

The Word Weaver

Inside

- ♦ Dan Sullivan Contest2
- ♦ Workshops4
- ♦ Meet the Board6
- ♦ GrammarPuss9
- ♦ Get It Write10

A newsletter for writers and editors
produced by
The Writers' Circle of Durham Region
July/August 2003 Vol. 9 No. 3

What I Did On My Summer Vacation

By Dorothea Helms

Most of you know I work way too many hours each week writing non-fiction. Well, you'll be happy to know that I took most of the first two weeks in July off to do something different. I attended two events to work on my fiction writing!

First, I joined fellow WCDR board member Sue Reynolds and Fred Ford (a member of Durham Write-on) in Huntsville to take part in the Muskoka Novel Writing Marathon, which was part of the town's Festival of the Arts.

There were 12 writers in all who set up mini-offices in the back of The Bean coffee shop. At 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 12, we each started writing a novel, and we had until midnight on Monday, July 14 to finish. We were allowed to arrive with one page of notes only – our entire manuscripts had to be written there in 59 hours.

What an experience! The event was open to the public, so people wandered in and asked questions. The media

came around to interview us, and to top off the challenges, one of the marathon organizers brought a horn that people could honk every time they completed 10 pages.

I brought my own box of unusual items that make noise (christened "weapons of mass distraction" by Fred). Among these are a dancing stuffed gopher from the movie *Caddy Shack* who sings "I'm All Right," and Nunzilla, a plastic wind-up nun who spits sparks as she walks across the table. People couldn't wait for me to finish 10 pages to find out what I'd use next.

I'm glad I brought that stuff because, frankly, Fred nearly wore out the horn. Sue and I managed to write between 60 and 70 pages, but Mr. Show-off wrote a 120-page draft. He honked that horn so many times, he sounded like a trained seal.

To set the record straight, there was more to this weekend than zany fun – the writers enlisted sponsors, and as a group we raised \$4,500 for the Muskoka Literacy Council.

I was exhausted when I got home from the marathon, but four days later managed to drive to Toronto to attend the week-long Humber School for Writers Creative Writing Summer Workshop. There were about 100 students in attendance, and we were divided into groups with mentors. My mentor was Kim Moritsugu – a good choice, because her sense of humour is as outrageous as mine. The other mentors were Alistair MacLeod, Nino Ricci, Richard Scrimger, John Metcalf, Olive Senior, Paul Quarrington, Wayson Choy and Isabel Huggan.

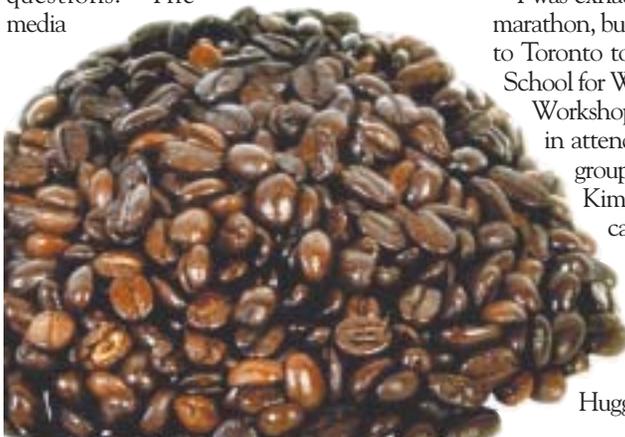
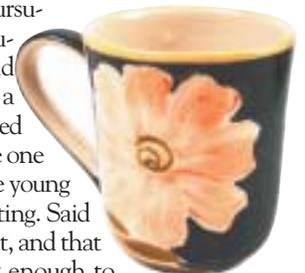


Each morning was spent workshopping our novel segments in our mentoring groups. In the afternoons we had amazing speakers that included editors, agents and representatives from small and large publishing companies. I learned a lot about what they're looking for in manuscripts. Over and over, these professionals drummed into us: show, don't tell; eliminate adverbs; create a compelling lead – and make your manuscript as polished as possible before you submit it.

Here are some of my favourite quotes from the week:

- Wayson Choy on punctuation: "Learn it and use it."
- Alistair MacLeod: "I go on book tours. People like to see you because most authors are dead."
- Paul Quarrington: "The writer's life is a series of opportunities for humiliation."
- Richard Scrimger: "Never solve a problem on the right-hand page."

And finally, how's this for inspiring? When Nino Ricci was pursuing his undergraduate degree, he had W.O. Mitchell as a professor. W.O. called Nino into his office one day and advised the young man to give up writing. Said he wouldn't make it, and that he was still young enough to find another career. We've all benefited from the fact that Nino ignored that advice. His message: believe in yourself and persevere.



Poets Among Us

Honouring the Winners of the Annual Dan Sullivan Memorial Poetry Contest

The Dan Sullivan Memorial Poetry Contest is sponsored by The Writers' Circle of Durham Region. It was established in 1995 in memory of Dan Sullivan, Durham poet and writers' circle member who on March 13, 1995, while at the inaugural Poets in the Pub night in Pickering, read two of his works, acknowledged the applause, and died. In a heartbeat he was gone. This contest is our way to remember him as a man of many accomplishments and to honour him as a poet and friend.

Contest winners were announced at the WCDR Annual General Meeting on June 14, 2003. Winners in each category received a cash prize and certificate. The prizes are funded by contest entry fees and by the WCDR. The poems were judged on originality and the sense of the craft of poetry shown in the work.

Judges

Adult Category

Milan Parab, co-founder and managing editor of *Signal*, a literary arts magazine, hails from St. John's, Newfoundland.

Dorothy Sjöholm is a retired English teacher and a freelance writer and editor. Her poems have appeared in various literary journals, anthologies and small press publications. She placed second in the Dan Sullivan Poetry Contest 2000.

Priscila Uppal has published three collections of poetry: *How to Draw Blood From a Stone* (1998), *Confessions of a Fertility Expert* (1999), and *Pretending to Die* (2001), all with Exile Editions. Her first novel, *The Divine Economy of Salvation*, was published by Doubleday Canada in February 2002 and by Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill in the U.S. in October 2002. She is also a Professor of Humanities at York University. Her new poetry collection, *Breaking News*, will

be released in the fall.

Youth Category

Stuart Ross has sold poetry on the streets of Toronto, edited literary magazines, and is co-founder of the Toronto Small Press Fair. His work includes the poetry collections *Farmer Gloomy's New Hybrid* (ECW Press, 1999), *Razovsky At Peace* (ECW Press, 2001) and *Hey, Crumbling Balcony! Poems New & Selected* (ECW Press, 2003).

Children's Category

Andrea Stone is a former English teacher, and is currently a Ph.D candidate in English literature at the University of Toronto. Her poetry has appeared in various publications including *Diviners*, *The Writing Space Journal* and *lichen*. She is also a poetry editor at *lichen*.

Adult • First Place

Still Here

Irene Livingston

Could it be that I might still be here
melting into lilac bushes, lurking
in the pale lilies, singing in the shell ears
of daughters, old lovers? Singing down corridors,
whistling in elevators, as always I have done.

Will they know me? Say, she's here.
For how can I bear to not be here?
Here where I've shifted my allotted gifts and faults about
till I've almost got it right, this life of mine.

Might I still be in my park in spring?
May I smile with the pink and purple lips
of crocuses, move with lacy yellow grace
of daffodils? Could I sit budding in the tall trees,
till I burst into leaflets of bright green laughter?

Could it be that some day I might stand
in the grass on weightless feet and touch
the shoulder of someone reading my little poems?
Will they feel me as I whisper, I am here. I am here.

Adult • Second Place

Ago

Carol L. MacKay

At Sam and Ida's she tossed tiddly winks,
hung monkeys in a chain of sun yellow
Christmas red
over a barrel
played smooth-worn games like Chinese checkers
in their lace and wood-smoked homestead.

Some time after theirs, in a string of
landscape & people-softening funerals,
she noticed the indentations left behind.

In the kitchen
her daughter mixes play-doh, quiet yellows and greens
into an anxious, muddy blue face.
Lana leaves it, lumped-eyed on the table edge,
in favour of basic beige: the sandbox outside.
Door slams, mother lifts it,
two-handed, to the center of the table
away from the hard blow of gravity.

The Winners

Adult

1st Place

Irene Livingston, Vancouver, B.C.
"Still Here"

2nd Place

Carol L. MacKay, Bowlf, Alta.
"Ago"

3rd Place (tie)

Dorothea Helms, Sunderland, Ont.
"Missing Heartbeats"

Caitlin Reid, Montreal, Que.
"The bench is grey in the black night"

5th Place

Ken Kucharic, Bowmanville, Ont.
"A Reflection of Fire in a Mirror of Gas"

6th Place (tie)

Caitlin Reid, Montreal, Que.
"Flatbush, Brooklyn"

Anne Louise Currie, Oshawa, Ont.
"An Easier Way?"

Youth

1st Place

Carissa Di Gangi, Ottawa, Ont.
"thursday, 2.31 pm"

2nd Place

Jehangir Saleh, Toronto, Ont.
"I Love You"

3rd Place

Julianne Yip, Calgary, Alta.
"Impromptu", a duet on the brink of insight"

4th Place

Sarah J. Poynter, Whitby, Ont.
"She Feels"

5th Place

Carissa Di Gangi, Ottawa, Ont.
"reflecting on Grandma who is losing her memory, and knowing"

Children

1st Place

Laura Brogan, Aurora, Ont.
"The Whale"

2nd Place

Amelia Edmunds, Whitby, Ont.
"Gramma"

3rd Place

Michael Martini, Ajax, Ont.
"The Yucky Bluky Dinner"

4th Place

Danitha Kanagavaratha, Scarborough, Ont.
"My Imaginary Friend"

Adult • Third Place

Missing Heartbeats

Dorothea Helms

Long before I made my journey into the light, you made yours
I have your name, but no memories of storytelling wrapped in a grandmother's shawl

No images of work-worn hands that raised too many children in a foreign land
No wafting scents of lavender or cinnamon or garlic
No lullabies that spoke of olive trees and fresh plum tomatoes placed straight from the vine into the pot

I am an ancestral orphan lost among grandparented peers,
aching for the front porch rocker, stop-and-listen love they have known,
applause that demands no performance.

Where are you, my grand babies? Will you fight your way into the light before I make
my final trek toward another source of brilliance?

I want to wrap you in shawls, tell you of travels, sing you dreamland lullabies,
scent your air with anise, hear your childish bantering, and care

I sense both our lights approaching. Hurry.

Adult • Third Place

The bench is grey in the black night

Caitlin Reid

I sit alone and feel unusually safe
eating sesame snaps while
mostly taxis pass mostly
empty like the streets I
hear the conductor over the orchestra and
think of nice wake-up sex had this morning
until I wonder what is to become of me
which is a hard question to answer and
an answer harder to hear so
I am up and out and
I leave my wrapper on purpose.

Children • First Place

The Whale

Laura Brogan

The gentle giants of the ocean,
Glide gracefully with tail fluke motion,
Never stopping even while sleeping.

Big at birth,
They are the largest mammals on earth,
Though they never touch it.

They fly through the air,
Breaching without care,
Then land with a gigantic splash.

Their songs fill the sea,
As if wanting to be,
Heard by the world around them.

Some kinds are all gone,
Others barely hang on,
We must save them from extinction

For the rest that are here,
We must help them for I fear,
They too might become endangered.

The world would be quiet and wrong
If the whale and its song,
Were gone because of us.

Youth • First Place

thursday, 2.31 pm

Carissa Di Gangi

i look up and there are your eyes, precious and fragile
as the 4-leaf clover you found on my birthday
and gave to me, pressed, for Christmas.

i wish i could snapshot those eyes,
carry them with me like i do that clover,
tucked safely in this notebook next to
my wildfire thoughts -

but you hate cameras like needles
and you've only let me take photos of your hands,
cupped and appearing to offer

air to an impressionist sky.

(secretly, i've always thought
you were offering the sky to the air.

Workshops Etc.

Writers in the Park

Facilitators: Susan Lynn Reynolds
and Gwynn Scheltema

Sunday, Aug. 10

12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Rotary Sunrise Lake Park, Whitby
In the Gazebo

269 Water St. south of Victoria
east of Brock

Writers of all levels are invited to join the WCDR for an exciting afternoon of writing exercises. Come out and celebrate writing in a friendly outdoor environment designed to inspire enthusiasm and confidence in your craft! Bring a pen and paper, a beverage perhaps, and a lawn chair or blanket.

Participation is \$2 per person to cover the cost of the park.

Attendance is limited, so register early. E-mail
writeinthepark@hotmail.com.

Write-Up Writing Camp

a summer writing adventure for children
and teens in grades 3 – 12

Facilitator: Lynda Allison

August 11-15, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Kingsway College, Hwy 2/Townline
\$175.00

Early drop-off (8 a.m.) or late pick-up (5 p.m.)
additional \$25

Friday night reading sessions, 6:30 p.m.

Summer days are the perfect time for young people to explore the writing process. The Write-Up philosophy of facilitating writing provides an environment and inspiration for creativity to flourish. Through creative activities, writing exercises, sharing and critiquing of work in a positive atmosphere, children and teens learn how to access their writing potential.

For more information visit www.writeup.ca or contact

Lynda Allison 905 623-0365.

Write-Up Kids/Teens Eight-Week Workshop

Facilitator: Lynda Allison

Ajax, Sept. 23; Oshawa, Sept. 25

Available Tuesday nights at the Main Branch,
of the Ajax Public Library, 55 Harwood Rd.,
Sept. 23 to Nov. 11 from 7:30 to 9 p.m. and on
Thursday nights at the Northview Branch of the



Oshawa Public Library,
Ritson and Beatrice Roads,

Sept. 25 to Nov. 13 from
7:30 to 9 p.m.

\$80.00

If your kids and teens love to write, they'll love Write-Up Kids/Teens, an eight week series of writing workshops designed to give flight to the creative spirit and inspire teens to write stories that soar.

For more information visit www.writeup.ca or contact

Lynda Allison 905 623-0365.

The Business of Writing

Facilitator: Dorothea Helms

Saturday Sept. 27, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Pickering Central Library (auditorium)

Pre-registration is required by Sept. 19

Back by popular demand! For those of you who have notions of making a part-time or full-time living through writing, this one-day workshop is jam-packed with information on how to start and run a writing business.

The workshop provides an overview of the left-brain practices writers must address in order to make money doing what they so love to do. Dorothea operates a thriving freelance writing and editing business, and shares with participants advice on topics such as what to charge, how to invoice, what to keep track of in the way of receipts and expenses, how to approach editors and publishers, how to make your work more marketable, and perhaps most importantly - when to say NO to writing jobs. The day will involve both lecture and interactive exercises that will help you lateral think your way into more marketable article queries and fiction pieces. You will leave the day with a

notebook full of useful handouts that can assist you as you start your business.

Dorothea is co-owner of the successful communications firm Write Stuff Writing Services. She prides herself on being walking proof that the worn-out whine that you can't make money as a writer in Canada is baloney. In just the writing/editing part of her business alone last year, she billed into the six digits.

During her 10-year career, she has had hundreds of articles published in U.S. and Canadian magazines and newspapers, from *Chatelaine* and *The Globe and Mail*, to *Big Buck* and *Stitches*, the *Journal of Medical Humour*. She has also been featured twice on CBC Radio's First Person Singular. Dorothea is contributing editor for several Metroland publications, and often hires writers to produce articles and editorials. In 2001, she was nominated for a prestigious Rotman Canadian Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Award. She is actively working to raise the profile — and average income — of freelance writers in Canada today.

The cost for the day is \$90 (\$80 for WCDR members). Coffee, snacks and juice will be provided. Lunch is not included, but there are several restaurants within walking distance of the library, as well as within a couple minutes' drive.

Please let Dorothea know directly if you're interested.

Call her at 905-852-9294, or e-mail her at
writer@usws.ca.

Mail your cheque made out to WRITE STUFF
WRITING SERVICES to: Dorothea Helms, S10895
Sideroad 17, RR #1, Sunderland, Ont. L0C 1H0



E-Word Weaver

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 Anna Therien to try the test PDF file (it's in full colour, folks!), then let her know if you'd like your name added to the E-Word Weaver list.

Happy Birthday, lichen

Literary Journal Celebrates Five Successful Years

It was standing room only at Oshawa's Robert McLaughlin Art Gallery, as *lichen literary journal* celebrated five years of publishing creative writing and visual art.

The editors of the journal hosted more than 100 guests and writers as they presented an evening of music, readings from the magazine's past and current contributing writers, and general celebration of the magazine's success.

Several writers and poets from Durham and Toronto presented their work in the Isabel McLaughlin Room, surrounded by the gallery's superb and eclectic collection of Canadian art.

"It is a wonderful setting," editor Ruth E. Walker said. "And great fun to be mixing contemporary writing with fine art."

Published in Whitby every spring and fall, *lichen* has been responsible for presenting the works of several writers from the Durham Region, including some who had never been published before.

"We have two very special mandates," said Steven Laird of Oshawa, another of the five editors who produce the journal. "We look for talented, unpublished new writers

and artists, and we especially look for them in Durham Region."

One of the evening's readers, Debra Franke of Courtice, had her first published work in *lichen*, and has since gone on to be published in other magazines.

Whitby's Nora Landry and Lucy Brennan also read, along with other writers and poets from the Durham Region and Toronto.

Jeremy Dodds and Cameron Esler, both originally of Orono, screened a "cine-poem," a mixed-media presentation of spoken word, music and video.

"Their work explores the potential of combining text and technology. Poetry is the oldest literary form and our new writers are constantly mining its possibilities," said poetry editor Andrea Stone. Interval music was provided by harpist Liane

James, a young Ajax resident.

Gwynn Scheltema, one of the founding editors, said, "I'm overwhelmed at the level of support we have received from so many

people. It is encouraging to know that others feel as passionately about *lichen* as we do. We were especially touched by a note accompanying a large privately raised donation which read, 'Without *lichen* ... Durham voices would not be heard, and for this we are truly thankful.'"

Editor Ingrid Ruthig said, "We're already looking down the road to the next five years. We have enough plans and ideas to fill 20 issues, certainly enough to keep *lichen's* readers sitting on the edge of their seats!"

Readers and past contributors come from around the world, including the U.S., Europe, Southeast Asia and Australia.



Lucy Brennan

Hot on the heels of her recent success at Too Write, **Deborah Rankine** has received exciting news from former WCDR Breakfast speaker Karen Levine — Karen has accepted Deb's piece for the CBC radio program "First Person Singular."

Congratulations go out to **Valerie Poulin**, who was recently announced as a finalist in the Canadian Poetry Association's 2003 Shaunt Basmajian Chapbook Award!

Rich Helms was granted USA Patent #6,560,572. The patent, "Multi-Simulator Co-Simulation" was co-written with Anil Balam.

Rich holds three Canadian and two U.S. Patents in surround sound, infra-red communications and circuit simulation technologies.

Deb Rankine placed second in the Too Write real life story contest. Her story, "Crimes Of Passion," appears at the top of the Honorable Mention Short List of 10 runners-up.

You can read her story at www.toowrite.com
Great work, Deb!

Carl Clark gets around!

Carl has been interviewed by reporters from both *Oshawa This Week* and *The Toronto Sun* about his illustrious career including two beach scene murals Carl painted from the top of a ladder in a local laundromat amid the noises and goings on around him!

Watch for upcoming articles celebrating Carl and his years of creative endeavors.

Devorah Garland has an article in the Aug. 9 edition of *The Toronto Sun* about women who love their hogs — motorcycles, that is! Vroom, vrrrom, Devorah.

Paeans

Meet Your New Board

Annette McLeod president

Annette's first published work, a poem, came at age 14 in the anthology *Celebrate Our City*, published by McClelland and

Stewart in honour of Toronto's sesquicentennial. She is a 17-year veteran of *The Toronto Sun*, where she currently holds the post of senior writer/editor in the special sections department.

Toronto Sun credits include a weekly automotive section, *Driver-Source Saturday*, book and restaurant reviews, and features on topics including Feng Shui and the history of architecture. She is a member of the Automobile Journalists' Association of Canada (AJAC).

Her first play, *Character Assassination*, was mounted to good reviews at last summer's Fringe Festival. She possesses a dubious education that includes communications at Ryerson Polytechnic University, fine arts at George Brown College, and bartending school. Annette considers herself an excellent self-starter and mediocre self-finisher. This is her last issue as editor of *The Word Weaver*.

She is currently working on several short stories and a novel. When not writing, she enjoys arts and crafts, time spent with friends, video games and obsessing about punctuation.



Anna Therien vice-president

Anna comes to us from Ajax, where she works as a team with her husband in their company, DNA Marketing. Soon after joining WCDCR she took on the role of administrative assistant, where she was able to use her background in accounting and computers.

Her publishing credits include *The Globe and Mail*, *At Home in York Region* magazine and *The Toronto Sun*.

Anna looks forward to helping WCDCR continue to grow.



Rose Cronin treasurer

Rose started Brothers Bookkeeping in 1988, and incorporated The Awesome Bean Counter Company Inc in 2001. She is a CMA and completed the Adult Educators' Program through Durham College. She has done presentations for several local organizations.

Rose was involved with Durham BPW for 14 years, sitting on the board in several positions. She is a past director of the Ajax Pickering Board of Trade.

Susan Lynn Reynolds workshops/retreats

Sue has been writing since she was eight. Her first novel, *Strandia*, was published in 1992 and won the Canadian Library Association's YA Novel of the Year award. She is an accredited writing instructor in the prestigious Amherst Writers and Artists method and teaches Advanced Creative Writing at Durham College, workshops on accessing your

writer's voice, memoir writing and fiction writing as well as facilitating writing-on-the-spot groups. Sue has formerly served three years on the Board of the Writers' Circle of Durham.



Aprille Janes past president

Aprille wrote reams of short stories and poems while growing up but was told she needed a "real" job. Five years ago, after a successful consulting career in the technology field, Aprille decided to take a creative writing detour and return to her first love. Creative writing and poetry courses at Durham College encouraged that dream. She finally took the plunge and submitted some of her work to the Canadian Author's Association

and found herself included in their first poetry anthology. She now has a number of publishing credits including *The Toronto Sun*, some local magazines and a piece on CBC Radio. She is currently working towards living her dream full time.



Meet Your New Board



Sherry Hinman breakfast co-ordinator

Sherry has been writing since she was old enough to hold a pencil but she only decided to turn her hobby into a serious pursuit in 2002, when she began operating her full-time freelance writing/editing business, *The Write Angle*.



In addition to a BA in Linguistics, and a BSc and MSc in Speech Pathology (from her past life), Sherry has her editing certificate from George Brown College.

WCDCR's anthology, *Signatures*, contains her first published fiction. Sherry's business focuses on business and commercial writing and editing including course outlines, student guides, practicum guides, promotional material, presentations and self-study manuals. She also writes and edits magazine articles for special publications of Metroland Durham. When she's not writing, Sherry is teaching at Durham College in the Communicative Disorders Assistant program.

This is Sherry's first year on the WCDCR board and she is happy to be able to give something back to an organization whose members have nurtured her so well.

Rich Helms web liaison

Rich's articles have appeared in a range of publications from *Engineering Dimensions* and the *IBM Systems Journal*, to *The Toronto Sun*. He is also well versed in writing computer languages and programs. Rich learned his first computer language in 1966 and designed his first computer language for IBM in 1980. He holds five U.S. and Canadian patents. He invented CARES, the computer system for aging images of missing kids that was used by Metro Toronto Police for 11 years, and was recognized with a Metro Toronto Police Appreciation Award. His Learning C++ CD-ROM was recognized with the Society for Technical Communications Distinguished Publication Award. Rich's passion in life is using complex computer technologies to make tasks easier. Rich does long distance bicycle riding and is currently building his first bicycle from scratch.



Kevin Craig secretary



Kevin has been writing for as long as he can remember. Since finding the WCDCR, he has been overwhelmed by the support and kindness of his fellow members. He is the facilitator of a once-a-month writing circle and an avid workshop attendee. Kevin recently organized a series of on-the-spot writing sessions, *Writers In The Park*, designed to inspire confidence in writers who are both seasoned and new to the path. His hopes are that it will become a yearly celebration of fresh air, group writing. His most recent accomplishment was a publication in *The Globe and Mail*. Kevin is excited about helping to get the word out about the WCDCR, an organization that has helped him immensely along his own writing path.



Dorothea Helms public relations

Dorothea has been a freelance writer since 1993, and co-owns the communications firm Write Stuff Writing Services. She provides articles and ad copy for magazines, newspapers, radio stations, agencies, Web sites, public relations firms, municipalities and businesses. In addition, she teaches Creative Writing at Durham College and offers workshops through WCDCR. Her work has appeared in publications such as *Chatelaine*, *The Globe and Mail*, *The Toronto Sun* and *Stitches*, the *Journal of Medical Humour*. She is contributing editor for three Metroland publications.



Despite her knack for humour, Dorothea had a poem appear in the Spring 2002 issue of *lichen literary magazine*, and won third place in the 2003 Dan Sullivan Memorial Poetry Contest — and neither piece started with the line "There once was a..."

She is also working on a best-selling novel that you'll be sure to want to read someday because you'll be blown away by the ending. So will she if she ever finishes the book.



A Message From The **BOARD**

By Annette McLeod, *president*

The WCDR is miraculous to many of us — its non-competitive, nurturing nature is a refuge in a highly competitive publishing market; its bright, friendly, inclusive members are a rare treasure; and the tater tots are fabulous.

As the newest board, we all look forward to helping it continue to grow and thrive while maintaining its intimate community feel.

As our first new initiative, we are instituting a mentoring program. It's not the grandest idea we have. While it's pretty darn good, it may not even be the best. And we haven't even heard your ideas yet.

But mentoring is one of the most time and cost-effective, as well as enlightening, personal and enriching, programs an organization can offer.

Mentoring takes only the willingness of more knowledgeable, experienced members to share what they've learned with newer, greener members. Motivation, publishing and editing tips, reading and workshop recommendations, form and content advice — these are just few things we can offer new members.

Not every new member will want a mentor — new to WCDR doesn't automatically mean

new to the writing craft — but many will, and wouldn't it be great if we were able to say, "Welcome to WCDR. We've the perfect mentor for you!"

Mentoring can take as little as an hour or so a month, and it's free. And one of life's most valuable experiences is knowing you made a positive impact on someone's life. Maybe you'll make a friend even.

If you're up for sharing the benefit of your experience, please contact me for more information. (We'll be figuring out the process together.)

If you think you could benefit from a mentor and would like to be put in touch with someone complementary, please also contact me. (See page 12 for contact info.)

We're in the process of discussing the findings of the surveys you

completed a couple of months ago and will do our best to act on your suggestions. Our main goal for the coming year is to help you get what you need and want out of the best deal in the business — membership

in the WCDR.

If you've got an idea that could help your fellow members (and yourself, of course!) take the next step in their writing journey, please let us know. If you're new (or shy), just pick out the face you like best from pages 6 and 7 (Rose's picture is missing only because we didn't get it on time, not because it's not a great face), and tell us what you think. We're all nice. I promise.

We're here because you're here. To quote one of my favourite characters, we want for us all to live long and prosper.



July/August Challenge

Considering Flight

By Kevin Craig

I am the wings of a dove. Not a snow white dove, nothing as sleek and pristine as that. No, I am the tawny brown-rouge expanse of turtledove wings. Nor am I the complete bird. For the heart of a dove is light, effervescent and free. I am not remarkable enough to be the heart of a bird. I leave that to you. You are the heart that causes my wings to beat, to soar high above these linear landscapes. You give the rest of the bird its reason to move, to stretch the wings that I have become. Together, we are dove ... moving effortlessly through the windless night. The heart beats and suggests the directions my feathered limbs may take. But then again, no, perhaps I am the tail of a fish, gliding freely through the tumultuous seas. Perhaps your heart lies beneath the scales and fins of the beautiful Redbelly-Yellowtail of the tropics, while I, your steering guide, am the tail,

adhering to the rhythms of your every beat. Whichever it is that I am, turtledove wings or the tail of a fish, it is you who guides me through the vast blue expanse through which I soar ... either sky or water, it does not matter to me. You give me reason to float through the memory of my evolutionary selves — my tail, my wings. I am free, a fish in the sky, a bird in the ocean blue. I am the motion of your beating heart.



Last month's challenge was to make the choice between having wings or having gills. They both have their temptations: the solitude of silence, the challenge to gravity itself, the freedom. But to soar or to swim? Befitting the diversity of our members and embracing

life in all its forms, Kevin Craig is this issue's challenge winner. In order to give Aprille a clean slate for her first issue, we've decided not to issue a challenge for next time. Instead, we invite you to submit five-minute fiction — stories of less than 500 words — for consideration. As always, thanks to all who entered. Your contributions have been a big part of the pleasure of editing *The Word Weaver*.

—McLeod

Congratulations, Aprille Janes!
We are delighted to announce that Aprille has
agreed to become the next Word Weaver editor,
effective with our next issue.
To reach Aprille, write to wordweaver@wcdr.org

Odds & Eds

It's with mixed feelings that I write this final Odds & Eds column, because while odd I may remain, I will no longer be Ed.

On the one hand, putting *The Word Weaver* together has been great fun and offered a thousand learning opportunities; it's also a design challenge and a lovely way to stay in touch with the membership. On the other, it can be frustrating. I've lost stories and struggled with fonts, had pictures go corrupt, been overwhelmed, missed deadlines and begged forgiveness for it all.

More importantly, it's another one of those things that takes time away from the thrust of it all: writing.

Discipline has never been my long suit, but I'm going to make it my goal to take the time I would devote to this newsletter (which can range from 10 or 12 hours to 20 or more, depending on content and how my computer is behaving) and concentrate on my own writing. Sure.

It's been a while since I actually sat down and concentrated on my fiction writing. As a trial run the other night, I put "bum in seat" (I will forever be grateful to Dorothea for putting that phrase in my head) and tried to write a short story. And stared at the blank screen. And stared. Then I remembered having read (numerous times) about not trying for perfection, not trying to write linearly, just filling up some space with some words. What I ended up with is 1,500 words along the lines of, "What should the main character do to reach the next point? Why should anybody care? This is stupid. What's this story about, anyway? Don't think about it. Just do it."

I've been very lucky in the past. When I sit down to write, it usually just comes. I've talked to other writers who aren't so lucky and always think, Gee, why does everybody think this is hard?

Enter hubris.

But something wonderful happened as I sat there filling up pages with nonsense: as I worked through every thought process in writing, themes began to gel, ideas led to others ideas, characters began to present themselves. When I gave up for the night, I still hadn't written a single word of the actual story, but discovered I'd made progress nonetheless.

What started out as a fruitless and humbling evening turned out to be a learning experience I'll carry forward to the next stage. That, and the fact that I leave *The Word Weaver* in such capable hands, has made it easier to let go.

Aprille, take good care of my baby. Have fun. Do good work. And remember, even those long nights spent banging your head against the monitor will work out in the end.

— Annette McLeod,
ex-Word Weaver editor



Grammar Puss

All it Takes is a Little Dedication

Hi GrammarPuss:

I love to read *The Word Weaver* and I love all the articles, but as a newsletter editor, am always particularly interested in the GrammarPuss items. We have a quandary!! Can you help us?

The mandate for the PineRidge Arts Council goes like this: The PineRidge Arts Council is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhance the quality of life within the community by developing widespread appreciation, support and involvement in the arts.

Here is the question: Some of us feel that the word "enhance" should be "enhancing." Some of us feel that the word "enhance" is fine as is. Since we are divided on this, we need a knowledgeable arbiter to help us. We couldn't think of a better person than you. What do you think?

Thanks for your help,

Cathy Schnippering,
 PRAC Newsletter Editor

Hi Cathy,

GrammarPuss is delighted to be so highly regarded — and we love a good quandary!

Yours is a conundrum of context, and in such cases, GrammarPuss finds it helpful to replace the verb in question with another — for example, after you get out of the shower, would you say you are "dedicated to dress myself"? Of course not, although on some mornings, it certainly feels like getting dressed takes dedication! Once you're shiny clean, your time is "dedicated to dressing myself."

If you say your organization is "dedicated to enhance the quality of life ..." what you're actually saying is that, as evidenced by your efforts to enhance to the quality of life within the community, you are dedicated. What GrammarPuss believes you mean is that it is your mandate to enhance the quality of life in the community.

Therefore, you are dedicated to *enhancing* the quality of life within the community. And good on you! A fine mandate it is.

GrammarPuss

Send your grammar, punctuation and style questions to GrammarPuss at wordweaver@wcdr.org

WOTS That You Say?

When? Sunday, Sept. 28

11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**Where? Queen Street West between
University and Spadina**

Why? Because it's fabulous!

The 14th annual Word on the Street Toronto festival is fast approaching! If you're planning to attend the festival, please consider volunteering for an hour at the WCDR booth. Volunteers will answer questions and generally promote WCDR.

More than 75 authors, storytellers and performers will take part this year.

Organizers say there will be more author readings, expanded youth programming and more "how-to" panels and discussions. They will also be partnering with the Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy in a poetry challenge.

If you are interested in volunteering, please e-mail Sherry Hinman at breakfast@wcdr.org.

Get it write @ your library

By Andrea Adair-Tippins

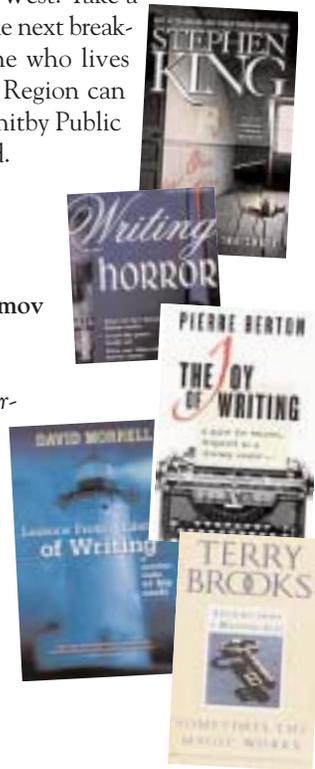
Looking for some inspiration to get you writing or keep you writing? The Whitby Public Library has some great books to encourage your muse. Keep you informed and interested in resources available to writers at the library (the Dundas Street branch is only minutes away from the Sports Garden Cafe, straight north on Henry Street). Look to this space in future Word Weavers to

learn about other resources available.

All of these titles are available at the main branch of the Whitby Public Library at 405 Dundas St. West. Take a look after the next breakfast. Anyone who lives in Durham Region can obtain a Whitby Public Library card.

Try these titles for inspiration:

- *Make 'em Laugh* **Steve Allen**
- *Asimov's Galaxy: Reflections on Science Fiction* **Isaac Asimov**
- *Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing* **Margaret Atwood**
- *The Joy of Writing: A Guide for Writers Disguised as a Literary Memoir* **Pierre Berton**
- *Sometimes the Magic Works: Lessons from a Writing Life* **Terry Brooks**
- *The Outlandish Companion* **Diana Gabaldon**
- *Bare Bones: Conversations on Terror with Stephen King*
- *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* **Stephen King**
- *A Likely Story: The Writing Life* **Robert Kroetsch**
- *Lessons from a Lifetime of Writing: A Novelist Looks at His Craft* **David Morrell**
- *Writing Horror* **Edo Van Belkom**



Breakfast Info

September 13

Featured Guest: **Robert M. Gignac**
Author

Our speaker for September 2003 is author Robert M. Gignac. Robert will be speaking about his experiences in self publishing, along with the issues of joint collaboration on a book, and the trials and tribulations of writing when you have a full-time occupation to keep you busy.

Robert's first book, *Rich is a State of Mind*, was co-authored with Michael Townshend. Robert is the owner of Taynac & Associates (Aurora, Ont.), which focuses on personal and organizational development. A sought-after speaker at seminars across North America, Robert writes articles on personal development and technology issues for various publications as well as a bi-monthly column in *Small Business Canada Magazine*. A student of the financial planning process, and a client of Michael Townshend's for more than

a decade, he is happy to share what he has learned through this story.



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 905-259-6520 or at breakfast@wcdr.org



Writers' Circles

To join one of the circles below, please call the contact person indicated. For general information, write to Sherry Loeffler at loeffler@primus.ca or call her at 905-640-6315. Group leaders, please notify editor of changes to dates, 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
Next meeting: Aug. 12
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Call for location
Ruth Walker, 905-728-7823

Inkwell

Formerly Bowmanville Writers' Group
Third Tuesday of each month
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Coffee Time Donuts
Liberty Street and Baseline Road
Bowmanville
susana.gomes@rogers.com

Markham Village Writers' Group

Monthly
Donna Marrin
donna.marrin@staples.ca

Newcastle Poetry Club

Third Monday of each month
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
261 Mill St., Newcastle

Philippa Schmiegelow, 905-987-4856

Northword Edition

Tuesdays, every two weeks
Next meeting: Aug. 19
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

Newcastle Writing Group
Every second Tuesday
Next meeting: Aug. 12
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
Next meeting: Aug. 14
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Uxbridge Public Library
Sue Reynolds, 905-985-1962

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



Calendar of events

August 10
Writers in the Park
 Gwynn Scheltema
 Susan Lynn Reynolds
 On-the-spot Writing Al
 Fresco

August 11 to 15
Writing Camp
 Write-Up Kids & Teens
 Lynda Allison

Sept. 23/25
Workshop
 Write-Up Kids & Teens
 Lynda Allison

September 13
Breakfast
 Robert M. Gignac
 Author/Publisher

September 28
Word on the Street
 Festival
 Annual Event



For workshop information, contact Sue Reynolds at workshops@wcdr.org
 To register for breakfast meetings, contact Sherry Hinman at breakfast@wcdr.org

WCDR Board of Directors

Annette McLeod
 President
president@wcdr.org

Aprille Janes
 Past President
pastpresident@wcdr.org

Anna Therien
 Vice-President/Memberships
membership@wcdr.org

Kevin Craig
 Secretary
secretary@wcdr.org

Rose Cronin
 Treasurer
treasurer@wcdr.org

Sherry Hinman
 Breakfast Co-ordinator
breakfast@wcdr.org

Susan Lynn Reynolds
 Workshops/Retreats
workshops@wcdr.org

Dorothea Helms
 Public Relations
publicrelations@wcdr.org

Rich Helms
 Web Liaison
webmaster@wcdr.org

the **Word Weaver**
www.wcdr.org

The Word Weaver is published by The Writers' Circle of Durham Region as a service to its members and other interested parties. No one should act upon advice given without considering the facts of specific situations and/or consulting appropriate professional advisors.

Publications are invited to quote from *The Word Weaver* upon obtaining written permission from the President, The Writers' Circle of Durham Region, P.O. Box 323, Ajax, Ont., L1S 3C5
 Phone 905-259-6520. Web address: www.wcdr.org

Word Weaver subscription: \$12/year (6 issues); WCDR membership: \$40/year, \$35/renewal

Editor/Desktop Publishing
 Annette McLeod

We welcome your input
 Send comments and submissions to
wordweaver@wcdr.org or
 c/o WCDR, P.O. Box 323
 Ajax, Ont. L1S 3C5

We reserve the right to edit or reject
 submissions at our discretion

Famous Last Words

Consistency is the last resort of the unimaginative.

— Oscar Wilde