

Writers
Circle
of
Durham
Region

Scripto Ergo Scribo

THE WORD WEAVERS

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A NEWSLETTER FOR WRITERS AND EDITORS
PRODUCED BY
THE WRITERS' CIRCLE OF DURHAM REGION
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Reluctantly Suburban

By Anne Louise Currie

I think I've finally realized why I'm having so much trouble becoming a writer. I don't think it's a lack of talent, a failure of self-discipline or even a harsh inner critic. I blame it on where I live. Face it, Oshawa, Ontario is just not the right kind of place for a writer to live.

I've wanted to write ever since I starting reading and I fell in love with the idea of Jo March, writing in her attic garret in New England, and Anne Shirley writing stories in her room overlooking the apple and cherry blossoms at Green Gables.

But how could I be a writer?



Writers live in cottages in quaint villages in Yorkshire, cabins in the woods near Walden Pond, or maybe even creaky walkup flats in Paris, or New York. Writers don't live in suburbia. Writers soak up the literary scene in smoky coffee houses, or wake to the sound of the ocean crashing against the rocks. They don't eat at McDonalds, or complain about their neighbours' lawn mower starting up too early on Saturday morning.

And it's not just where I live that's the problem, it's where I come from. Writers grow up in Los Angeles, Jerusalem or Berlin, caught up in the crosscurrents of world events or struggle against circumstances. They grow up in rough, backwater towns far from everything, so they can transcend or recreate their

childhood in their biting incisive fiction. Writers don't grow up in modest Kamloops, B.C. with no big events to remember or pain to transcend.

Writers spend their childhood sharing tiny rooms with multiple siblings and violent alcoholic parents or rebel against a life of privilege so that their writing can expose with devastating accuracy the layers of hypocrisy in the homes and vacation playgrounds of the wealthy. They don't grow up in a rational loving family in 1970s, middle class Canada. Where's the poetry or the passionate emotion in that?

So you see, I can't possibly be a writer. Not only did I grow up boring, in the 'burbs', but I compounded the accidental misplacement of my birth with further inappropriately middle class moves. I didn't take off for the city as soon as I turned eighteen, and struggle to make ends meet as a waitress, while giving poetry readings at night. Instead, I made my way sedately through university and various white collar jobs, to the slightly larger, but still suburban, Canadian city of Oshawa. I work for a living, shop at Loblaws and worry about mortgage rates and car payments. I mow my lawn in summer, shovel snow in winter, and plan to install carpet in the living room of my modest brick bungalow as soon as I can afford it. In between, I still dream about becoming a writer.

"Write about what you know" I am told at my beginning writing class, and I try to do that. But, I can't help but wishing what I knew was Frances Mayes, Bella Tuscany.

When I sit down to write, I try not to mind that my prose doesn't draw forth any images of lush, sun-drenched vineyards, or stark northern landscapes.

I try to go beyond the drab front yard of my parents' home in Kamloops, B.C. and out into the wider, brighter world. But it seems that no matter how many times I try to send my characters on adventures to Alaska or Peru, they always turn up looking for a good parking space at the mall. It's starting to drive me crazy!

I keep trying though.

Lately, I've become more philosophical about my fate as a writer. I've given up keeping my characters shivering in chilly attic rooms, and have let them fall asleep under a Hudson Bay blanket, in centrally heated bedrooms with freshly raked shag carpets. Instead of wishing for Simone de Beauvoir's Paris childhood, I'm trying to remember details about the size of pre-oil crisis cars, describe the look and feel of polyester pant suits and tell about how it was that, even in Kamloops, my best friend's mother cried the day John Lennon died.

I've started to look at Oshawa a little differently. It doesn't have the cachet of a moonlit gondola ride through Venice, or the exotic majesty of the great wall of China,

but the maple in my back yard turns crimson in the fall,

and on a clear night I can see the stars. Maybe that's a good place to begin.



Anne Louise Currie is a member of WCDR and the Word Players Writing Circle. She has been writing since childhood, but only recently taken her writing out of the metaphorical bottom drawer.

Odds & Eds

By Aprille Janes, Word Weaver Editor

We've all been there and done that - wondered if we're 'real writers'. It's an unfortunate by-product of living in our modern society. It seems that validity only comes if there is a dollar sign attached to an activity.

One of the first things I establish with new students is a simple truth. If you put pen to paper, you're a writer.

But when friends, family and even strangers ask that dreaded question 'What have you published?', it's hard to know the right answer. Hopefully, this issue of Word Weaver will help you

formulate your response. 'Yes, I'm a writer.'

Word Weaver is also here to help you become a published writer. The



June/July issue's theme is 'Tools of the Trade'. Gwynn Scheltema is going to explain the techniques of mind mapping and how to use it to enrich your writing.

How about you? Share with your fellow worksmiths some of your favorite tools and methods for getting your thoughts out of your head and onto paper.

The August/September issue will explore the theme of 'Nuts and Bolts'. Word Weaver needs someone to tell us how to write a great query. What secrets do you know about winning contests? And can someone please explain what all those different rights are?

Deadline for the June/July issue is May 14. Deadline for the August/September issue is July 9.

E-mail queries only to wordweaver@wcdr.org. Please indicate the issue you are submitting to.

Real Writers - Seize the Day

WCDR Who's Who : Helen Bajorek MacDonald

by Philippa Schmiegelow

"Writing's about reading" states Helen, firmly. And with that she lists the major influences in her childhood that led to what has developed into a richly varied and extensive writing life. Greek, Norse and Roman myths, folk and fairy tales provided the strong female role models she sought; Nancy Drew books provided others. Regular letters to her grandparents in England provided a training in the craft of writing that served her well when, as a thirteen year old, she read *The Diary of Anne Frank* and her mother presented her with her 1st journal. Profoundly moved by the level of maturity and by the courage displayed by the thirteen-year-old Jewish girl, Helen began a regular habit of journal writing.

In 1989, Helen, a self-described eco-crusader and budding historical researcher, began her ongoing association with local, national and international newspapers and professional journals. In 1994, her letters appeared in *The Fifth [And Probably Last] Morningside Papers*, (McClelland & Stewart Inc.); in 1999, her memories of



her Polish immigrant grandmother in *Our Grandmothers, Ourselves: Reflections of Canadian Women*. (Raincoast Books).

She has done groundbreaking work on Polish survivors of exile in Siberian Labour Camps who immigrated to Canada post WWII, she is a sought after public speaker and has just completed co-authoring the tentatively titled *Iron in the Blood*, a 100-year history of the Bowmanville Foundry, with publication anticipated later this year.

Helen has achieved the goals she set herself: she is a mother, a writer and a teacher. She is also a published poet and a member of the Newcastle Poetry Group. With her help, Helen's students staged a successful poetry café: with her encouragement several submitted their work to the Dan Sullivan Poetry Contest. Grounded in myth, folklore and fairy tales, this gifted writer seems well on the way to creating one of her own.

If you'd like to suggest someone for a future profile in Who's Who, drop a line to wordweaver@wcdr.org.

Sherry Loeffler's first children's story, *Busy Buzzing Bees: A Mystical Garden Series Book* will be published by the end of March by Fraser Graphics Limited in Markham. Sherry's manuscript was edited by **Stuart Ross** and illustrated by the WCDR's **Carl Clark**.

Sherry Hinman's article, "Why a Writer Needs a Business Plan" will be appearing soon in *The Writer's Digest*. Sherry also received an honourable mention in The Bruce Dale Press Fifth Annual Acrostic Story Contest!

Olive Roberts' poem "My Journey" was published in the latest edition of *Canadian Woman Studies Journal*, a twenty-five year old feminist quarterly, published by Inanna Publications and Education Ltd.

Dorothea Helms published a feature article on women in the skilled trades - a topic near and dear to her heart in the February/March issue of the national magazine *Scarlett*.

Paeans



Ted Barris, WCDR member and spectacular host of Words in Whitby, has just released his latest book, *JUNO: Canadians at D-Day, June 6, 1945*. Ted's book skyrocketed to the Canadian Bestseller list

AND started out in the Number 8 spot on *Maclean's* Bestseller list.

Barbara Hunt's "First Person Singular" aired on CBC Radio in February. Entitled "The Map", it touched on a WCDR writer and mentor we all know and love.

Dorothea Helms' essay "Hooked on Words" was accepted by *lichen literary journal* for their Spring issue, which has the appropriate theme of 'fun'. In addition, her CBC "First Person Singular" essay that aired in 2002 will be included in the Viva Voce Press book, *They Lied: True Tales of Childbirth and Breastfeeding*, which will be available this spring.

A Message From THE BOARD

By Annette McLeod, President

As I write this, our Word Weaver editor is putting this issue to bed, and almost the entire board is preparing to meet tomorrow at the home of Rich and Dorothea Helms to act as first-tier judges on our first online contest. Dorothea has just phoned to pick my brain about an evaluation system she has designed. And to say she's made us lasagna.

It's Saturday night and Rich is busy logging the entries as they roll in while the eminently qualified Dorothea works on critiquing criteria. And nobody minds.

At our last board meeting, when I asked Kevin Craig whether he intended to remain on the board next year, he said he'd love to, but that he didn't really feel as though he'd done very much.

We all howled.

Our resident organizer (especially with Anna out of town), Kevin takes copious notes, books our meeting places and mails the Word Weaver out. He

volunteers for virtually every single task that comes down the pike.

I believe the truth is that it just doesn't feel very much like work. We really like one another. We laugh a lot at board meetings and breakfasts despite the fact that we must be there early, we "work" the entire time, and sometimes don't get fed.

We're proud of our involvement in this organization. We're thrilled to be part of its next stages of development.

Our past-president, Aprille Janes, is stepping down from the board next year. Over the past five years, Aprille has given selflessly of her time and efforts on our behalf. She serves on the Words in Whitby committee, as well, and she continues to take on additional duties, such as heading up of the short story contest committee. (Note to our Word Weaver editor: Don't go all modest and change any of this on me. I'm warning you.) We are so grateful. As she joins our other awe-inspiring past-presidents, Marjorie Green, Ruth Walker and Lynda Allison, in the role of former board member, we find ourselves numbering eight.

If you've ever served on a volunteer

committee, you know an even number is a deadlock waiting to happen.

The tireless Sherry Hinman has not only booked and liaised with our monthly speakers this year but she's kept track of member attendance, ordered food and kept me from looking like an idiot. She's also been our go-to girl for special events.

WCDR members love a good shindig. Where authors, editors, poets -- wordsmiths of any kind -- gather, we will be there. Spreading the word about WCDR while benefitting from the acquaintance of other like-minded groups deserves to be a dedicated position, and so Special Events is the board position we have open for next year. It doesn't mean you can't do other things. And it doesn't mean we'll ever leave you hanging without help. But it is a great opportunity for a member who loves this group to give something back, while having a lovely time and potentially enjoying Dorothea's lasagna.

If you love people, planning and a great party, please consider joining the WCDR Board of Directors next year. Keep an eye on the Word Weaver and your ears open at breakfast for more details.

A Performer Who Writes

By Heather Whaley

I'm not sure if I am regarded as a 'real' writer in the eyes of other writers when I open my mouth and tell them that I am an oral traditionalist. My personal writings are delivered primarily through performances of storytelling, poetry and song.

On many occasions, I sit among fellow scribes at workshop conferences and listen as fiction and non-fiction writers speak of their creations and aspirations; the date their first or second book will be released; of the many stories, poems and articles they have published. There seems to be a polite distance between us; they defining their topics and generalities about writing; me, being very aware and conscious of another part of the writing industry, particularly song writing and creating a 'set' to perform live.

I've been reciting my poetry and stories and singing original songs publicly for years yet didn't make a conscious effort to record or publish any of them until a couple of years ago. They were written and copyrighted, but it didn't seem imperative for me to submit my work for publication in order to be considered an established writer. I assumed the number of people who were part of my listening audience (several thousand to date) would be enough to establish me as a published author. After all, they feed me instant responses and reactions that let me know whether or not the material is acceptable to them.

Program organizers pay me and are given the opportunity to fill out an evaluation form specifically focusing on aspects such as age appropriate content and level of performance. I get many referrals and "call backs". The only

difference with this type of publication is that a song, like-wise the spoken poem or story, can be publicly delivered without passing across an editor's desk or a reader's eyes and is therefore not concretely seen.

The dictionary does define published in the following terms: *to print and issue (a book, magazine, etc.) to the public; to print and issue the work of _*; . But a brief inclusion also states: *to make known or announce publicly*. Now, that makes



sense to me.

One of the first questions asked at conferences is, "Do you have anything published?", and I never quite know how to answer. I self-published a double album of my work and have a few poems and pieces published in other sources but I'm not focused on sending my work to publishers. For the most part, I write to perform orally and it feels comfortable, although there are a couple of stories and poems I'd love to have in print in order to reach a wider audience.

My daily writing habits rarely begin with an established, rigid time with pen in hand or at a computer. Nor do I read novels as avidly as suggested. Rather, as I move about my day listening and observing life, ideas and combinations of story and song accumulate in my mind and I jot these down in block format. Or I sit with my guitar and work some of the words to a melody.

If the idea needs substantiation or facts, then I do the research either on the internet, through books or by interviewing people. Often the story I come up with is expanded upon as I verbalize it into a tape recorder. Never is it told exactly the same way twice, and so I find it very difficult to write it out in full.

It's a bit different with the inclusion of poetry and song, of course. The format and flow is impossible to create without crafting it during lengthy sitting sessions. Then it needs to be rehearsed over and over again to get it right. I guess my oral rehearsals could be representative of re-writes.

Sometimes I wonder where I fit. I have struggled with how to feel part of the writing community as a whole, rather than slipping into a separate category with songwriters and performers only. I'm admittedly not as consistent as I probably should be as a writer. So in this respect, I wonder myself - am I a real writer or just a performer who writes?

Heather Whaley is a full-time storyteller, singer-songwriter who performs at a variety of venues where her voice inspires, educates and entertains listeners of all ages.

Grammar Puss



GrammarPuss is taking a break but will return in June. In the meantime please send your grammar, punctuation and style questions to GrammarPuss at wordweaver@wcdwr.org

E-WordWeaver

Thanks to those who have opted to receive *The Word Weaver* by e-mail. This helps the WCDR save printing and mailing costs. If you'd like to give it a try, contact Kevin Craig to try the test PDF file (it's in full colour, folks!) and let him know you'd like your name added to the E-Word Weaver mailing list.

Professional Development Winter / Spring 2004

Saturday, April 17

10:30 to 4:30

Pickering Lib. Auditorium

Writing From the Core

Vicki Pinkerton

Writing From the Core will take a deep look at you as a writer. Meditations and writing exercises will bring your essence as a writer to the forefront and launch your writing from a new level. When your words come from your core, you will speak in a voice uniquely your own and say the things you are meant to say in this life time. The workshop will also explore reasons that prevent you from writing and give you tools to move beyond those blocks.

Saturday, May 1

10:30 to 4:30

**Northview Library, Oshawa
Conquering Corporate Markets
Paul Lima**

How one approaches and manages relationships with corporate clients is different from the way one deals with an editor. Oh, and the writing is different too. Learn how to: Select the type of writing you want to do for the corporate market; choose which corporate (or government) sectors to target; find companies and contacts within various sectors; market your services to corporate clients; accurately price writing services for the corporate market; manage the writing and approval process.

May 19 to June 16

5 Wednesday nights

7:00 to 9:30

**Uplands Retreat, Port Perry
Writing with a Slow Hand:
from Romance to Erotica
Gwynn Scheltema &
Susan Lynn Reynolds**

From a chaste kiss in a Harlequin romance to an explicit sex scene in the burgeoning field of erotica, sex raises its head throughout literature. This course explores the principles and practices of including sex in your writing. How far should you go? How reserved or explicit should you be? How do you handle situations that may be beyond your experience? Read, write and receive feedback in a supportive environment.

For More Information Check Out www.wcdr.org

To Register

**Contact workshops@wcdr.org or Leave a Message at
905-686-0211**

Saturday, April 24

10:30 to 4:30

Pickering Library Auditorium

Healing Writing

Martin Avery

This workshop is about both healing writing problems and using writing for healing purposes. We'll explore therapeutic writing and we'll also look at how writing can re-traumatize an author -- and how to avoid and heal that. Tools used will include: past life work, channeling, guided visualization, meditation. An intro to tai chi and qi kung will be optional at no additional cost. Wear comfortable clothing facilitating gentle movement. This workshop will be creative, inspiring, and healing. Come ready to write and to share your writing with a supportive group.

Saturday, May 15

10:30 to 4:30

Location: TBA

**Creativity is Contagious
Jessica Outram**

Say goodbye to writer's block! This one-day workshop will keep you hopping-it aims to inspire. Interactive games and challenges will get your creative juices flowing. Minimally, you will leave with a dozen new stories to follow and a handful of unforgettable characters to develop.

A hodge-podge of Improv, Art, gardening, free-writing, and many surprises will help you to tap into your inner child and remind you of the value of playing with words and ideas. Creativity is an integral piece of the writing process-learn how to find, use, maintain, and cherish your creativity.

Next Fall:

ONLINE COURSES!

Substantive Editing for Writers
by Susanna Gomes



NEW WORKSHOP POLICY!

Workshops will be cancelled 7 days before the start date if registration is insufficient. Payment in full is due upon registration, by cheque or credit card.

April/May Challenge



Spring has sprung, the grass is riz.... We all know that poem but the writers of WCDR rose to the Challenge and offered us some exquisite new poetry to celebrate the season. Bravo to all who sent in an entry. It was hard to choose and if Word Weaver had more room you'd all be on this page. But space is limited so here are the best of the best for your enjoyment. Congratulations to Philippa and Barbara.

Such Lambency

Philippa Schmiegelow

The day
has us
in a sharp, sweet

ecstasy; everything
changed-
the air,
for example

and the light
lancing down
through bare
branches

touching the pond:
such lambency
a celebration
surely,

golden song
spiraling
up
and up

until bees
newly born
are drunk with
dizziness

and maybe
here, right here,
is the key to
happiness

here,
in this wild place

where
white bones lie

Time

Barbara Hunt

if matchstick-fingered forests reach for milder hues
if thaw's vapour rises, rolls and eases from soft shoulders in a
slumbering wake
if that burnished orb lifts spirits; wakens droplets, buds and critters
from their near-
death

if its higher journey lets light kiss winter's private places stirring
desire

if scents quicken, vibrant, spicing breezes; whispering promises into
unfurling ears

if rich, black loam beckons hands to burrow; calls thoughts to ponder
yellow, purple,
pink jewels of distant memory

if hustle, bustle bees and squirrels and birds set the world humming
fresh, dizzy tunes

then it is time



Your June/July Challenge

Spring has everyone a little giddy and ready for something new and fun but first we have to attend to some time-honoured rituals! The Challenge for the next issue is to write a classified ad. But not just any classified ad. What would your favourite author or literary character be selling this season after completing their spring cleaning? Perhaps Scarlett O'Hara has some good drapes she no longer needs. Or maybe e.e. cummings wants to get rid of a used typewriter (shift key never used).

Keep it to 75 words and send your ad to wordweaver@wcd.org.

E-Mail entries only please!

DAVE

by Vicki Pinkerton



Some things are best learned from kids, like the magic of Christmas, how to play until you drop and in my case, the true meaning of writing. When I met Dave, I had recently returned to university and was overwhelmed by assignments, essays and papers. He was 15, tall and lanky with a shy smile and dark eyes. At that point in my life, I wanted to be a writer. A real writer, someone who sold writing, had an audience and was always working on the next piece.

Somehow it came up in conversation, probably because I was an avid reader, that Dave wrote stories. I asked to see his work and he obliged. The first piece he handed me was 20 pages long, the margins as narrow as possible, and the font was small. The pages were so crowded with words that there was no white space. My eyes watered as they pushed through the dense jungle. The grammar was poor and the spelling non-existent but the story sparkled with passion and exuberance. I was hooked. "Next time," I prompted, "Use one inch margins and double space." We were off.

Once he knew that I was interested, Dave began to fill my e-box

with writing. I found out later that he had a learning disability, which made reading, and writing hard for him so school was almost impossible but his stories were anything but stilted. They were fantastical, alive with creatures and characters that cut bold paths through their hardships. He took me to new worlds and captured my mind with solutions to the problems in old ones. No matter what was happening in his life, he sent me work. Sometimes it was hard for me to keep up.

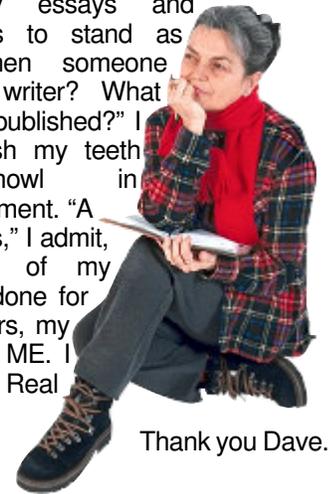
As he got older, his writing got more sophisticated. We started to talk about plot and character. He struggled to get into college and then through his programs. During those stressful times, he wrote more. Each crisis, financial, emotional or overwhelming would inspire a fresh spate of words. I started to wonder out loud why he didn't ease some of his financial burdens by selling some of his work. He would look at me blankly, "Then someone else would control what I could write," he said, and wrote some more.

Today, Dave has joined the "adult" world. He has a job, a fiancé and obligations like the rest of us and still he writes. He has yet to publish a thing but has hundreds of thousands of words to his name. I don't think I would be exaggerating to say that he has hundreds of stories, some novel length and others shorter. He says he can't manage to cram all of his characters into a short story but he promises to give it a

shot someday.

As I sit and write these words I know that Dave is a writer. A 'real' writer. He writes because words push their way out of his fingertips. He isn't worried about what the world thinks of his work, he doesn't have time to 'stew' over style or the next market. He writes for the sheer joy of it.

As for me? I am a slow learner but coming along. I don't make as many excuses. Instead of wistfully thinking, "I should get that down on paper," I do it. I allow my essays and newsletters to stand as 'real.' When someone says, "A writer? What have you published?" I don't gnash my teeth and howl in embarrassment. "A few articles," I admit, but most of my writing is done for my teachers, my friends and ME. I am a Real Writer!



Thank you Dave.

Vicki Pinkerton is a freelance writer and certified whole life coach with a finely developed sense of humour.

She can be contacted at lifelines@ican.net.

April Breakfast

April 10
Paul Lima
Freelance Writing:
Do The Math

Paul Lima is a professional writer, communicator and instructor. He has run a successful freelance writing, corporate communications and media training business since 1988.

His breakfast topic: Freelance Writing, Do the Math. How successful freelance writers put food on the table by writing for a variety of publication and clients. And how they find and pitch editors and clients.

BREAKFAST MEETINGS RUN FROM 8:30 A.M. TO 11 A.M. AT IROQUOIS PARK SPORTS COMPLEX 50 VICTORIA ST. W. (AT HENRY STREET) IN WHITBY • MEMBERS, \$12; GUESTS, \$15
IF YOU ARE NOT ON THE REGRETS-ONLY LIST, YOUR PLACE MUST BE RESERVED NO LATER THAN THE
WEDNESDAY PRIOR WITH SHERRY HINMAN AT 905-686-0211 OR AT [BREAKFAST@WCDR.ORG](mailto:breakfast@wcdr.org)

Are You A Real Writer?

By Gwynn Scheltema

Is a real writer someone who has published a book? Whose income comes primarily from writing? Who writes whenever possible, between loading laundry or on the GO train, but has never been published?

At first glance, the Writers Union of Canada (TWUC) puts the emphasis on publishing. "To qualify for membership, you must have had a trade book published by a commercial or university press." But TWUC also offers services to non-members, to whom they consistently refer to as "writers".

The Periodical Writers Association of Canada (PWAC) puts the emphasis on being paid - consistently. Prospective members of PWAC qualify under a point system based on paid writing. A Professional Member of PWAC needs 60 points representing at least two different markets. All work must have been done as a freelancer, for pay, within the last 24 months. Qualifying is not difficult: for example, magazine or newspaper articles over 500 words, print or online, count as 10 points each; annual reports, newsletters and speeches are 10 points each. (This article is worth 10 points).

Becoming an Associate Member of PWAC is even easier: only one non-fiction, freelance article of at least 300 words published for pay within the last 12 months.

To call yourself a writer for tax purposes, the tax department (CRA) seems to require only that you try to make money. The CRA broadly defines the difference between a "hobby" and a "business" as the latter having an "expectation of profit". Interestingly, however, the CRA allows that "In the case of an artist or writer, it is possible that a taxpayer may not realize a profit during his or her lifetime, but still have a reasonable expectation of profit" (IT-504R2).

Surprisingly, however, for all its focus on making money, the tax department considers other factors in making the determination between hobbyist and "writer". Some of these factors include the amount of time devoted, (writing); the extent to which an artist or writer presents work in public, (publishing, reading); the amount of time devoted to marketing, (submitting); and evidence of public and peer recognition (prizes, awards, reviews). No particular factor is more important than another, and no one factor determines or precludes the taxpayer's artistic or literary activities from qualifying as a business.

Publishing and getting paid aside, I think the CRA makes some good points. How much time do you spend writing? A real writer devotes whatever time they can to the craft, whether that is an uninterrupted day at the computer, or a

snatched fifteen minutes waiting for a child to finish piano lessons.

The point is, they write! A real writer doesn't just think about writing or dream about writing, or read about writing.

A real writer writes.

"Anyone who commits to putting pen to paper regularly, and who textures their life by writing, is a writer," says author and writing teacher, Sue Reynolds. "The greatest barrier to calling yourself a writer is confusing being an author (publication credits) with being a writer (someone for whom writing gives extra meaning and savour to life)."

It is interesting that the CRA considers public and peer opinion in the equation. A writer not only writes, but sends that writing out into the world.

Ultimately, however, you have to allow yourself to be a writer by believing that you are a writer. You cannot let other people's acceptance or rejection of your work dictate whether or not you write. You have control.

If you write, and you believe you are a real writer, you are.

Through her business, The Write Connection, Gwynn Scheltema earns a living as a freelance writer/editor. In spare moments she writes what she enjoys – fiction and poetry.

WCDR IS CHANGING...

Its phone number, that is.

Our new number is now
905-686-0211





Writers' Circles

To join one of the circles below, please call the contact person indicated. Group leaders, please notify *The Word Weaver* editor of changes to times or locations.

Christians Who Write

The second Saturday of each month after the breakfast meeting
Call for location
Caroline Davidson
905-683-4854

Circle for Children's Writers

First Wednesday of each month
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Oshawa Public Library
Northview Branch
250 Beatrice St. E., Oshawa
Mike Ward
wardswords@hotmail.com

Durham Write-On

Tuesdays, every other week
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Call for location
Cynthia Green
cynwriter@rogers.com

Markham Village Writers' Group

Monthly
Donna Marrin
donna.marrin@staples.ca

Northword Edition

Tuesdays, every two weeks
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Uxbridge Public Library
Dorothea Helms, 905-852-9294

Oshawa Scribes

First and third Tuesday of each month
1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Oshawa Library, Northview Branch
250 Beatrice St. E., Oshawa
Grace Stevenson, 905-725-0760

Richard Ferrier Writers' Group

Formerly Volume Two
Third Tuesday of each month
2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
History Room at Pickering Central Library
Tina Ivany, 905-427-1270
or *tdivany@sympatico.ca*
Ron Dixon, 416-284-5673
or *retro@pathcom.com*

Senior Scribes of Uxbridge

Second and fourth Friday of each month
1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Township Hall, Uxbridge
Joyce Whitney, 905-852-3414

Word Players

Every second Tuesday
7 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.
Oshawa Public Library, Northview Branch
Mike Ward, wardswords@hotmail.com

Write in Whitby

Second and fourth Tuesday of each month
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Whitby Public Library
Lloyd Blair, 905-430-0075



Write Now

A group for on-the-spot writing
Every second Thursday
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Uxbridge Public Library
Vicki Pinkerton, 905-473-1284

Writers' and Editors' Network

Breakfast meeting
Third Saturday of each month
9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Canadiana Restaurant and Banquet Hall
5230 Dundas St. W.
Six Points Plaza
Toronto
Mickey Turnbull
905-824-5035
or *mickeytc@ica.net*

WORDS IN WHITBY

Words in Whitby is pulling out all the stops for its 5th Anniversary Series – we have the writers, and the venue and the promise of an exciting and entertaining weekend. Join us as we return to the newly renovated Centennial Building, where it all began, for our 5th Anniversary Celebration. The 2004 series offers the thrills and chills readers and writers alike have come to expect from this dynamic non-stop writer's weekend.

If you are a reader, a shopper or an eater – no matter! Words in Whitby offers something for everyone:

New York Times best-selling authors to generate suspense,

Non-fiction favourites with tales to tell,
Home improvement gurus with advice laced with humour,

Delicious food and drink,
And a writer's themed silent auction to satisfy that urge to shop.

Words in Whitby is once again proving this is a series you don't want to miss. Just check out the line-up:

Ted Barris

Words in Whitby attendees who enjoy the engaging and intimate interviewing skills of our host Ted Barris will have the opportunity to appreciate his writing skills as well as our host takes a turn in the author chair. Barris will share a chat with local non-fiction writer D'Arcy Jenish about their current work and the writing process.

Author of numerous non-fiction books, Barris' latest release *JUNO: Canadians at D-Day, June 6, 1945* has hit the Canadian Bestseller list and started out in the number 8 spot in Maclean's.

Wayson Choy

Wayson Choy's first novel, *The Jade Peony*, spent 26 weeks on *The Globe and Mail's* bestseller list, placed number six on its 1996 Year-End National Bestseller List for fiction, and was an American Library Association "Notable Book of the Year".

Choy was born in Vancouver and attended the University of British Columbia's creative writing course. He is a volunteer for various community literacy projects and AIDS groups and, for three years running, was elected

President of Cahoots Theatre Company in Toronto. He is currently a professor at Humber College and a faculty member of the Humber School for Writers.

He says he has always loved reading and thinks it "stems from a fascination with language and words that I picked up from my early English teachers."

Joy Fielding

Best selling author Joy Fielding's books have been translated into dozens of languages and are distributed worldwide. She produces a book a year. With titles such as *Whispers and Lies*, *Kiss Mommy Goodbye* and *Missing Pieces*, she keeps the reader turning the pages.

On her web site at www.joyfielding.com, Fielding writes that she thinks she is popular because "men as well as women can identify with the people I'm writing about." According to *The Washington Post*, Fielding "masterfully manipulates readers' expectations" and *People* magazine writes "Fielding has made the women-in-jeopardy genre her own."

Her latest mesmerizing novel, *Lost*, was published last fall and continues her tradition of creating fascinating characters caught in emotional struggles.

Nalo Hopkinson

Nalo Hopkinson's novel *The Salt Roads* (2003) begins in Jamaica, centres around the lives of three Caribbean slave women, and includes elements of West Indian mythology and folklore.

The Toronto Star writes her stories are "steeped in Caribbean language, customs, mythology and spirituality; she reconceives conventional sci-fi themes and motifs to elaborate her idiosyncratic literary vision."

Born in Jamaica, Hopkinson has lived in Toronto since 1977. She is renowned for her incorporation of Caribbean tradition and lore into contemporary science fiction. She is a graduate of the Clarion East Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers' Workshop (1995), and the Masters program in Writing Popular Fiction at Seton Hill University. She has been a writer-in-residence, a university teacher, as well as an instructor of various writing workshops.

Hopkinson has won many literary awards, the most current being the 2002 World Fantasy Award and the 2003 Sunburst Award.

D'Arcy Jenish

His journalism background and attachment to the west, has led D'Arcy Jenish to write some fascinating work about Canada's history.

His first book *The Stanley Cup: A Hundred Years of Hockey at Its Best* was published to celebrate Canada's national sport and to coincide with the Stanley Cup's centennial. From there he jumped into political writing with *Money to Burn: Trudeau, Mulroney and the Bankruptcy of Canada*.

For the past few years, he has been exploring the events and personalities which helped shape the Canadian west. Examining the troubled times the aboriginal people of the northern plains experienced during the 19th century, he wrote *Indian Fall: The Last Great Days of the Plains Cree and Blackfoot Confederacy* in 1999.

His most recent work, *Epic Wanderer: David Thompson and the Mapping of the Canadian West*, looks at the lives of 18th century explorers and the thrilling race to claim Canada's Northwest frontier.

Loris Lesynski

Author and illustrator Loris Lesynski always wanted to write for children.

"From the time I first read picture books, I wanted to write," she says.

A graphic designer and illustrator, she turned to writing and illustrating full time after publishing her first book, *Boy Soup*. Her rollicking rhymes have found themselves in numerous picture books - *Ogre Fun*, *Catmagic*, *Nightschool* and *Rocksy* – have delighted both children and adults.

But her poetry really wows children. *Dirty Dog Boogie*, published in 1999, was hailed by the *School Library Journal* as a collection of poems that "will appeal to fans of Jack Prelutsky and Shel Silverstein". The humorous and energetic collection was followed by *Nothing Beats A Pizza* in 2001.

Words in Whitby - Cont'd

Eric McCormack

Eric McCormack was born in Scotland, emigrated to Canada and has been teaching at St. Jerome's University in Waterloo, Ontario since 1970. He began his writing career with a collection of short stories, *Inspecting the Vaults*, published in 1987. His first novel, *The Paradise Motel*, published in 1989, won the Spring Book Award by the Scottish Arts Council in 1990. The *New York Times Book Review* said of the novel it "...steeps itself in mystery, horror and suspense to tell a story about the very art of story telling." This was followed by *The Mysterium* in 1992, and in 1997, *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, which was nominated for the Governor General's Award. *The Globe and Mail* described the book as "A lavish and beautifully human novel, [it] creeps into the blood... An utterly absorbing read."

Eric McCormack's work has been called daring and inventive, cryptic and haunting, fascinating and perverse and always compelling. In fact, *Saturday Night* magazine has said about the author "...with Eric McCormack you always sense he's tapped into something authentically dreadful."



Mag Ruffman

From corsets to tool belts, Canada's own "Tool Girl" has had a riveting career. But don't let her soft-spoken, country charm fool you; she's a lethal weapon when it comes to home repair.

Mag Ruffman, author of the recently released *How Hard Can it Be*, may be best known for her role as "Olivia King" in *The Road to Avonlea*, but a new generation of television viewers have come to know her through her home repair show "A Repair to Remember." And now through her new workshop show, "Anything I Can Do", she delights international audiences with her humour, charm and knowledge. A licensed contractor, Ruffman let viewers see her mistakes on the show to illustrate that everything doesn't always go perfectly when they do the work at home. Her syndicated "ToolGirl" column runs in *The Toronto Star* and other papers across Canada.

Rosemary Sullivan

Rosemary Sullivan's talents are as diverse as her subjects. With publishing credits that include biographies, essays, fiction, literary criticism and poetry, this award winning writer has tackled the lives of such literary giants as Margaret Atwood and Theodore Roethke, explored sexual obsession, and examined art, culture and life in Cuba.

Winner of the Governor General's award for non-fiction for *Shadow Maker: the Life of Gwendolyn McEwen*, Sullivan

is herself a renowned poet. The author of three volumes of poetry, she won the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award for the Best First Book of Poetry for *The Space A Name Makes*.

Eric Walters

Award-winning author Eric Walters wrote his first book in 1994, to get his students interested in reading. Since then he has written numerous titles, getting thousands of more students interested in reading, and picking up more than a few awards along the way.

Camp X, *Stars* and *Trapped in Ice* won the coveted Ontario Library Association's Silver Birch Award. *Long Shot*, *Full Court Press*, *The Bully Boys*, *S.T.A.R.S.*, *Diamonds in the Rough*, *War of the Eagles* and *Tiger by the Tail* are among his titles that have garnered the Canadian Children's Book Centre "Choice Award".

Part of the writing process Walters enjoys involves the hands-on research some of his stories require. He spent time in a wheelchair for his novel *Rebound*, stood outside in his backyard in a blizzard wearing a T-shirt and shorts for *Trapped in Ice*, and visited farms where people keep exotic animals in barns, and videotaped cougars and tigers for *Tiger by the Tail*.

His latest novel, *Run*, introduces Canadian hero Terry Fox and his courageous story to a new generation of young readers.

The Last Page

By Tina Collette

Four years ago, a ten-year-old boy named Jason came to live in my head. His great ambition was to become a hockey player at the highest level but his small stature thwarted his efforts. As I wrote about his passion and disappointments, other characters moved in beside Jason. Before I knew what was happening, the pages were flipping out of the printer and the plot was thickening. I was writing a book.

It was a long time before I admitted this to myself or anyone else. But as these people made themselves comfortable in the quiet corners of my mind, I had to admit something was going to have to come of the hours of attention

they were demanding.

The characters and their actions played before my mind's eye in quiet moments in the car or in a room full of people. They traveled with me to Victoria B.C. and along the Cabot Trail in Nova Scotia. My eyes would glaze over and a spoon full of cereal would pause, half way to my mouth, milk dripping, as Jason's mother became wrapped in the embrace of her lover. My husband began to recognize and accept these moments when he and the real world went away.

Four hundred pages later, the end was nigh. Although I knew what I wanted to put down on the last page, there was a great reluctance to do so. It was with

surprising sadness that I realized I would have to leave the people I had created and lived with so intimately for four years. They would no longer accompany me on my walks or fill my dreams with their voices. Their problems had been solved, their questions answered. My characters would be frozen forever in the final scene and their lives would end with the last page. I would now become the fearsome editor and our relationship would be changed forever.

Tina Collette is a recent member of the WCDR and an avid hockey fan. Her creative muse has led her from dancing to writing.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 2-4
Words in Whitby

April 10
**Breakfast
Freelance Writing:
Do the Math**
Paul Lima

April 17
**Workshop
Writing from the Core**
Vicki Pinkerton

April 24
**Workshop
Healing Writing**
Martin Avery

May 1
**Conquering Corporate
Markets**
Paul Lima

May 8
Breakfast
Emily Hearn

June 12
**Breakfast
Annual General Meeting**



FOR WORKSHOP INFORMATION, CONTACT SUE REYNOLDS AT WORKSHOPS@WCDR.ORG
TO REGISTER FOR BREAKFAST MEETINGS, CONTACT SHERRY HINMAN AT BREAKFAST@WCDR.ORG

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THE WORD WEAVER

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Famous Last Words

The difference between fiction and reality? Fiction has to make sense. Tom Clancy