

# WRITE ON!

Newsletter of the North Shore Writers' Association  
Linking North Shore writers since 1993  
No. 34: February 2024



## President's Message

Writing fiction is like enjoying life. Characters are critical in both sectors — their foibles, fantasies, and fears all wrapped into unforgettable idiosyncratic personalities. One recent sleepless night, I fell prey to searching the web (not the dark web, that's another story) for old friends from decades past to see what was new and publicly visible about them. I stumbled upon an obituary of a woman I once dated forty years ago. Yes, it is a long time as my daughters would remind me. I remember her as an angry leftist but also fun and passionate.

We fell out because of the anger, not the political persuasion, and certainly not because of the passion. She was a vibrant, vivacious person who was working on her third university degree when we briefly consorted. I imagined then she would go on to great things in community activism. In fact, she was eventually productive working as a legal aid lawyer and volunteering for Amnesty International. But the sad news is that by her early forties she developed MS and, subsequently, dementia, faded away professionally, and passed away early.

All this information, which I did not possess until recently, makes her character more memorable. So, imagine all the exhilarating twists and depressing turns your fictional characters can take. It will never match up to reality.

Bill Koch, *President*

## Upcoming Events

**Monday, February 26, 2024**

7:00-8:30pm

General Meeting & Speaker  
Series

North Vancouver City Library,  
3rd Floor Program Room  
Guest speaker: Grant Lawrence

**Wednesday, March 6, 2024**

7:00pm

North Vancouver City Library  
Dare to be Heard  
1st Floor Program Room

**Saturday, March 9, 2024**

10:00am–12:00pm

Saturday Morning Write-In  
Online

Many thanks to the North  
Vancouver City Library for  
generously providing meeting  
space for many of our events  
and workshops.

*We respectfully acknowledge the Coast Salish Peoples, including the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and səlihwaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh), on whose unceded ancestral lands our community of writers supporting writers is grateful to live and work.*

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# 2023-2024 Board of Directors

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**Speaker Coordinator:** Lisa Bagshaw  
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**Dare to be Heard Host:** rotating  
**Newsletter Editor:** Tiffany Budhyanto  
**Webmaster and Publicity:** Carmen Farrell  
**Writing Contest Coordinator:** (vacant)  
**Directors-at-Large:** Trish Gauntlett,  
Melanie Dorchester, Barbara Reardon, Linda Mangnall

## Message from the Editor

February is a month associated with love and gratitude...so I wanted to take this opportunity to show my gratitude and appreciation for you, dear reader! I am so grateful for your dedication and commitment to engaging with the North Shore Writers' Association. I hope you enjoy being a member and are relishing the writing journey. Yes, there can be writer's block (sometimes, it feels more like a wall or a tower), and days when your words don't feel like enough. I've certainly had those days. But we all know that progress isn't a straight line — it looks more like a messy squiggle that my toddler likes to draw. So, take solace in the fact that our organization is here to support you every step of the way, however we can. Also, don't forget to submit your entry to the NSWA Annual Writing Contest. There is a new category this year. If you're feeling hesitant, just go for it — you never know.

I can't wait to read more of what you've got.

Tiffany Budhyanto, *Newsletter Editor*

# NORTH SHORE WRITERS ASSOCIATION

## 28TH ANNUAL WRITING CONTEST



OPENS JAN. 15, 2024 - DEADLINE, MAR. 15, 2024

### FICTION

\$100

1st prize winners

### NON-FICTION

\$75

2nd prize winners

### POETRY

\$50

**\*NEW\***

### WRITING FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG ADULTS

All genres.  
Illustrations accepted.

3rd prize winners



Prizes sponsored by:



### Low Entry Fees

- \$10/entry for NSWA members
- \$15/entry for non-members
- \$5/entry for all youth

BACK LANE  
BOOKS

kidsbooks

For more details go to:  
[nswriters.org/annual-contest/](http://nswriters.org/annual-contest/)

# Upcoming Speakers

Lisa Bagshaw hosts an interview-style Speakers Series meeting every month at the North Vancouver City Library from 7:00-8:30pm. Read below for more information on our future guests!

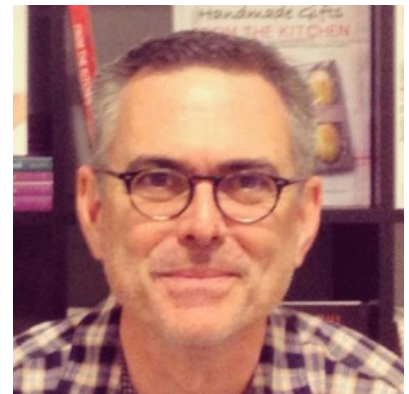
February 26, 2024

**Grant Lawrence** is an award-winning writer, musician, broadcaster, and live event host. He is the author of four best-selling books for adults: *Adventures in Solitude*, *The Lonely End of the Rink*, *Dirty Windshields*, and his latest number one bestseller, *Return to Solitude*. *Bailey the Bat and the Tangled Moose*, his first children's picture book, was released in 2021. Grant is also the host of the CBC Music Top 20 and the lead singer of the internationally acclaimed garage band The Smugglers.



March 18, 2024

**Robert McCullough** is Publisher of Appetite by Random House and a Vice-President of Penguin Random House of Canada. After twenty-one successful years at Whitecap Books, Robert had the opportunity to start a new imprint in Vancouver for Penguin Random House of Canada, where he has been creating a carefully curated collection of food, drink, and lifestyle titles since launching in 2012. Appetite's list has produced more than ten *Globe and Mail* Bestsellers and five *New York Times* Bestsellers.



Coming in April...

**Erin Soros** writes fiction, nonfiction, poetry and critical theory. She researches trauma-induced psychosis and the police and psychiatric response to it. Her honours include The Malahat Review Long Poem Prize, inclusion in Best Canadian Poetry 2020, Gold at the National Magazine Awards for One of a Kind Storytelling and Silver at the National Magazine Awards for poetry.





# WANT TO GET PUBLISHED?

Submit your poetry, prose, or artwork to the NSWA Newsletter! It's a great jumping off point for getting your work out to the public.

## 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, published articles)
- Your poetry or prose (up to 600 words, fiction or nonfiction, and it can be an excerpt from a larger work)
- Artwork or photography (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.



# DARE TO BE HEARD



Writing can be hard and lonely...but it doesn't have to be! Dare to be Heard encourages people to read their work aloud in a friendly and non-critical environment, and have the courage to finish their story. Meet fellow writers in a relaxed and welcoming setting.

## MEETING DATES

7pm at the North Vancouver City Library

March 6, 2024	1st floor program room
April 3, 2024	2nd floor boardroom
May 1, 2024	2nd floor boardroom

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!**



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

A North Shore Writers Association Workshop.



# Saturday Morning Write-ins

with host Melanie Dorchester



**March 9, April 6, May 11, June 8**

**10:00am–12:00pm**

Can you imagine yourself seated in the comfort of your own home, ready to write, then nothing happens? The friendly but focused eclectic Saturday morning write-in may be a good fit for you! After a brief check in to share recent writing news, questions, concerns and individual writing plans for the morning, we do a writing warm up, then get to work. At the midway point and again at the end of the session, insightful and helpful writing tips are often shared. Participants often marvel at how much they can write in such a short time.

New members are always welcome.

Join Zoom meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87105551221?pwd=MUNTcFNkMWRxOXpRWIBHRHA2VUZpQT09>

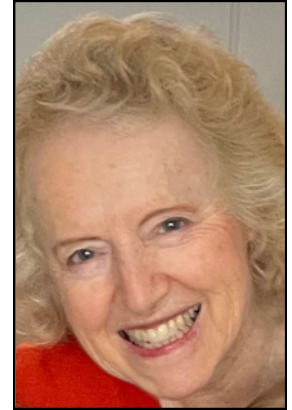
Meeting ID: 871 0555 1221

Passcode: Write (same every month)

# Member Q&A with Christine Cowan

## by Linda Mangnall

*Dedicated NSWA board member and newly self-published author Christine Cowan accomplished her bucket list goal of writing a novel after retiring from a career in teaching and counselling. The dynamic plot for her debut novel, She Thought I Knew, evolved from a disturbing incident at her job, and the layers of conflicts and subplots came from a lifetime of reading, attending creative workshops, and listening to the advice of successful authors.*



### **Tell us a bit about yourself.**

I grew up in Vancouver and moved to the North Shore for my career. In addition to my teaching degree, I have a master's of psychology that provided me with insights on human behaviour and helped with creating a suspense novel. I have won prizes from local writing contests in poetry and non-fiction, and I am currently writing my second novel. I am also a painter and belong to the North Shore Artists' Guild.

### **Why did you choose to self-publish?**

I chose to self-publish because writing a novel (and finishing it!) was on my bucket list. I wanted to get it in front of readers as quickly as possible and be able to say I had done it. Now that I am now working on my second book, I plan to try the traditional publishing route.

### **Your novel is a thriller set on the Sunshine Coast. What is your connection to this beautiful part of BC?**

We had a cabin on the Sunshine Coast, and I still visit there often. My second novel is also set on the Sunshine Coast, but the plot is unrelated to the first novel.

### **One reviewer described your novel as having “a deceptively intricate plot and engaging main character.” What insights can you offer about your creative process?**

The plot idea came from an event at my job and built from there. I explored themes and what we can learn from them. My characters are an amalgam of friends and people I've met with bits of myself in there, too.

### **What childhood book made an impression on you?**

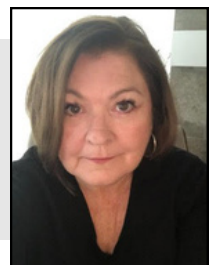
*The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Even as a child I was interested in wounded people and underdogs.

### **You have served on the NSWA board for almost a decade. Thank you! What does the NSWA offer you?**

I love to talk to others who feel the same excitement about writing that I do. The association attracts a wonderful mix of people and has great speakers and programs of interest.

### **Write On! Member Q&A Feature**

Linda Mangnall is a career and lifestyle writer. Suggestions for the member Q&A feature are welcome and can be submitted to Linda at: [Lindamangnall@icloud.com](mailto:Lindamangnall@icloud.com).





# Playwright Jill Daum's Words Lusciously Devoured By All

by Lisa Bagshaw



The North Shore Writers' Association was thrilled to have Jill Daum, Actor and Playwright for over 40 years, as our guest in the Speaker Series in January. Jill is one of the co-creators, co-writers and performers of internationally acclaimed *Mom's the Word* trilogy, which was seen all over the world, by millions of people and translated into a multitude of languages. She recently wrote a play on her own, *Forget About Tomorrow* about her experience with her husband (John Mann's) early onset Alzheimer's Disease, a love story which tells the tale of a relationship rocked by a devastating disease. Jill was humorous, engaging, genuine, and provocative as she performed from three of her plays, *Mom's the Word*, *Forget About Tomorrow*, and a new one that is in the works about her son who has been diagnosed with Schizophrenia.

In our conversation, Jill was humorous and generous about her writing process. Writing a play wasn't something she had considered until one of her actor friends had engaged her and a few other actor friends about the experience of having a baby and being a new mom. Jill discovered a love of writing about her life with humour and authenticity. And it hit the sweet spot. All the women of *Mom's the Word* accentuated their authentic experiences as new moms and it catapulted the show not only locally here in Vancouver, but nationally and all over the world.

Jill had always utilized a writing/acting group to formulate the *Mom's the Word* plays, but then she found herself on her own to write *Forget About Tomorrow*. She joined a different writing group and was able to flush it out, and with the help of a Dramatron, which in the more traditional publishing world is like an editor, she was able to bring it to fruition to the stage in live theatre. It was the first time she had written alone, written what she calls "fiction" and not acted in her own creation. She utilized the elements of character development, plot, tension, scenes, pacing, and dialogue to bring it all to life.

Jill is currently in the process of writing a play about her son's condition of Schizophrenia, part of which she also graciously performed for us. Although she shared that she is struggling to find the humour in it, which is her calling card, I'm sure she will.

Those of us in attendance lusciously devoured every word Jill spoke and performed. We are so grateful for Jill's performances and sharing of her writing experience and process as a playwright. I can't wait for her next play!

On Monday, February 26, we'll welcome Canadian broadcaster, musician, and best-selling author Grant Lawrence for another fascinating Speaker Series.

# BRAVO!

A CELEBRATION OF MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS



Member **Suzanne Spohn**'s two-part piece "To Go Faster" won an award for best 2023 Heritage article in the magazine *Classical Gas*, the magazine of the Canadian XK Jaguar Register and Canadian Classic MG Club. This non-fiction story is about her husband, Bill, racing an MGA in the 1970s, '80s and '90s. He raced the sports car at race tracks from Coquitlam (Westwood) to California (Laguna Seca).

Suzanne would like to thank everyone in the NSW Saturday Morning Write-ins for encouraging her from start through to the finish line to complete these pieces. The articles can be viewed at the links below.

Part 1 – Racing an MGA and TVR in B.C., Oregon and Washington, *Classical Gas*, Sept/Oct 2023 issue: article starts on page 18.

Part 2 – Racing an MGA and TVR at Laguna Seca, *Classical Gas*, Nov/Dec 2023 issue: article starts on page 17



**Doug Macleod** wrote an article on The Celtic Colours Festival on Cape Breton Island which is published in the winter edition of PostScript Magazine. PostScript Magazine is the quarterly publication of the BC Retired Teachers' Association. See p. 42 to read the article.

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY DOUG MACLEOD

# EVENTS, WORKSHOPS AND MORE

## Regional Spotlight on the NSWA

On Tuesday, February 27 (7:00–8:15pm), the Federation of BC Writers will shine the spotlight on . . . us! NSWA board member Wiley Wei-Chiun Ho will host an evening of readings and conversation featuring three NSWA authors: Samantha Adkins, Marie-Claude Arnott, and Calvin Wharton. Don't miss this chance to listen to and cheer for your fellow writers. [Register now](#) to get your free ticket and Zoom link, and share with your friends, family, and writing network.



## Author to Author: The Fusion of Fact and Fiction

On Wednesday, March 13 (7:00–8:00pm), the Lynn Valley Library will host a conversation between the NSWA's own Frances Peck and North Vancouver author Tara McGuire. Frances and Tara will do a deep dive into inspiration, process, research, and craft as they discuss the making of their books, in particular how they blend fact and fiction to create worlds and characters that feel real. [Register for this free event on the library website](#), and tell your friends!

**NORTH VANCOUVER DISTRICT Public Library**

**LYNN VALLEY**

**Author to Author: The Fusion of Fact and Fiction**

Wednesday, March 13  
7:00pm–8:00pm

Lynn Valley Library  
Community Meeting Room

"Truth is so hard to tell, it sometimes needs fiction to make it plausible."  
—Francis Bacon

Critically acclaimed authors Tara McGuire and Frances Peck create worlds that feel real because of accurate local and technical details, and also journey into emotional and psychological truths that only fiction can reveal.

In this inspiring author conversation, Tara and Frances will discuss the making of their books: their process, research, characters, themes, and the choices they made to blend fact and fiction on the page.

Their books will be for sale (cash or e-transfer).

Registration required:  
register online or  
call 604-984-0286,  
ext. 8144.

**LYNN VALLEY**  
1277 Lynn Valley Rd.  
604-984-0286

**CAPLANO**  
2040 Highway 104  
604-987-4471

**PARQUATE**  
8015 Burrill St.  
604-909-0727

**LYONS GATE**  
1730 Lyons Gate Ln.  
604-986-3033

**nvdppl.ca**



Dear Writers,

I'm hosting a multi-day writing retreat this year and I hope you'll consider joining me. It's in September, at the tail end of summer, on beautiful Salt Spring Island.

For five sweet days we'll get to call Stowel Lake Farm our home. Delicious food, private rooms, and guided morning writing sessions provide the foundation for the retreat, which is designed to support you to work peacefully and productively on a project of your choosing in the company of like-minded creators.

As writers, we spend so much time alone with our craft. We need opportunities like this to be with other writers to talk shop, work side by side, share ideas, laugh, and play. Online classes and groups support us in important ways, but getting away with our writing is uniquely refreshing. I know first hand that creative retreats can be life-changing.

The last retreat I hosted was in France in July 2019, pre-pandemic. Times have changed, to say the least. But our love of writing hasn't...In fact, it may have intensified. Writing is personally empowering, but it's also a form of power, because stories can change hearts and minds.

If the idea of this retreat kindles your heart's desire in any way, please check out the link below, or email me so we can set up a live call. I'd be delighted to talk to you.

Write well.  
April

[Deep Writing Retreat, Sept 12th to 17th, 2024](https://deepstorydesign.com)  
[april@deepstorydesign.com](mailto:april@deepstorydesign.com)



Relax ~ Write ~ Connect  
**Deep Writing Retreat**

Salt Spring Island, BC  
with April Bosshard



Visit **[deepstorydesign.com](https://deepstorydesign.com)** for more information.





# SUNSHINE COAST WRITERS AND EDITORS SOCIETY

## 2ND ANNUAL BOOK AWARDS FOR BC AUTHORS

OPENS FEB. 1st, 2024 - DEADLINE, MAY 31st, 2024

### GENRES

Fiction  
Non-Fiction  
Poetry

Writing for Children/YA  
Diverse Voices

Indigenous Voices  
Sunshine Coast Voices

Open to traditionally & self-published books. Multiple & simultaneous entries accepted.

Submit ONE print & ONE electronic copy of book (if possible), or TWO print copies of book to : SCWES 787 Madison Place, Gibsons, BC V0N 1V1  
Send a cover email with your name, address, email, cell number, publisher (if applicable), book's publication date (must be between Jan. 1st, 2022 - March 31st, 2024 to be eligible)

### ENTRY FEE

\$50 per book

\$20 per poetry book under 120 pp. or \$50 over 120 pp.

Under age of 18 authors - \$15 any genre

E-transfer fee to [sunshinecoastwritersandeditors@gmail.com](mailto:sunshinecoastwritersandeditors@gmail.com) OR send a cheque to: SCWES, 787 Madison Place, Gibsons, BC V0N 1V1

### PRIZES

1st Prize \$100 in each category, stickers for book cover, honorary membership.

Go to [scwes.ca/contests](https://scwes.ca/contests) for full contest info



# 100-WORD CHALLENGE

This edition's theme required the inclusion of three words selected at random: *crystal*, *outer*, and *wriggle*.

When I was eight, I got a crystal set for Christmas. My father ran an aerial outside my bedroom window and every night I'd slip my headphones on, wriggle under the blankets, and listen to sounds of the outer world streaming into my bedroom. Morse code blip-blipping, voices in Russian, German, French and Spanish. Radio Luxembourg playing, "You Ain't Nothin' But A Hound Dog." My bedtime was 8 pm, but I'd try to stay awake until I heard the sonorous bells of Big Ben chiming nine times, followed by a measured English voice announcing — "Here is the BBC nine-o'-clock news."

- Rod Baker

## *Rockhounding at Richardson Ranch, Montana*

Soft ochre clay walls loom two meters above my head as I dig for thunder eggs. Once again, I hope for a prize that has eluded me.

The clay is cool to the touch as I wriggle my fingers through it searching a rocky sphere.

Then, something solid, rough. I hold my breath. Pull it free. Take it to the diamond saw, which whines as it cuts the knobby gray orb in half.

Will I find boring milky agate bands? Or prized amethyst?

Gripping the outer pieces, I hold my breath. Open my hands and gaze at amethyst crystals. Eureka!

- Karen Bower

**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;

**Use or be inspired by these three randomly generated words: assumption, retain, stress**

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

# The Last Page

by Cathy L. Scrimshaw

These days I think a lot about the passage of time.

It's been one of those winters. My husband had major surgery in November. All eventually went well, but we had to wait weeks for the news after waiting months for the surgery. Time crawled during those periods. In early January, I attended a funeral for a cousin who was younger than I am now, and on the same day was told that another cousin, again younger than I, has an aggressive form of cancer. A few days later my father's doctor had the talk with me, about end-of-life issues. Decisions will have to be made soon, and while other members of the family will weigh in, it will be my responsibility to make the call when that time comes.

All this reminds me that time is marching on much faster than I'd like it to. And that time is something we never have enough of. We can't stop the changes time brings. We can never have enough time to spend with family and friends. To accomplish all our goals. We can never know when our time will run out.

What does this have to do with my writing?

Strangely enough, all these endings, while not welcome, have not depressed me. They have galvanized me to do more. More of everything that matters to me. Especially where writing is concerned.

In the same months these events have taken place, I've completed three online writing courses, written hundreds of words most days and am near completion on a submission for an international novel-writing contest. I've journaled daily, read several books, both fiction and non-fiction, and joined a library-sponsored book club.

Writing and reading have always been an important part of my life. Writing has always been a way of sorting out my thoughts, even when I'm writing fiction. Reading the words of others, especially poets and songwriters, has brought both comfort and inspiration. Novels have given me an insight into other lives, other realities. Together, writing and reading make the cycle and seasons of life, and the passage of time, easier to cope with.

I like to think my experiences with the upheavals of the past few months will make my writing richer. More interesting. Maybe even more saleable.

So, I'll continue on the writer's path. It will be interesting to see where I end up.

