

The Word Weaver

Inside

- ♦ Paean3
- ♦ Word in Whitby 4
- ♦ Writes of Spring6
- ♦ Challenge 8
- ♦ Tribute to Marge Green9
- ♦ Writers' Circles10

A newsletter for writers and editors
produced by
The Writers' Circle of Durham Region
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Opportunity's Knocking And it Sounds Just Like the Radio

By Lucy Brennan

After hearing her brief account at the breakfast meeting in March of an evening spent at an Insurance for Radio seminar, Word Weaver asked Lucy Brennan to elaborate on what she learned.

This informative evening was organized by the Periodical Writers Association of Canada, Auctions Toronto, and included four speakers: Mario Carlucci, executive producer at Toronto's CFRB 1010 radio; Iris Yudai, one of the producers involved with freelance contributors, at CBC's *Outfront*; Adam Killick, a young man who has been very successful in getting the attention of CBC's *Outfront* and, last but not least, Julia Steinecke, from Ryerson's radio station, CKLN 88.1, producer of *In Other Words* (2 p.m on the first Tuesday of every month).

Why radio?

To quote Paul Lima of PWAC Toronto: "One word: Convergence. Global Television owns Southam. CTV and the *Globe and Mail* are owned by Bell (BellGlobe Media). Print journalists are popping up on radio and TV shows. It can't hurt to write for more than one media, and I suspect it will help over the next few years."

Mario Carlucci told us that the owners of CFRB have taken over another telemedia broadcasting corporation and now have 80 radio channels to provide with material.

They are hoping that this will, to a very large extent, be supplied by freelancers, so they need writers who appeal to small markets outside the big cities, people who feel that they have something special to offer, reporters of local happenings, specialists in a particular field of common appeal or just tellers of personal anecdotes.

The writers' words must be vibrant, bringing the subject to life — balancing between periodical writing and writing for TV. No photos, but informed prose that doesn't need photos, because it has its own immediacy — every word must count. If the writer's sub-

ject is a gut reaction to a recent news report, then the writing must make us feel that reaction.

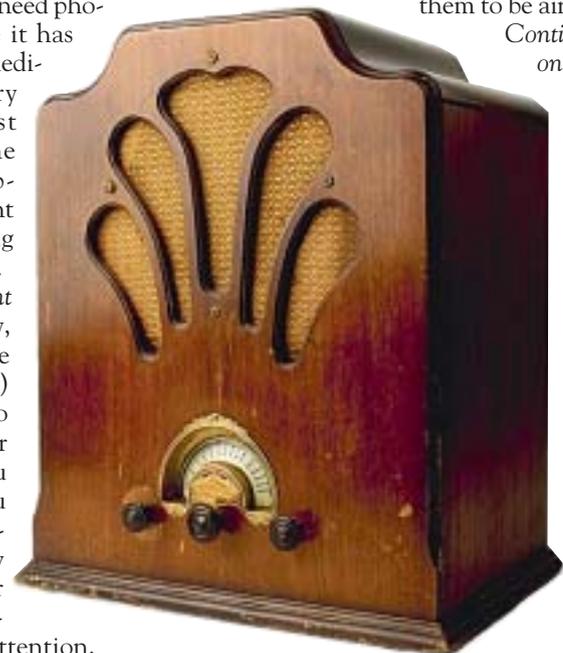
Iris Yudai from CBC's *Outfront* (Monday through Thursday, 11:45 a.m. to noon, Radio One 99.1FM, <http://cbc.ca/outfront>) went along with what Mario Carlucci had said and added her own two cents' worth. If you want to contribute to radio you must prepare a pitch (a proposal). To do that, you must know what's on air, what a particular program offers. Check the guidelines on the Web site and pay attention.

Your pitch should be one or, at most, two pages. Call the show with any questions you may have before submitting.

Create a picture with your words; remember, on radio, they're all you have. Take your listeners somewhere. Your words must be evocative.

Your submissions must be timely, especially if they are a reaction to current affairs. Yet they must be submitted soon enough to give producers time to assess them before they go on the air, so submit them at least one week before you expect them to be aired.

Continued
on page
2



Networking: It's Up to You to Connect

By Dorothea Helms

Did you know that the word “networking” was added to Webster’s Dictionary in 1940? It may have taken more than half a century to reach buzzword status, but the concept of sharing information or services among individuals or groups for mutual benefit is as old as time.

The old adage that word-of-mouth is the best advertising is true — and for writers, the “word” should come mostly from our own mouths. Networking is the most valuable form of marketing communication we have. From the ubiquitous business card to the formal breakfast or dinner meeting, we have unlimited opportunities to let people know we’re writers.

Durham College does regular surveys of graduates to find out where their job leads come from. A surprising percentage come from unexpected sources, like “my grandmother’s plumber.” Grandma knows the

value of letting people know what you do.

Remember, however, that networking is *your* responsibility. WCDCR provides you with an amazing array of opportunities to interact with other writers, editors, publishers, and even potential clients. It’s up to you to introduce yourself to people, hand out business cards or follow up on promises to get in touch.

Remember, too, that although networking is your responsibility, it’s not all about you. Showing interest in others is just as important. If you’re a professional writer or aspire to be one, remember that in order for people to hire you, they have to know you write.



Tips for Success

- ◆ Before you attend a business or writing-related gathering, find out all you can about the people who will be there.
- ◆ Have business cards ready, and be professional in your interaction.
- ◆ Develop an effective 30-second commercial and let people know what you do every chance you get, even in everyday life.
- ◆ Initiate conversations with “Hi, I’m so-and-so and I do such-and-such. Tell me about yourself.”
- ◆ Listen more than you talk.
- ◆ When you accept a person’s business card, make notes on the back regarding your common interests or promises you’ve made.
- ◆ Remember to ask for what you need.
- ◆ Offer to help others with connections or information without expecting something in return.
- ◆ The kindnesses you show in business will come back to you.
- ◆ Follow up with the contacts you make.
- ◆ Remember, IT’S UP TO YOU!

Writing for Radio

Continued from cover

If your submission is concerned with a specific story, query the program, either by e-mail or phone, in advance to see if they are interested in the subject you propose. Don’t submit previously published material, especially that produced for a different medium.

If the reply to your submission is ambiguous, Iris said to ask the responder to elaborate, and be persistent. She says it pays off. If you are turned down the first or second time, keep at it until you get an acceptance. She supplied us each with a photocopy of a sample proposal that was accepted for *Outfront* and a photocopy of Tips on Freelancing for CBC Radio, which were compiled by the staff of *Outfront*. Copies of these can be obtained on the



Web at the PWAC site (www.pwac.toronto.org) She also encouraged us to buy the CBC Radio Style Guide put together by Michael Enright for CBC Training & Development. It is obtainable for \$15 at the Ryerson Book Store or on line at cbc.ca/boutique.

When it comes time for taping, you would be working with the assistance of CBC staff, so you don’t have to know all the ins and outs of broadcasting in advance. But, if you do, and you can bring your piece to life with sounds, squeaks, rattles and pops or music, all to the good. You should mention that in your pitch and describe what you will be doing. Make pitches to *Outfront*, to *Metro Morning* and even to *This Morning*, which is going to take shorter pieces. Ask! Ask! Ask!

There is very little in the way of fiction broadcast on CBC, except for the readings by their own staff of published books on programs such as *Between the Covers*.

Because of funding cuts, CBC is about to take on an altogether different face; they expect to employ far more freelancers than before, and CBC is going to be pitching to younger audiences, a market they’ve had trouble reaching in the past.

Adam Killick, the recently acquired staff contributor to *Outfront*, stressed that sound is first and foremost. Remember, you

are a storyteller — your words are being heard!

With the writing itself, stay away from subordinate clauses or parenthetical phrases. Your script must run in a narrative style that will hold fast the attention of your listeners. Shut your eyes and imagine the effect of your story on a listener.

Julia Steinecke, from the program *In Other Words*, on Ryerson’s student-run CKLN 88.1, advised that this is essentially a training station. They like to air programs that speak from unique perspectives. Listen to what is being aired there and make your pitch accordingly. It opens up a great opportunity for people starting out in radio. They have a drama section called *Stage Left*. Poetry and fiction are read on air. You have to “tech” your own show. They have a Volunteer Training Session on the first Sunday of every month. For further information call Brian Wright McLeod (416-595-1477). This is a great place to start. Mario Carlucci started his career in campus radio at Carleton University.

By the way, radio pays by the minute for each piece (except Ryerson, which compensates with the training you acquire there in lieu of stipend.)

To find out more about future workshops at the Toronto branch of the Periodical Writers Association of Canada, check out



Alexandra Savage-Ferr won First Place in the Expository Writing category in the Centennial College Student Writing Contest 2001/2002 for her article "A Profile of Daphne." What can we say but, "Wow!" Alex was also invited to a special executive/student magazine forum at Magazines University 2002 at the Old Mill.

Lynda Allison had an excellent article on entertainer Bob Cates appear in Career Connection in the *Toronto Sun* on Wednesday, May 8. Great job, Lynda!

In the Spring issue of *lichen literary journal*, you'll find pieces by WCDR members **Dorothea Helms, Debra Franke** and **Dorothy Sjöholm**. Quite a talented trio.

Helen Bajorek MacDonald just had a piece called "A Canadian Passport" published in *Pens of Many Colours*, 3rd Edition, Eva C. Karpinski, Editor. (Nelson Thomson, 2002). Congrats, Helen!

The multi-talented **Lynda Allison** has been chosen as a finalist in the Innoversity Open Door Pitch for Radio, sponsored by CBC Radio. She received a day of pitch and radio

training at CBC, and a scholarship, courtesy of the CBC, to the entire Innoversity Creative Summit. What's next, Lynda? T.V.?

Nancy Rogers was the author of several Spring Car Care advertorials in the April 18 issue of the *Toronto Sun*. Vroom, vroom.

Ruth Walker has been hired to teach Creative Writing for Continuous Learning at the Oshawa Campus of Durham College. This is a big step forward for Ruth in her career, and a huge step forward for the college to have someone of her calibre as an instructor. Ruth began teaching her 10-week course on April 21. In the fall, the course will be run on Monday evenings. If you're interested, call Durham College to sign up. We're very proud, Professor Ruth.

Sherry Loeffler is in print again. An April issue of *Uxbridge Times Journal* contains a tribute article she wrote on the Uxbridge Senior Scribes. Way to go, Sherry — congrats on another publishing success!

You'll find **Steven Laird's** feature article on writing poetry in this issue of *Canadian Writers Journal*. Steven has also had a five-part experimental poem accepted for an Australian online 'zine called *Textbase*. And he's been commissioned by *Books in Canada* to write a review for *Landmarks: An Anthology of New Atlantic Canadian Poetry* edited by Hugh

MacDonald and Brent MacLaine. Talk about a hat trick!

In his new role as historian of the Associated Male Choruses of America, an international organization with approximately 80 choruses in Canada and the northeastern U.S., **Robert Woodland** has been engaged to write a monthly column on the association's illustrious past. His second column has just been published on the association's Web site at www.amcofa.org.

Jacqui Daub has gotten one step closer to her publishing dreams, as Adventure Books from Calgary, Alta., has agreed to review her manuscript *Kaitlyn Wolfe, Crown Attorney*.

Singular sensations **Kathleen Smyth** and **Jackie Bramma** have had pieces accepted for First Person Singular (Jackie's second!) Jackie is also eagerly awaiting the publication of her first book, *Brass Roots*, about Whitby Brass Band.

Ingrid Ruthig won third place in the Open Window III Poetry Contest — as well as having four runners-up! The blind judging just reinforces Ingrid's considerable poetic talents.

Annette McLeod's play, *Character Assassination*, will be appearing at the Toronto Fringe Festival for eight performances during the first two weeks of July. ('Scuse me for tooting my own horn. Ed.)

BUILDING

LOCKS

We all know that squeezing out even 10 or 15 minutes of writing can make you feel better about your day, but how can you possibly find the right voice for a longer work when you only have a moment to spare? Try limbering up the voice you know best — your own.

The next time you've got a little chunk of time, sit down and begin a paragraph that starts like this, "In a parallel universe somewhere, I'm ..."

Make WCDR History

Be a part of WCDR's first-ever anthology.

Prose, poetry, essays, memoirs — anything that sparked enough passion in you to write it down.

Entries must be no longer than 2,500 words; limit two submissions per member. Deadline for submissions is July 31, 2002. Submissions must be made by

mail to WCDR Anthology, P.O. Box 323, Ajax, Ont. L1S 3C5.

(For those online: Bearing in mind that hard copy entries are necessary to the reading process, but eventually must be retyped, simultaneous submission of identical electronic file is much appreciated. Send to: wcdranthology@hotmail.com.)

Words in Whitby 2002

One Fine Day

By Kathryn Bremner, WiW Chair

Trafalgar Castle School was the place to be on the weekend of April 5 and 6 as legions of literary fans paid homage to some of Canada's most distinguished writers at the third annual Words in Whitby.

Interviewer and host Ted Barris skillfully guided his guests through a series of interviews that revealed not only fascinating tidbits about their approach to the craft of writing, but personal reflections as well.

The morning began with London, Ontario's Joan Barfoot reading from her newest novel, *Critical Injuries*. Barfoot described the pivotal event of her novel, one of only a few moment's duration, over several pages: the precise details of thought and action were starkly real.

Following her reading, Barfoot chatted with Barris about her career, and *Critical Injuries* in particular, displaying an entertaining sense of humour that contrasted the serious topic of her reading.

Regina's Sandra Birdsell introduced her book *The Russlander* by reading an actual newspaper account of the massacre of members of a Mennonite community in Russia in 1917.

The Russlander is a story of one woman's struggle to overcome feelings of guilt and loss. Birdsell intrigued the audience with her recollec-

tions of growing up in a culturally diverse family.

Adrian Downs, Trafalgar Castle School chef, displayed his remarkable culinary talents by providing Gala

"It has always seemed to me that the right detail is what brings people into the work."

Joan Barfoot at Words in Whitby

Luncheon guests with a magnificent feast. Over coffee and dessert, comedian Dave Broadfoot demonstrated that he is still just a kid at heart as he had everyone howling at his anti-drug rap and dance moves.

Whitby's own Susannah Kearsley delighted everyone with an honest, refreshing discussion of her personal background (she wrote her second book, *Mariana*, on a dare from her sister) and vacations spent with family studying cemeteries because of her father's

love

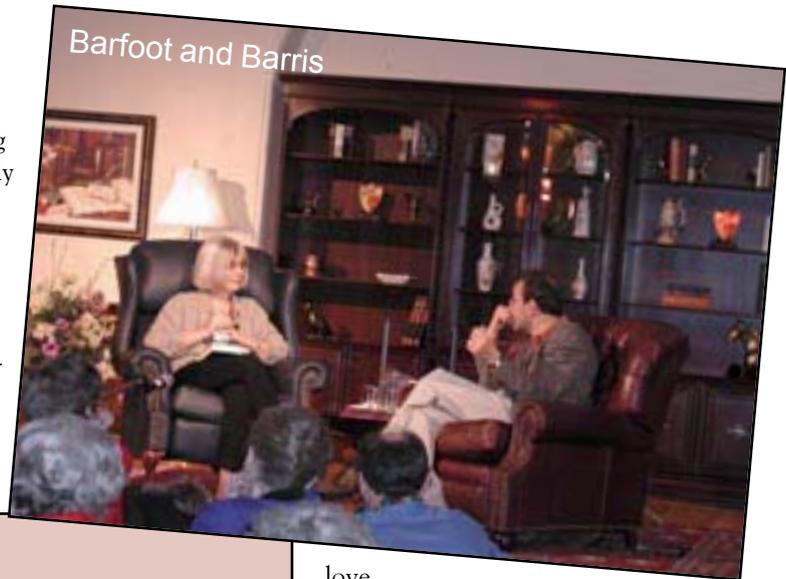
of genealogy! During her interview with Barris, Kearsley, a skilled researcher, talked about the help Canadian actress Cynthia Dale provided for her newest novel, *Season of Storms*.

Following a brief intermission, the audience sat back to enjoy the final guest of the day, famed historian and storyteller Pierre Berton. Berton spoke passionately about the stupidity and needlessness of war as he read excerpts from his latest book, *Marching As To War*.

He described how he "becomes part of that time" by reading archival newspaper accounts, old advertisements, correspondence, etc. from years gone by.

Berton described writing as being "in my head" and seeing it "as a movie — the shots, panning, scenes, backdrops." Berton is currently working on a book called *The Joy of Writing*, a title that sums up how he feels about his chosen profession.

Words in Whitby was a huge success not only because of its stellar lineup but thanks to the many volunteers who helped out on that weekend, including students from the school. Congratulations on a job well done to the organizing committee: Aprille Janes, Ruth Walker, Dorothy Sjöholm, Mike Ward, Kenza Warburton, Alex Savage-Ferr, Andrea Adair-Tippins, Sandra Metselaar, Rhonda Jessup, Tammy Gay, Lesley Kelz, D'arcy Jenish, Marjorie Green and Ted Barris.



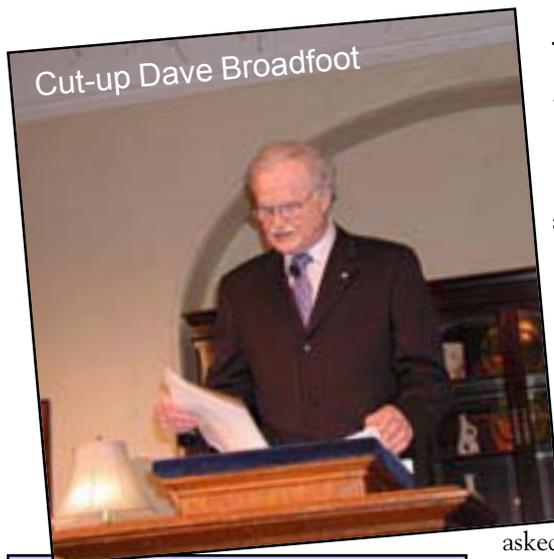
Barfoot and Barris



Words in Whitby 2002

Broadfoot and the Broad

By Dorothea Helms, WiW Writer Wrangler



“Never wear a hat
that looks better than
your face.”

Sage advice from Dave Broadfoot

In March when Marjorie Green asked me if I'd be the “wrangler” for Dave Broadfoot at Words in Whitby, I was thrilled and immediately said, “YES!”

After I hung up the phone, I realized that I had no idea what a wrangler was supposed to do. There I was, volunteering for something without knowing what I was getting myself into.

So, I called Marge back and asked, “As Dave Broadfoot's wrangler, does that mean I get him coffee and show him around, or wrestle him to the floor in a stranglehold so he can't escape?”

In fact, I may have referred to something a little more lewd than that, but in the interest of newsletter decorum we won't go there.

Marge explained that as his wrangler, I was to greet his limo when he arrived,

show him around, help him set up his table to sell videos and sit with him during lunch. As hilarious as he is on TV, I didn't know what to expect in person. Well, he's hilarious in person, too. He's also sweet and considerate, and was stunned at the beauty of Trafalgar Castle School and the scope of the Words in Whitby event.

Dave sold out of videos and was most gracious when signing autographs for his enthusiastic fans. People hugged him and greeted him like an old friend, and I could see how pleased he was. I was also amazed at his remarkable energy on stage. Plus, he did that entire routine from just a few brief written notes. That means he remembered an awful darned lot — which is more than people can say for me these days. Dave also took my rib-poking thank-you speech really well — said it was one of the best he'd ever had.

I guess it really was good for all of us.

Opening Night

By Gwynn Scheltema, WiW Fete-goer

The wind was biting and the sky grey, but as I drove up the sweeping driveway to Trafalgar Castle, and then walked on up the imposing stone steps, things seemed a little brighter. When the front door swung open, I knew this was an enchanted place: a smiling doorman, warm greetings from friends, a breathtaking interior — everything pointed to an evening to remember. And indeed it was.

After exploring the castle, and filling up on scrumptious eats and punch, we gathered for the somewhat overlong, but very necessary, speeches that were the first official order of the day (night?). “I've always loved stories, and if I can find someone to read them to me, all the better,” said Judy Longfield, and that statement set the tone.

Later, comfortably seated in the dining hall, we settled back to be read to — and to steal a glimpse into the lives of the authors who shared their work with us. The atmosphere leant itself to a rather posh occasion, maybe even a little remote, but Ted Barris' engaging interview style soon

defused the stuffiness, and instead I felt I was privy to a comfortable fireside chat.

I had been looking forward especially to hearing from Richard B. Wright — after all, he was a Governor General's award winner — but it was the Barris duo who stole my heart that evening. Ted and Alex Barris regaled us with anecdotes of their literary and musical lives, and old Toronto memories that had the audience nodding in agreement — all of it peppered with a lavish dash of humour.

It was a fine way to begin what proved to be a fine weekend.

I was at the first Words in Whitby held

two years ago; I've watched it grow, and I shall continue to be there in years to come.



Writes of Spring

All Dressed Up and No One to Show

By Jan Seppala

Looking forward to my first retreat with the WCDR I anticipated a weekend of relaxation, rejuvenation and a focus on putting pen to paper.

As the week drew to an end and my departure time grew near, I continued to fret. Did I have everything? Pillow, lots of warm clothes, pens, paper ... wine.

Wait! Pajamas! At home I sleep *au naturel*, something my husband doesn't seem to mind, but I was going on a retreat and sharing a bedroom.

My roomie might not be quite as agreeable to my bedtime attire, or lack thereof.

Walmart! I thought. That's nice and close to work! I'll run down during my lunch hour and pick up something suitable.

Now if I was going to put the money out for this seldom used item, I was going to get something nice. (The nicest you could get when you were shopping at Walmart anyway.) Loose, silky pants sounded good. Scouring the racks there was nothing to be had. The plus-size section was limited to begin with, but this store's selection redefined limitations and I only needed something for those occasions when clothing was not optional.

There! Cotton, loose, cheap — fits all three of my shopping criteria.

Not a bad colour and definitely within my budget. Lunch hour was almost over as I grabbed the hanger and headed for the cash register.

"Oh, these are nice," said the cashier as she scanned them while skillfully checking for any items I may have tried to conceal within the layers of fabric. "They look comfortable."

Wanting to get my little dig in at this person who, while only doing her job, dared to make me feel suspect, I looked her in the eye and said, "I'm not worried about comfort. I'm going away for the weekend and just don't know who I might be sleeping with."

Picking up my purchase I walked out, head held high, leaving the cashier with a look of astonishment and disbelief on her face.

Arriving at the retreat I found myself instantly drawn in and inspired.

The Gil-Mar Muse

By Dorothy Sjöholm

There's a muse up in Gil-Mar, 'tis said,
Could evoke written words from the dead.
(Or from minions who laze
In the hot tub for days!)
She demands that her word will be fed.

So, last month, she forged words in the heads
Of some wordsmiths who slept in her beds.
Then, 'neath sunlight's bright gaze
Her slaves polished and glazed,
And exulted as offerings were read.

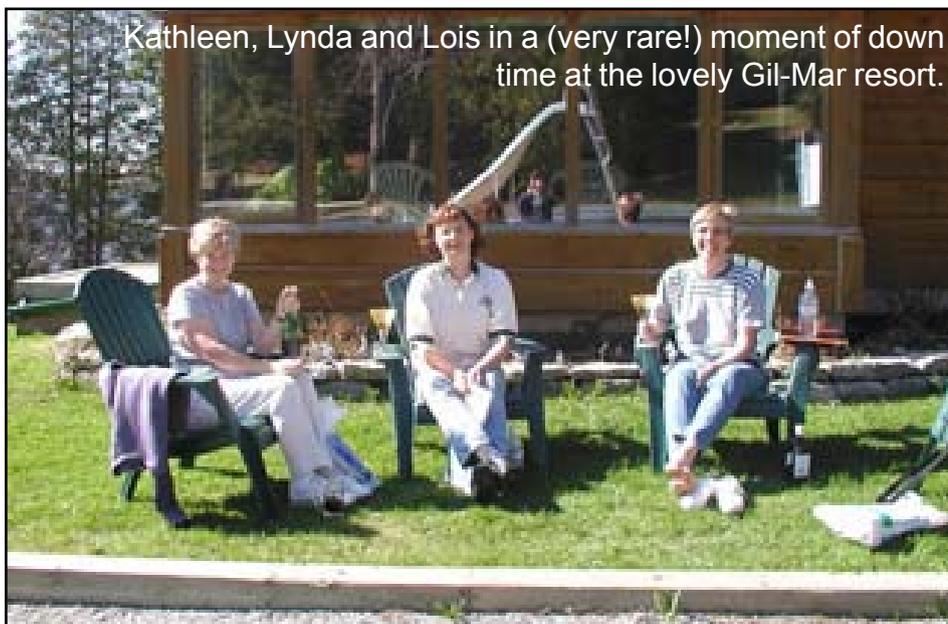
The location — quiet, peaceful and serene (when we wanted it to be) — allowed creativity to spring forth. The sharing and camaraderie provided encouragement as well as countless ideas for future writes. As I listened to the work produced by other members I drew strength from the knowledge that they were once in my place. After recently committing myself to the pursuit of this lifelong dream I welcomed the input and guidance of those who walked this path before me.

A few brave souls challenged the brisk evening winds on our final night together gathering 'round a bonfire to lull the rest of the resort to sleep with a variety of lyrical renditions. None of which seemed to have more than one verse, or if they did, they were quickly forgotten in favour of the next challenge to their vocal abilities.

A wonderful weekend was spent reaffirming my need to continue on this path, stopping to explore each clearing as I make my way through this tangle called life.

As luck would have it, my nightly attire was not an issue when circumstances found me without a roommate.

I now look forward to seeing that Walmart cashier again so that I can say, with a glint in my eye, "You know, I didn't really need the pj's after all."



Kathleen, Lynda and Lois in a (very rare!) moment of down time at the lovely Gil-Mar resort.

Can You Be a Little Less Specific?

By Bill Walsh

There are cliched expressions, and there are cliched writing techniques. (Some would include in the latter category the “There are x, and there are y” technique. Or the “Some would include” technique. Or the repetition of “or.” Or the parenthetical aside. Somebody slap me.)

While it’s a noble goal to rid writing of cliches, I’m not sure it’s possible to be completely successful in doing so. Once you broaden the definition of “cliche” to include writing techniques (as you should), even conventional sentence structure starts to look like a cliche. It’s been done before, right?

I think it’s important, then, to sharpen your cliché-hunting focus and target phrases and techniques not just because they’ve been done before (very little has never been done before), but because they’re especially tired or annoying. This isn’t, to use a cliché, an exact science. I might be just fine with a certain technique in one piece of writing but be determined to zap it in another piece of writing.

One currently popular device that I think deserves a wary eye is what I have dubbed the smirkingly specific example. You’ve encountered this device, I’m sure, if not in actual writing, then in television and radio commercials. Its users (and I’ve been among them) consider it a tool of modernization. At one time it was. Now, at least to me, it increasingly comes across as self-consciously cute and annoying. (And when I think something is self-consciously cute, well ...)

Here’s a decidedly non-modern sentence: Visitors sometimes tell boring stories.

Here’s how the same idea looks after it’s

been through the Smirkingly Specific Modernizer[®]: Tired of listening to Uncle Harry go on and on about his nose-hair collection?

You get the idea. This device isn’t always so slapstick. Sometimes it’s just a little more cutely specific than it should be. The genesis of this rant, in fact, was a very mild example I encountered at work — something about “distance learning” being used by adults, not just eighth-graders. Of course, the writer didn’t really mean to exclude sixth- and ninth- and other-graders; she was just trying to be a little cute. At one time I would have thought she had succeeded.

Now I’m just a little tired of reading such things.

My brother Terence at the East Valley Tribune in Mesa, Ariz., points to the conspicuous use of “that” and “those” as another hallmark of this device. Instead of instructing readers that a tidy car is a good thing, writers of the new school might harangue people whose cars they have never seen about “that McDonald’s bag” or “those soda cans” cluttering their back seats. Terence notes that this kind of specificity renders writing inaccurate as well as silly: Most readers have neither an uncle named Harry nor a McDonald’s-wrapper-littered car.

Bill Walsh, copy chief on the Washington Post business desk, runs The Slot: A Spot for Copy Editors (www.theslot.com) on the World Wide Web, from which this article was reprinted with permission. Walsh is also the author of Lapsing Into a Comma: A Curmudgeon’s Guide to the Many Things That Can Go Wrong in Print — and How to Avoid Them (Contemporary Books, 2000).

“While it’s a noble goal to rid writing of cliches, I’m not sure it’s possible to be completely successful in doing so.”

What Am I About? (a tour in self-assurance)

By Francis J. Theriault

Written in appreciation of those who most influence our lives.

I’m about getting things done
I’m about wanting to do it all
I’m about rushing too much
I’m about getting frustrated often
I’m about lack of discipline
I’m about seeking balance and order
I’m about a million hopes and dreams,
and I don’t know why
I’m about hanging on, tenacious, dangerously determined
I’m about loyalty and friendships
I’m about much, more, better!
I’m about wishing my life were more relaxed and routine
But my lot ... it’s about change ... and about challenge

It is I who is appointed to confront convention and custom
It is I who will live with a little regret, but will have lived my lot well
It will be my words, when received by willing ears — embraced in eager minds
I trust I’ll use good words, those of passion, wisdom, and deepest faith
My hope and prayer is that I’ll foster self-confidence and courage in all that I think and say and do

For I am persuaded with greatest certainty that I can make a difference
That is why I am about getting things done ...
Thank God for my million hopes and dreams!

... I am the speaker, the teacher, the writer.



Odds and Eds

By its name, anyone can tell that we members of the Writers' Circle of Durham Region have something in common — we write.

What may not be as immediately obvious is the other (and perhaps the only other) thing everyone one of us shares — we dream.

There are a lot of people who give their time so we dreamers can write (or is that the other way around?).

The gifted speakers at Words in Whitby are realizing their dreams, and wowed us as they let us in on them. Congratulations to the WiW organizers on the biggest event yet, and thank you for entertaining us, educating us, and reminding us that each word we lay down brings us closer to realizing our own dreams.

(If you have any doubts about that, check out this issue's Paeans. Go team!)

On the spring retreat, a passel of us dreamed together, made some memories and scratched out some more words, some easy, some hard-fought. I mostly goofed off and wrote silliness, but I had a great time, I limbered up the muscles and I made a new friend. We all heard some breath-taking readings; we all laughed 'til it hurt.

Thank you, Lois, for another great job organizing it. And thanks for laughing especially hard.

With the resignation of Alexandra Savage-Ferr, WCDR loses another hard-working, enthusiastic player on its board. That makes five holes, folks. WCDR needs you. If you love this group and want to see it continue to inspire, nurture and amaze, please consider nominating yourself for a position.

(And to anyone thinking, "Hmmp! Why doesn't she put her money where her mouth is?" — I don't blame you, and I am.)

Thank you particularly to Marjorie Green, who heads off to "retirement" (if you've spoken to her about it, I think you'll agree the quotes are implicit in her tone!) for making an invaluable contribution to our lives as a founder of WCDR.

Thank you, finally, to all the contributors to the Word Weaver. You are such an awesome group of writers — and Dorothea, I'm starting to think you're not human. Do you ever sleep?

All the best for a warm, wonderful, productive summer — and sweet dreams!

Annette McLeod, wordweaver@wcdrr.org

August/September Challenge

I'm sure there's not one among us who doesn't get some enjoyment out of the summer season. After all, what's not to like? It's got traffic congestion, black flies, humidity, smog ... why, it's a veritable smorgasbord of writer's fodder. For the next issue, haul out those pet peeves. Screw up your ire, get cranky, and write a fictional scene about something that drives you nuts. Keep entries to 300 words max and send them by July 15 to wordweaver@wcdrr.org or by regular mail to the editor at address on last page.

April/May Challenge Winners

Last issue's challenge was to amuse, entertain, and, most of all, rhyme. Yup, it's all about the limerick, that underrated little ditty that can perk up even the sorriest of days. Thank you to all.

By Mike Ward

A lim'rick's a humorous poem
You can write it at school or at home
It's witty and punny
And really quite funny
You'll find none in a serious tome.



By Carl Clark

There was a young couple of 20
Who longed for a time of plenty
There were bills to be paid
And bricks to be laid
But their pockets were in The Fully Monty

By Carole M. Lidgold

Weather forecasters say
Tomorrow's a wonderful day
The sun will shine
All will be fine
Then a blizzard blows us away!

By Graham Ducker

The W.C.D.R. is an ass-
Ociation of writers with class.
When Ms. Dorothea
Says, "We're sure glad to see yuh."
You're happy you came for breakfas'.

By Kevin Craig

I'm not quite a member, just yet
Looking to get my feet wet
The cheque's in the mail
It's yours without fail
With this first entry, I'm all set

By Mike Ward

There was a young boy from Sparks Street
Who just couldn't get Limerick's beat,
He tried and he tried
Then he finally cried,
"I know, I'll just tap with my feet!"

By Sherry Loeffler

Lake Scugog is shallow and murky
and shaped like the neck of a turkey.
We cast worm and wish
for a bloomin' big fish
and end up with a four-inch finned quirky!

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 Dorothea Helms to try the test PDF file, then let her know if you'd like your name added to the E-Word Weaver list.

Good luck, but not good-bye Marge Green

By Dorothea Helms

She may be retiring and moving to Minden, but a little bit of Marjorie Green's heart will always remain in Durham Region.

Marge, as most of you know, is the founder of The Writers' Circle of Durham Region (WCDR) — an accomplishment for which members will always be in her debt. What you may not know is the extent to which she has influenced and encouraged writers over the past two decades.

In addition to teaching creative writing at Durham College for several years, Marge personally helped dozens of writers (including me) get their first article published, and she started a number of smaller writing circles for children, adults and seniors. The long-standing Durham Write-On writers'

circle based in Pickering, for example, was her brainchild back in 1990, when students from her Durham College courses didn't want their interaction with each other to end. It was and still is a support group for writers.

In 1995, she decided that we needed a networking venue with a regional scope to support each other's writing dreams. Marge located some like-minded souls, began the hard work to establish a non-profit organization, and WCDR was born. I think I'm safe in saying that even she has watched in awe as the seeds she planted seven years ago have grown into a lush garden of opportunities for writers of all levels and genres.

Marge is a fine writer and editor whose

work spans the gamut from the hilarious humour piece on refinishing her basement that was her first publishing credit, to the in-depth piece she did on a wife abuse case for *Homemaker's Magazine*, to her published book *Spywriter: Licensed to Write*, to the countless publications and businesses that have called on her for business, advertorial, historical, feature and other types of articles. Her professional credentials include being a newspaper and magazine editor, a writer-in-residence for the Canadian Authors' Association and, most of all, a friend to all writers across Durham Region and beyond.

We'll miss you, Marge. You deserve a rest, but for all our sakes, please keep writing and encouraging others to do the same.

If I Do Say So Myself ...

Q: Dorothea Helms ♦ A: Andrea Stone

Q We've all heard the phrase "Write about what you know." Do you think that's a valid premise from which to write?

A It's definitely a valid premise, but always in the back of my head are W. P. Kinsella's words: "In 99 cases out of 100, writing about what you know will fill pages, but fill them with dull and uninteresting material."

If we lead boring lives, then we have to use our imaginations. To make our imaginary stuff believable we have to write what we know about people because people are essentially the same. The bank teller who loves her husband has as great a capacity for vengeance as a military sniper does for compassion. We just have to figure out where their switches are located; that's the tricky part. For that, we need to look into what we know about human nature.

And we usually get better at it as we get older.

Q When you go into a bookstore, what is the first section you tend to explore, and why? (And don't say the washroom — that's for when you're older, like me.)

A I usually head for the poetry section to see if it's my kind of store. Most bookstores have a pretty sorry stock of verse. The big chains seem to have a lot because they have a lot of everything, but it doesn't necessarily mean they have a lot that's good. In the past six or seven years I've seen a lot of good book stores close, two of my favourites being Albert Britnell Book Shop and The Book Cellar. Currently, I recommend Book City in the Annex (poetry's upstairs). It's still a chain but they hire people who know more about

books than Big Macs and to my knowledge, its owners aren't donning disguises and checking to see if their staff can draw a map to the owner's picks table — nor are they in the business of censoring books.

On my way out, I hit the bargain table. I love a deal, especially in hard-cover.

Q Thinking back over all the fiction you've read in your life, is there one character who has stuck in your mind longer and stronger than any others? If so, who is it, what was the book/story, and why is he/she so vibrant for you?

A I love characters who don't get what they want. They rip your heart out and force you to watch every painful intricacy of how it bleeds. We avoid this in real life at all costs, unless we're drama queens. But in fiction, it's what we crave. In real life, the people who should get together must get together, but in fiction these people should never be permitted the privilege. Imagine *Casablanca* ending differently. Impossible! Only in real life.

In fiction, my favourite character is never the main character, at least not directly. My heart hemorrhages for Peter Walsh in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. Since he's not the title character, he has the job of shaping her: "He made her see herself; exaggerate. It was idiotic. But why did he come, then, merely to criticize?"

There he was wandering off, and she must speak to him. But she would not get the chance. Life was that "humiliation, renunciation." And at the end: "What is this terror? what is this ecstasy? he thought to himself. What is it that fills me with extraordinary excitement? It is Clarissa, he said./ For there she was." Coagulants anyone?

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



Circle for Children's Writers

First Wednesday of each month
June 5; July 3; Aug. 7
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
June 4, 18; July 2, 16, 30
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
June 18; July 16; Aug. 20
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
3021 Providence at Concession 3
Bowmanville
Lynda Allison, 905-623-0365

Markham Village Writers' Group

Monthly
No meetings in June, July or August
Send e-mail for times and dates
Donna Marrin
katnip40@sympatico.ca

Newcastle Poetry Club

Third Monday of each month
June 17; 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Call for summer information
Philippa Schmiegelow, 905-987-4856

Northword Edition

Every two weeks
June 11, 25; July 9, 23; Aug. 6, 20
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Uxbridge Public Library
Dorothea Helms, 905-852-9294

Oshawa Scribes

First and third Tuesday of each month
No meetings in June, July or August
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' Circle

Formerly Volume Two
Third Tuesday of each month
June 18; July 16; Aug. 20
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
June 14, 28; 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
No meeting in July or August
Township Hall, Uxbridge
Joyce Whitney, 905-852-3414

Word Players

Newcastle Writing Group
Call for dates
7 p.m. to 10 p.m.
261 Mill St. S., Newcastle
Philippa Schmiegelow, 905-987-4856

Write in Whitby

Second and fourth Tuesday of each month
June 11, 25
No meetings in July or August
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
June 6, 20; July 4, 18; Aug. 1, 15
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
June 15
9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Call to check for summer meetings
Stemms Eatery
3300 Bloor St. W., Etobicoke
Mickey Turnbull, 905-824-5035
or mickeytc@ica.net

This, that and the other thing

The *American Journalism Review* has just launched its new Web site: www.ajr.org. The new site features thousands of journalism links and resources as well as original content from the pages of AJR.

Don't miss your chance to be part of the WCDR's *Writer's Services Directory*. This is a great opportunity for members to market their writing and related skills to the community. The cost for the directory listing is \$20. Trillium Funding and Essence Publishing sponsorship will help offset costs. The directory will be distributed to local organizations, government offices and school boards, and be accessible online.

Submissions must be received by June 15. If you would like to promote your services through the directory you may do so in one of the following ways:

Offline Entry

Complete and mail the directory submission form available at the June breakfast together with your cheque for \$20 to WCDR, P.O. Box 323, Ajax, ON, L1S 3C5.

Online Entry

Mail your cheque and e-mail address to the above address. Upon receipt, you will be provided with an id and password via e-mail to access the form online. Submissions made online become immediately accessible at

www.wcdr.org/directory. You may also bring your cheque to the June breakfast and receive the id and password.

If you have any questions or should you wish to advertise in the print directory, please contact Lynda Allison at directory@wcdr.org.

Visit the Absolute Write Web site for a listing of markets and numerous contests. You can subscribe to the newsletter, or just scroll down the page and you'll see all the listings in the May 16th newsletter. There are some interesting contests here. Visit <http://www.AbsoluteWrite.com/Marketplace.htm>.

This Magazine's Great Canadian Literary Hunt is in high gear. Cash prizes and the chance to have your work read by 10,000 *This Magazine* readers across the country. Send your entries by July 1 and join *This Magazine's* 35-year tradition of heralding the brightest talents in Canadian letters.

For more information, visit www.thismag.org or send questions by e-mail to thismag@web.net.

If you're looking for a publishing credit, maturemoment.com may be just the answer.

"The mature in the site name is hoped to attract content that is mature, not in a colloquial sense of being old, but in the sense of being more thought-provoking," says the e-zine's proprietor, Chuck Suikki. This is a free service. E-mail submissions to mail@maturemoment.com.

The *National Post* column "Personal Life" invites first-person memoirs and observations, personal letters and diary entries. Submissions of no more than 800 words can be sent to Personal Life, The National Post, 1450 Don Mills Rd., Don Mills, Ont., M3B 3R5 or fax to 416-442-2109 or e-mail personallife@nationalpost.com. Please do not send originals, personal documents or photographs. They will not be returned.

The *New Writer* magazine presents Prose and Poetry Prizes 2002. International prizes for contemporary fiction and poetry, essays and articles. Up to 20 prizes will be presented as well as publication for the prize-winning writers in *The Collection* in July. Closing date is Nov. 30, 2002.

Total prize fund, £2,000. For guidelines and entry form visit www.thenewwriter.com/entryform.htm or write to *The New Writer*, PO Box 60, Cranbrook, Kent, England, TN17 2ZR.

Upcoming Breakfasts

June 8, 2002

Featured Guest: Neil Crone

Join us in June for our annual general meeting and then a real treat, Neil Crone.

Crone is an actor and writer who lives with his wife, two small boys, two psycho cats and one very patient dog. Crone has performed in dozens of television and radio commercials and TV shows, and is the voice of numerous cartoon characters every Saturday morning. He has also done a number of feature films including the soon-to-be-released *Red Sneakers*, with Gregory Hinds.

You can catch him on YTV's kids' series *Screech*

Owls, on CTV's *Power Play*, the hit children's show *Noddy*, and as the weirdly friendly Mr. Crawford on *Eerie Indiana*.

A Second City veteran improviser, host and stand up comic, Crone also loves to write poems and stories for "big and little kids." His first book, *I Am Dead at Recess*, is currently published on the Internet. He writes a weekly humour column for the Metroland papers and is a contributing writer for CBC Radio's new *Real Life Chronicles* programme. Once he meets Don Knotts and Dick Van Dyke, he figures he can die.

July 13, 2002

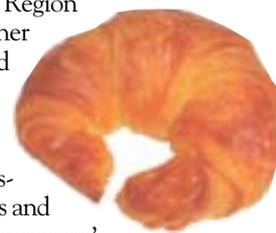
Featured Guest: You!

True to tradition, our July Breakfast meeting will host a potpourri of writing circles under the WCDR umbrella. You will have the opportunity to hear from a medley of representatives supporting writing circles sprinkled throughout the region.

They will honour us with the pleasure of hearing a number of members read their works, reflecting the diverse organizations the Writers' Circle of Durham Region represents. Whether you are interested in fiction, poetry, humour or children's writing, there will be an assortment of genres and styles to match everyone's taste.

This will be the perfect opportunity to find out about the different circles and see which one will best suit your needs. Remember to book your breakfast by Wednesday noon, the Saturday before the meeting.

Please note that there will be no meeting in August. Our fall lineup will begin again on Saturday, Sept. 14 with Mike O'Connor of *Insomniac Press*.



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

Your place **must** be reserved no later than the Wednesday prior with Nancy Rogers at 905-259-6520 or at breakfast@wcdr.org



Calendar of events

June 8, 2002

Breakfast Meeting

Featured Guest: Neil Crone
Actor and Author
and

Annual General Meeting
including board elections

July 13, 2002

Breakfast Meeting

Featured Guest: WCDR Writers' Circles
Shared Readings

To register for breakfasts
see page 11

**There is no breakfast meeting
in August**

Workshops resume in
the fall

Have a great summer!



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the Word Weaver

www.wcdr.org

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

Famous Last Words

I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by. *Douglas Adams*