there are many more rejected. I'm also aware that having a book published will not necessarily change my life. The average newly-released book gets about one week of front-facing time on the bookshelf. What does change my life is the fun of creating and writing. To be paid to research and write is an amazing luxury. I am thankful.

Learn more about Erin at: [erinmacnair.com](http://erinmacnair.com)

*Write On! Member Q&A Feature*

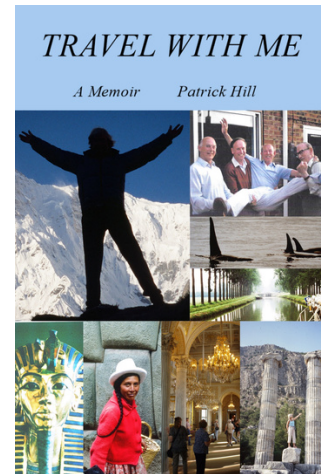
Linda Mangnall is a career and lifestyle writer who recently moved back to North Vancouver. She joined NSWA to connect with other creative people who are drawn to our coniferous-scented community. If you would like to be featured in our Q&A, contact Linda at [Lindamangnall@icloud.com](mailto:Lindamangnall@icloud.com).

# BRAVO!

## A CELEBRATION OF OUR MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS



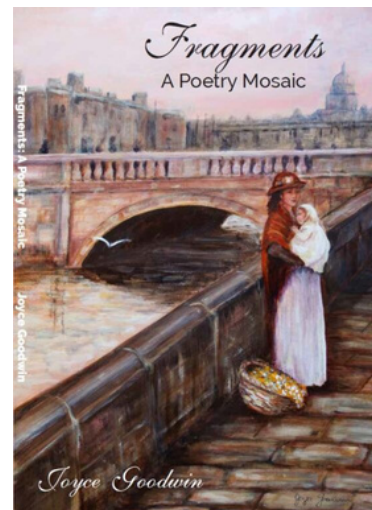
**Wiley Wei-Chiun Ho** is pleased to have her short story "The House" published in PRISM international. The public is invited to the launch of issue 61.1 at Massy Arts Society on Saturday December 10 from 6-8 pm PST. Congratulations, Wiley!



Congrats to **Patrick Hill**, whose manuscript for his memoir "Travel With Me" was published by Pegasus Publishers in Cambridge, U.K.!



**Joan Boxall** has published a wonderful travel piece on Portugal in the November issue of '55+ Lifestyle Magazine' which you can read here. The photo above is of Joan and her husband at Cape of St. Vincent in Portugal's Algarve.



**Joyce Goodwin's** book *Fragments: A Poetry Mosaic* was officially included in the North Shore Authors Collection at the N.S. libraries on November 17th, 2022. An official Celebration took place at the North Vancouver City Library where all the accepted books were displayed.

# Rescue Me: A Book Launch Recap

by Cathalynn Labonté-Smith

It's been an exciting few weeks since my book, *Rescue Me: Behind the Scenes of Search and Rescue* was released on October 7th, starting with a reading at Vancouver Public Library as part of a panel of authors. I read about Andy Evans, lately of Sunshine Coast Search but formerly of Powell River Search and Rescue, and the nail-biting search in the fall for a mother and her toddler who were lost overnight while mushroom-picking. In the fall, there are many call-outs for mushroom pickers, and there was recently an incident of mushroom poisoning in Powell River where two people had an ingested what was possibly an *Amanita muscaria*, more commonly known as a toadstool. They were rescued by North Shore Rescue and Talon helicopters airlifted them to hospital where they recovered. There were many audience questions about mushrooms, but I clarified that I'm not a mushroom expert, although I did write an article on mushrooms in Sunshine Coast Life magazine on cultivating and foraging mushrooms in the most recent issue.



My next reading was again in a group of talented writers as part of the Sunshine Coast Art Crawl in Sechelt, where I was honoured to have as guests, the Masseys, Vincent (Binty), a well-known potter, and Cheryl, a basket-maker. Binty has recently retired from Whistler SAR and moved to Sechelt. I described the ice rescue where Binty risked his life and was awarded the Medal for Bravery and flown to Ottawa to receive it. He shared how he didn't feel worthy of the award next to the other recipients, like an Inuit grandmother who fought off a polar bear to save four children.

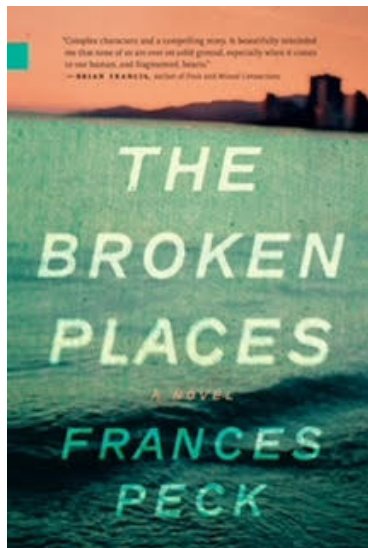


Recently, I had a book launch at Book Warehouse on Main Street, where Brock Fischer, an avalanche survivor, who was rescued by Mike Danks from NSR was present to add to the conversation about his life-changing experience and the death of his "best partner ever" in the avalanche. Mike and some of his most memorable rescues are captured in my book. I see that Mike was featured in the article on the NSR fundraising calendar, which I opened my launch with to get the word out.



The launch saw a full house and extra chairs had to be brought out. Also in attendance was Martin Colwell, one of the founders of Lions Bay Search and Rescue, who is also profiled in my book and I read one of Martin's recovery stories. The books were almost all sold out, but there are a few signed copies in the store if you hurry.

# EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS



## Tales of Disaster & Rescue: Real & Imagined

In their recent books, NSWA members Cathalynn Labonté-Smith and Frances Peck both focus on the compelling themes of disaster and survival. Cathalynn's non-fiction book, *Rescue Me: Behind the Scenes of Search and Rescue* (Caitlin Press), goes behind the scenes of some of North America's riskiest search and rescue operations to bring readers harrowing tales from those who survived natural disasters and misadventures, and those who risked their lives to rescue them. Frances's novel, *The Broken Places* (NeWest Press), which is set largely on the North Shore, explores what happens to society and a group of wildly different yet interrelated characters when the fictional Great Vancouver Earthquake hits.

On **January 28 at 2 pm**, Cathalynn and Frances will discuss their real and imagined tales and read from their work in an interactive conversation at the West Vancouver Memorial Library. NSWA members are warmly invited. Keep an eye on the library's website ([westvanlibrary.ca](http://westvanlibrary.ca)) for details.



## Poetry Workshop

As part of the North Vancouver City Library's "Writing with Writers" workshop series, NSWA member Joan Boxall will be leading a workshop. Bring your journals, quills (or pens!), and a desire to get creative. The workshop is tentatively titled "Prose pondering to poetic response: from journaling to verse". 3rd floor of the Library, from 7:00-8:30 pm on December 7th. Keep an eye on the NVCL website events calendar to register.

**But I Live: Illustrating Holocaust Survivor Stories**

Wednesday, November 30, 2022

7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Vancouver Central Library

How can we preserve the history of the Holocaust and educate young people about it? And can a book help to push back against disinformation and hate?

Come to a conversation about *But I Live*, a new book that collects the stories of four Holocaust survivors, illustrated by three graphic novelists.



**Writers Showcase**

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Vancouver Central Library

With only a few minutes to grab your attention, a talented line-up of established and emerging local writers showcase their works and bring you into their world.

Vivian (Xiao Wen) Li

Kim Mooney

Mark Vulliamy



**SFU Writing Consults**

January 3, 2023

4:00 pm – 7:00 pm

West Vancouver Memorial Library

Need an expert opinion on your writing? The SFU Writer's Studio offers free, one-on-one, 45-minute manuscript consultations at the Library.

What you'll need: seven double-spaced pages of written work to submit ahead of the consult and an email address. Writing consults are limited to one per person. This manuscript consultation is intended for individuals pursuing creative projects and is not suited for homework assistance. This program runs the first Tuesday of the month with time slots at 4:00, 5:00, and 6:00 pm.

Please contact 604-925-7403 or [info@westvanlibrary.ca](mailto:info@westvanlibrary.ca) to make an appointment.

# 100-word challenge

Theme: Folk Music

## Fresh Out the Oven

by Nona Jalali

Tenderly rising lyrics scrawled  
on the back of a dog-eared recipe  
Font faint, it's hard to differentiate  
whether the tune will be light, airy,  
morose, teary—  
Are the directions for sourdough a clue?

I knead on rhythm while  
soft plucking and swooning dips  
fold upon another, rise and rise,  
keep my heart company—  
Can you hear the smell of a freshly baked loaf?

Heat radiates out the oven  
as my hands hover near the flame,  
ears receiving a steady wave of warmth  
Of course—  
What other songs would I enjoy my bread and butter with?

## The Hej Shop

by Rod Baker

“**We shall overcome**, some day-a-a-ay.” I sing Pete Seeger’s words to cheer myself up—build a bridge over Troubled Waters that I’ve been floundering in for the past two hours. Sometimes, when hopelessly stuck, I sing a song from my carefree youth to lift me out of whatever clinging, claggy, clay I’m stuck in. I massage my ancient, aching knees, sigh, swallow, and stare grumpily at the wordless instruction manual. How can a 30-inch-high filing cabinet possibly have 89 parts? I’m never, ever, ever going to that store with Anna again. IKEA—humiliating hundreds of helpful husbands, every day, everywhere.

### YOUR NEXT NEWSLETTER 100-WORD CHALLENGE:

Submission must be 100 words or less (excluding title);

Can be prose or poetry;

Inclusion of theme words is optional

Theme: Aging

Email your masterpiece to [editor@nswriters.org](mailto:editor@nswriters.org)

# Anna's hummingbird wintering over in Lions Bay

by Rod Baker



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## New Independent Bookstore in Lower Lonsdale

by Doug MacLeod

Helicon Books, a new and independent bookstore in the heart of Lower Lonsdale opened this summer. Come down to this bright, inviting space at 125 West 1st and check out their collection for yourself. Helicon sells a wide range of books from literary new novels to award winning non-fiction, including books in translation. If the book you are looking for isn't on the shelves, the staff will be happy to place an order. Christmas is coming and books make great gifts.



**Let's support our local independent bookstores!**

# STOP WARS, STOP THE KILLINGS

by Malik Ahmed

"The world is passing through the worst time of war. Shortly after the massive hit by Covid-19, war has paralyzed human life worldwide. The threat of using nuclear weapons is at its highest ever. Is the Third World War imminent? Nations are on a high alert. And I got caught penning an anti-war poem."

Some world leaders are playing war games  
While the others are clapping, and  
some greedy foxes are wandering around  
looking for a piece of meat.  
The brutal armies are bombarding,  
attacking by drones and tanks,  
and firing rain of missiles murdering people and  
destroying infrastructure.  
The air has been tainted by the odour  
of the decaying bodies,  
The river-water has turned red,  
mixing with the blood of the dead.  
The solitary beaches resemble a cemetery,  
where lies some corpses and body parts  
in wait of the high tides, to be dragged into the water  
and consumed by sharks.  
O world leaders, try to hear  
the pleadings of the virgin girls  
who were murdered after being raped  
by the brutal armies.  
Who should I run to, seeking an end  
to these brutalities and mass murders?  
The United Nations seems no longer functional,  
just standing like an ice sculpture.  
O the people of the world, come down to the streets  
like the bees from the hive, and protest  
against the modern-day Hitlers, chanting slogans:  
Stop Wars, Stop the Killings.

Malik is a new member of the NSWA, a poet, and reads his own poems  
on the World Poetry Cafe radio show broadcast by Vancouver Coop Radio on  
100.5 FM every Thursday.

# Courage Can Wait For Tomorrow

by Alicia Peters

The earth exhales deeply sending up a dewy morning fog. We survived our first rainy night camping in bear country. Coffee percolates and we're soon on our way.

We'd booked our roof-top-car-camping trip months ago but as the weekend approached, our idyllic vision of camping in the late summer heat washed away with the rainfall warning. September weather is unreliable, and now we realize that we're too late in the season, but it's impossible to re-book. Our cushy campsite is full, leaving us to one beside a salmon-bearing river. A 'bear in the area' sign welcomes us in.

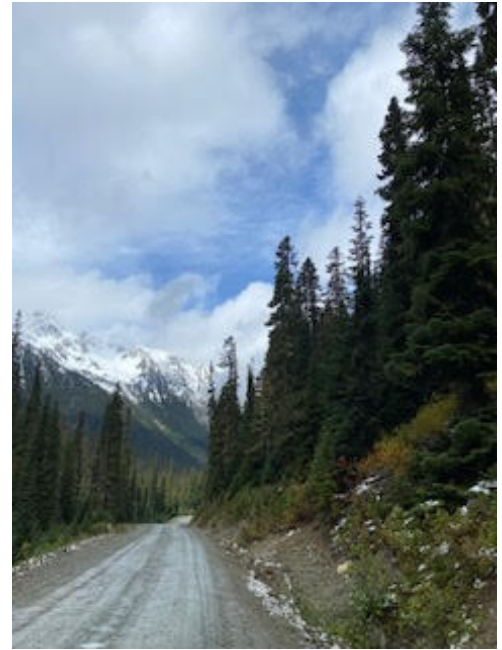
Semaphore Lakes, two hours from Whistler, is our planned activity, a popular hike in the summer with friends who have 4x4s. A chain of three pristine alpine lakes that make a robust day hike or base camp for those adventurous enough to carry on up the mountains in their background.

Getting to the trailhead is a chore. We drive through soggy meadows as rain clouds hang over farms dotted along the road. Turning right, we leave civilization and pavement behind. Our intestines rattle as we slowly roll over the pot-holed gravel. At first, Joshua tries to dodge them, but it is so rutted it is impossible. After twenty minutes we pull over to release all that's been shaking inside us. Can we last two more hours of this I wonder? The switchbacks begin. Mercifully the road smooths out, a hint of sunshine pokes through and we think, "this isn't so bad". We glimpse spectacular mountain views as the rainclouds fidget in the sky.

The Hurley River Forest Service Road is locally known as the Hurley, as in "dude, I took the truck up the Hurley and broke an axle". It's reserved for the ambitious or the stupidly ambitious we say as we pass a vintage Volvo and wonder how they'll make it. The 74-kilometre logging road connects Pemberton to the town of Goldbridge. For those not employed in the forestry industry, it's access to some of the gnarliest expeditions in B.C. Joshua is deservedly proud that we are conquering this road and jokes about starting an 'I survived the Hurley' club complete with t-shirts. Six months later I discover such a club already exists and they have trucker hats and regular reporting on road conditions. Unfortunately, they don't ship – you actually have to drive the Hurley to get the merch. That's next-level brand preservation.

Rounding another switchback, a baby black bear tumbles down the mountainside onto the road. Oblivious to our existence, it saunters along before disappearing down the other side of a stream. Where is mamma bear? I'm confident we can manage black bears, but grizzlies are what's been keeping me up - they aren't afraid or curious, just hungry, territorial, and very large. Even with our bear spray and air horn, if we came face to face with a grizzly it would be a bad scene. What are the odds? Have you ever regretted asking a question to put your mind at ease? September in B.C. is one of the final fattening up months before hibernation and our destination was described to me as a "grizzly highway", so the odds are not as good as I'd like. Courage will come when we get to the trail.

The Hurley ascends 5,500 feet. Cresting the top of the pass, we hit snow and by the time we get to the trailhead, there is a foot of it. No cars and no discernable trail. We decide to forge ahead to our campsite and hike tomorrow. Courage can wait for another day.



# An Archetypal Champion

by Arthur Hastings

Volunteers are the most formidable foes in battles. He was one, the only one. His fortitude came from a blend of well-practiced capabilities, the will to protect and belief. He was ready to fight for his people, his king and himself.

Despite his physique, his brethren did not regard him as a warrior; he was there to feed them. He had not trained for battle, yet his initiative was not an impetuous decision. He had multiple days and nights to mull over stepping forward. He knew what he was about to face and had argued successfully to be his army's champion.

As he had no shield, sword, or spear, he did not prepare for battle with the soldiers. He knew exactly what to do. He had done it countless times.

Apprehension and fear filled his body as he wended his way through the ranks lined up and facing the enemy's ranks. He had refused an offer of armour. It would hinder his movements, and thwart a victory and undermine its significance. By wearing almost nothing to the battle, he would appear naked and defenseless. The enemy would underestimate him and that would make his victory epic.

When he stepped in front of his army's lines, the enemy's champion and the enemy's army sized him up. Their taunts were meant to bludgeon his confidence and to spike his fear.

The enemy knew nothing of his experience with fear and adrenalin rushes from other fight or flight situations. His quiet courage overcame his fear and gave him control over his adrenalin. It did not surge through his body with just a risk of imminent and deadly danger. When he decided to attack, it would rush through his body for quickness, speed, and strength.

When he stopped advancing toward his opponent his stance was not that of a fearsome warrior nor that of a champion squarely facing another. His left side was closer to the enemy lines. His weight was on his right leg. His left knee was bent slightly, and his left foot was on a bump on the ground. He was leaning away from the enemy as if he might flee.

His left hand casually held a braided wool strip hanging over his left shoulder. His right arm was by his right side with the hand close to his thigh. No weapon was obvious, but his right hand held a palm-sized smooth stone. His stance was stable and relaxed.

He turned his head toward his opponent and set hardened determination into his jaw and neck. Apprehension furrowed his brow. The aftermath of his attack worried him. After he killed the enemy's champion the reaction of the armies would be unpredictable.

He locked his eyes on his opponent like any hunter focused on its prey. The taunts from the enemy's champion proved that the ruse had worked. His opponent did not see him as a threat.

He put the stone into his sling and whipped the sling around. He used the power of his legs to accelerate the stone toward Goliath's forehead. Upon the stone striking Goliath, the giant fell face down. David sprinted forward, took Goliath's sword, and decapitated the giant. The Philistines panicked and fled with the Israelites in pursuit.

The penultimate David by Michelangelo depicts David as a calm, canny and courageous champion in the moments before he slung the stone at Goliath. The marble is silent, yet the sculpture declares who will be the victor.

# The Last Page

by Cathy L. Scrimshaw

I've been thinking a lot about cycles lately. There's the cycle of life, of course. But I've been thinking beyond that lately, to the daily news about historical, public health, and economic cycles.

Years ago, one of my history profs was fond of saying "history is not linear. History is more cyclical. And often the course of history, and the fate of thousands, hinges on the actions of one person."

A few years ago, another war in Europe seemed unthinkable. Yet here we are again, two European nations battling each other, and affecting us all. After what we learned from WWII, we shouldn't be here again. But we are.

And the recent worldwide pandemic. We've been here before, too. The Spanish flu pandemic killed millions. Medical researchers warned us another one could happen at any time, but with modern medicine, it didn't seem possible. Yet here we are. And it's not done with us yet.

What about economic cycles? Boom times, bust times. Poverty, then prosperity, both linked to cycles in politics; political motivations and actions seem to change in step with economic cycles.

On a personal level? Recent events have taught us how quickly life can change, can become shaky, unpredictable. Amorphous, even. It seems impossible to get one's solid footing. Which leads many of us to live for the moment. Enjoy each day to the full. Or, instead, put as much meaning into life as possible.

What does this have to do with writing? It means inspiration – for a short story, a novel, an essay – is as close as the next newscast, magazine article, or conversation with a friend, neighbour or family member.

Local writer Diana Stevan has created a successful trilogy from the memories of her Ukrainian grandmother, inspired by the events her Baba lived through decades ago in a country that is at war yet again, again wracked by hardship and suffering. The recent children's novels from Sonia Garrett, another local writer, take place in the Fraser Valley during WWII. Research that included speaking with people who lived through those times, combined with her own vivid imagination, has given us a wonderfully fantastic peek inside a child's day-to-day life during the familial upheaval created by a world at war. Karen Dodd has taken a page out of political, economic and criminal current events to write thrillers about international organized crime and crusading prosecutors who risk their lives to fight for justice. Again, absorbing reading based on fact.

All three writers looked at the cyclical forces at work in our world. At how the actions of a few can have far-reaching effects on the many. At how drama can be found in any human journey, whether it is international in scope or takes place in our own backyards. At how events create uncertainty and challenges, and how meeting those challenges forges character and creates action. Then they took those real-life elements and created absorbing stories.

Today's world is packed with inspiration for us writers. I'm sure many of you have your own great stories to share. I'm looking forward to hearing some of those at Dare, and seeing some of them in print. So, I'm sure, are many other readers and listeners.

See you all at the next meeting.