

# The Word Weaver

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A newsletter for writers and editors  
produced by  
The Writers' Circle of Durham Region  
October/November 2003 Vol. 9 No. 4



## HOME SCHOOLING

By Rich Helms



Taking a class used to mean walking into a classroom.

Research meant going to the Toronto Reference Library for the day. The Internet changed that, opening up classrooms and libraries to the world.

Writers have found worlds of new information to learn from, ranging from free online guides and archives, to degree-granting university courses. If you are considering a university degree via the Internet, your first \$24 should be spent on the book College Degrees by Mail and Internet by Dr. John Bear. Dr. Bear got all of his degrees by mail and Internet, and is considered one of the top experts on distance education. He discusses in detail diploma mills selling phony degrees and how to spot them. He has been employed by the FBI to investigate many "schools." In Canada, Athabasca University ([www.athabascau.ca](http://www.athabascau.ca)) has been offering degrees via mail and Internet for many years, and you can take online writing courses from local schools such as Durham College.

Internet learning doesn't have to mean large schools. Individual writers are opening up schools to tutor in their area of expertise. With online education, location is not important. Want to study with an instructor in Australia? No problem.

Writing circles are a traditional way to improve your writing through peer review. How about online writing cir-

cles? Advantages of such a system include the elimination of the need for a common meeting time and location; work can be reviewed over a span of time; and revised work can be displayed.

A basic writing circle can be formed with a group of people and e-mail. In WCDR, we have been considering an online writing circle where pieces can be posted and comments appended.

Writing tools are also available online to help writers. Need a word



processor, spreadsheet, drawing and presentation package? One I have come to love is OpenOffice ([www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org)). OpenOffice is a worldwide project of developers creating an office system that works on Windows, Linux, Mac OS X and Unix. The most amazing part is – it's FREE. OpenOffice supports Microsoft Word documents as well as Excel files.

As a writer, my favourite electronic resource is the online bookstore. Amazon.ca lets you search for books as well as check user reviews. Often I am looking for hard-to-find, unusual or professional topic books. If the book you want is out of print, try Powells.com, the world's largest used bookstore, or Alibris.com, which acts as a search facility to millions of used and hard-to-

find books. Some of the more interesting places to browse are the small publishers, especially if you are looking for books on obscure topics.

And what do writers do when they aren't writing? They read. Check out [www.ipl.org](http://www.ipl.org). You'll find thousands of links to newspapers, dictionaries, magazines and books online around the world. And last but not least, [digital.library.upenn.edu/books/](http://digital.library.upenn.edu/books/) is a collection of over 20,000 books that are in the public domain (such as Shakespeare), free to download.

Fact is, if you'd like to learn more about writing, you can do it from the comfort of your own home, in your PJs in the middle of the night if you want to. But if you hand in your assignments late, you won't be able to use the old excuse that the dog ate your homework!



*Rich Helms is a multi-talented web designer, writer, photographer and WCDR board member.*

## THE LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE NEVER LOOKED SO GOOD

by Ruth E. Walker

It's that 'Back To School' time of year again and the kids either love it or hate it, but they all agree it is an exciting time. There are a few other people caught up in the Back-To-School frenzy, including long-time WCDR member Debra Franke. In fact, by the time you are reading this, Debra has travelled more than 1,200 kilometres and is already immersed in classes at the University of New Brunswick.

Scary prospect? You bet, but fear did not keep Debra from fulfilling her dream. Although she has attended university a few years ago, it was for a psychology degree. But recent creative writing courses at York University and other workshops soon helped her realize where her passion lies. She has a few English courses to take first, but if all goes according to plan, this time next year, Debra Franke will be on her way to a Masters of Creative Writing at UNB. "Sure I'm nervous, but it hasn't stopped me. This is what I want to do, and I will."

Debra is not the only local writer who has travelled a great distance to attend this program. Rabindranath Maharaj left his home in Trinidad in the early '90s to attend the masters program at UNB, and he hasn't looked back.

For Robin, the program was a wonderful affirmation of what many people had dismissed as a hobby. "The masters program worked for me because of the atmosphere. There were serious writers around; I think I learned more from the informal discussions with other writers and the instructors than from the classes themselves. But it also moved 'writer' into the professional level. You invest money and time and achieve a new sort of competence, so that writing is a career choice and not just a "pastime"."

Both Robin and Debra suggest that an extensive masters program is not necessary to achieve a sense of professionalism. Shorter courses, even one-day workshops, are all excellent methods of achieving what Robin calls "competence".

But if you want to plunge headlong into the rich world of the creative writing masters programs, here is a list of what is available in Canada:

### University of New Brunswick, Masters in Creative Writing

UNB also offers a full undergraduate degree program in creative writing, exploring drama, fiction, poetry, screenwriting and writing for new media.

link: [www.unb.ca](http://www.unb.ca)

### University of Windsor, Masters in English and Creative Writing.

UWindsor also offers an honours program in English and Creative Writing.

link: [www.uwindsor.ca/english](http://www.uwindsor.ca/english)

### University of Calgary, Masters and PhD in English with a creative thesis option.

UCalgary has creative writing options in the English BA program.

link: [www.english.ucalgary.ca/creative](http://www.english.ucalgary.ca/creative)

### University of British Columbia, Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Writing.

UBC web site boasts that their program is unique in North America, and a quick review by this reporter was rewarded with some impressive info. Admission requirements are also impressive. And daunting.

link: [www.arts.ubc.ca/tfcw](http://www.arts.ubc.ca/tfcw)

### University of Alberta, Masters program.

Similar to UCalgary, UA offers their masters through a creative thesis at the masters level. They also offer a combined honours BA Creative Writing program.

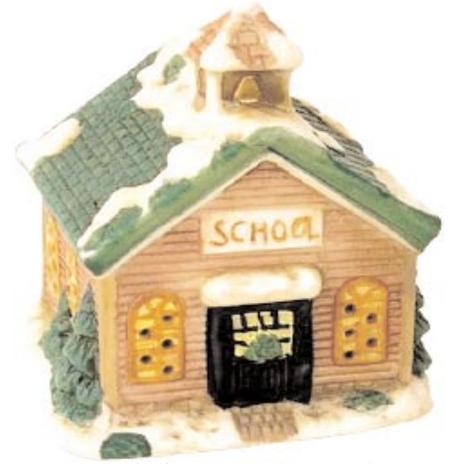
link: [www.ualberta.ca](http://www.ualberta.ca)

### Concordia University, Masters in English with a creative writing component.

Concordia also offers a full BA with a Creative Writing major or Creative Writing minor.

link: <http://artsandscience.concordia.ca/English>

Writers should take note that many Canadian universities and colleges offer full undergraduate programs in creative writing, or have expanded their English departments to include various creative writing courses. This is a tremendous shift from a few years ago when a degree in creative writing was almost unknown.



This list may not be complete, but it is a darn good start for those interested in a masters program. As Robin suggests, a masters program is not for everyone. And there are definite benefits to short and intense programs that focus on aspects of the writing process.

Organized retreats, such as the WCDR Write Away retreats, offer participants a wonderful opportunity to wallow in creative thought with like-minded colleagues. One-day workshops, or continuing education evening programs also help keep the inspiration fired up and the confidence level climbing.

Durham College in Uxbridge is always introducing new and exciting continuous learning writing programs featuring none other than WCDR favourites Dorothea Helms and Sue Reynolds. And let us not forget the smorgasbord of workshops sponsored fall to spring by your very own WCDR workshop coordinators.

The world is our oyster, writers. Let's crack open the shell and discover all the pearls within. And with Deb Franke and Rabindranath Maharaj as role models, we know those pearls are lovely indeed.



*Ruth E. Walker is a fiction editor for lichen literary journal and teaches creative writing courses and workshops.*

# Odds & Eds

As you may have noticed the theme for this month was education. Early fall always feels like the beginning of something new for me. I almost wish I could stand with the kids at the bus stop with my backpack, excited to see old friends and discover new ideas.

I love the smell of freshly sharpened pencils. Empty sheets of paper offer exciting vistas. Luckily, being a writer gives me an excuse to browse the Back to School aisle at Grand and Toy.

This year brought me another reason to feel like a student. Putting together my first issue of the Word Weaver has been quite an education. Besides the challenge of filling some very large shoes left by Annette, I've also been learned how to use desk top publishing software.

I've spent a couple of evenings arguing with my computer but so far I'm still winning. I can even feel new neural pathways are

developing. Maybe not as quickly as they did when I was six but the next issue should be easier. (I hope!)

Learning a new skill made me give serious thought to how lucky we are in Durham to have this great organization and all the opportunities it presents. Breakfast speakers, workshops, a fantastic website, our new lending library (Thanks, Kevin!). Add in all the other events around the GTA and we're inundated with riches.

Speaking of Rich (sorry...), Mr. Helms presents some interesting ideas about how to learn on your own terms and time while Ruth Walker provides a review of more traditional schooling. And if you've ever thought about being on the other side of the teacher's desk check out what Dorothea Helms has to say.

Then take a look at the Challenge for next month and share

how you gained some of that hard-earned wisdom accompanied with a smile and a chuckle. Because experience really is our best teacher.

In upcoming issues I'd like to focus on ideas designed to feed a creative fire as well as how to survive some of the slings and arrows of the writing life.

If there's something you'd like covered, send along your ideas to [wordweaver@wcd.org](mailto:wordweaver@wcd.org). I'll try and find an expert among us or 'out there' who can provide some insight and add to our store of knowledge.

And if you see my family? Please don't tell them about the 'Odd' part of the 'Ed'. They already have doubts about my sanity. Especially when they hear me arguing with my computer.

*Aprille Janes*  
Word Weaver Editor



**"We learn something by doing it.  
There is no other way."**

*John Holt, Educator*

# Workshops Etc.

## “The Power of Words”

A Workshop for Creative Writers of Fiction and Non-Fiction

Date: Saturday November 29.

Time: 10:00 till 5:00

Presenter: Jane Bow.

Location: TBA Whitby/Oshawa area

Fee: \$50 (\$45 for WCDR members)

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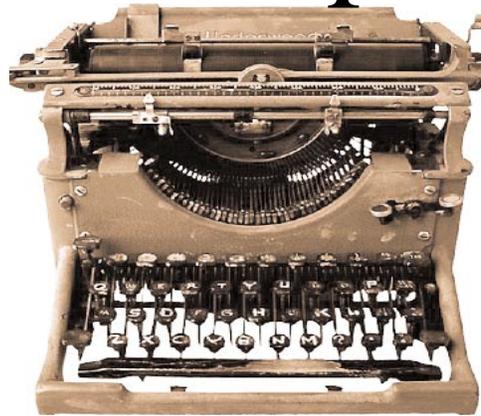
Words, mightier than any weapon, are the writer's only tool. Jane Bow, an experienced writer and creative writing teacher, will lead participants in an exploration of words: what they are, how they work, and how to put them together to create different effects.

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Jane Bow's novel, Dead And Living, published by Mercury Press, was selected for a Carleton University course last year. Her plays have been produced, published and studied in Canada and India. She has also published short stories in a variety of literary magazines, as well as essays and articles in *Chatelaine* and various major newspapers. Her scripts have been aired by CBC Radio. Most recently, Jane's history of Peterborough, published in 2001, won a Heritage Ontario award.

Jane teaches creative writing at the Haliburton School for the Arts, runs workshops, and coaches writers privately.

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## “Writing Practice”

Date: Saturday, October 18

Time: 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Presenter: Susan Lynn Reynolds

Location: TBA (Whitby/Oshawa)

Fee: \$75 (\$65 for WCDR members)

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED BY OCTOBER 14, 2003

"Writing Practice" - or writing on the spot, is a powerful technique for bypassing your internal editor or internal critic and finally getting the words down on the page. Whether you're a beginning writer who doesn't know where to start or a seasoned writer having trouble with a dry spell, *Unleashing the Writer Within* will give you the tools for creating vivid, connected, juicy prose --- and to finally stop procrastinating as a writer!

Come and spend the day actually writing, and learning the techniques that can keep you writing --- no excuses!

## “No Excuses Writing:

A Weekend Residential Workshop

Date: Friday Nov. 14 to Sunday Nov. 16

Time: 7:00 p.m. Friday to 4:00 p.m. Sunday

Presenter: Susan Lynn Reynolds

Location: TBA within 2 hours drive from Whitby/Oshawa

Fee: TBA approx. \$275. per person, 2 nights, all meals & instruction included.

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Do you want time away to work on your writing? Do you long for an environment that supports and enhances your process? Come away for a weekend and write in a structure that supports the creative process and gives you helpful feedback. Leave having written, and having new confidence in your ability to write whenever and whatever you want.

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Sue's 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 as well as workshops on accessing your writer's voice, memoir writing, and fiction writing. She facilitates the "on-the-spot writing" group Write Now in Uxbridge and serves on the WCDR Board of Directors.

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## 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.

## “Novel Writing from A to Z”

Date: Saturday, November 22

Time: 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Presenter: N. J. (Nancy) Lindquist

Location: Location TBA (Whitby/Oshawa area)

Fee: \$75 (\$65 for WCDR members)

Event Register - contact Sue Reynolds at [workshops@wcdr.org](mailto:workshops@wcdr.org)

An overview of writing a novel, with a focus on the key areas -- characters, setting, plotting, and theme. Do you begin with the characters or the plot? Write out every

scene in advance or simply sit down and go wherever your muse takes you? Consciously put in metaphors and foreshadowing, or just hope someone somewhere will see more in your words than you ever dreamed possible? We will discuss these topics and more as we work through one way of developing a novel from original concept to completed form.

N. J. (Nancy) Lindquist is the author of *Shaded Light*, a critically acclaimed mystery novel that has been compared to the best of Agatha Christie's. She also has five novels for teens as well as a variety of other published work. A former English medalist and high school Teacher of the Year, Nancy is a highly-rated writing teacher, speak-

er, and panelist both in Canada and the US. She is the executive director of The Word Guild, and a member of The Writers' Union of Canada, Crime Writers of Canada, and Sisters in Crime. Visit [www.njlindquist.com](http://www.njlindquist.com).

## To Register for workshops

Contact Sue Reynolds at [workshops@wcdr.org](mailto:workshops@wcdr.org)

OR

Leave a Message at 905-259-6520

## How I Spent My Summer Vacation: Roughing it with Writers

by Ruth E. Walker

Summer school. That phrase can clear a roomful of kids faster than the jingle of the ice cream truck on a July afternoon. Oddly enough, the thought of school in the summer caused exactly the opposite reaction for a group of adults in early August. They were not just eager about heading back to school; they were downright ecstatic. And it was my privilege to be their teacher.

Okay. It wasn't precisely "school". And I wasn't exactly their teacher". Let me explain.

Fiction and poetry hold my heart, and I love to share that passion with others. Especially others who are just beginning to spread their creative writing wings.

This summer, I spent an amazing week at the Centauri Arts Retreat in the lush and rolling Bethany Hills. I facilitated "The Art of Short Fiction" course in the basement classroom of a private girls' school. Former WCDR Writer in Residence, Stuart Ross, facilitated the "Poetry Express" course during the same week.

Don't let the private school

bit lead you astray. It is a nice place but there's no air-conditioning and no swimming pool. I did get a two-bed dorm room all to myself and somebody else cooked (woohoo!). And the surrounding landscape was fabulous – inspiring and exhilarating.

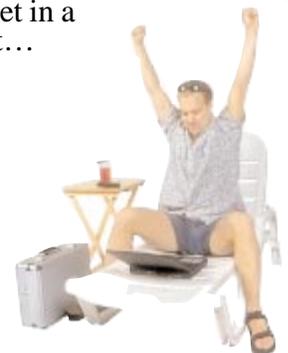
But what made this a remarkable summer experience had nothing to do with the setting. It was the women and men who slipped into lateral-thinking exercises and spirited discussions with the enthusiasm of first-graders at recess. And oh, did we play!

By the end of the week, I felt like I had been challenged, stretched and turned inside out. I needed a vacation. But those participants were so wound up, that they ended up committing to continue the process by starting their own writing circle for support. They even found a way to overcome their geographic differences so that those from as far as Pennsylvania and New York could still participate. Oh, the marvels of e-mail.

While writing retreats are not

for everyone, this group certainly let the genie out of the bottle. The process resulted in some incredible writing. In fact, one participant just had a short piece accepted for First Person Singular on CBC Radio. And yes, it was a piece that she wrote during the week. Very cool.

Would I do it again? You bet. These folks got me so creatively charged, that I finally finished the novel I've been writing and rewriting for nearly three years. In fact, I can hardly wait to return to summer school next year. Who knows; maybe I'll be working on a new novel. One about a creative writing workshop set in a rural retreat...



## SO, YOU WANT TO BE A WRITING TEACHER?

By Dorothea Helms

It's sad, but true. I once had a writing student who said her dog ate her homework. The pet was a puppy, so I guess it's believable – but it's also one of the reasons why if you want to teach writing, you'd better have a sense of humour. When it comes to students turning in assignments, I've heard every excuse: I threw it at my boyfriend and it landed in a mud puddle; I spilled spaghetti sauce all over it just before I left for class; my printer blew up; my computer blew up; I left it on the subway; I was too busy having a baby ... OK, well, maybe that last one was a viable reason for not having time to write 500 words of dialogue!

When I took Marjorie Green's Creative Writing course at Durham College in 1992, I didn't foresee that someday I'd be standing in her place, inspiring writers and encouraging them to submit their work for publication. Today, teaching Creative Writing at Durham College North and running workshops for WCDR represent part of my professional living, and rank among my favourite things to do.

The path that led me to teaching was one I'm glad I followed despite my hesitancy about my being good enough. To me, there's nothing quite as exciting as the first night of my college course, getting people all fired up about their right to call themselves "writers" - and wondering what their voices and imaginations will conjure up during the following 10 weeks.

I started teaching via one-day workshops. Back in 1995, I felt there was a need for writers to know more about the left brain aspects of writing for a living, and designed my Business of Writing workshop. From there I developed workshops on ad writing and humour writing. Then in August, 1996, I opened the Durham College calendar and noticed there was a 10-week Creative Writing course being offered in Uxbridge for the first time. I had taken my original course from Marge in Ajax.

My first thought was hey - I could have taught that! I called the college and asked what I would need to do to teach a night school course. Send a proposal was the answer, so I did. Because the course advertised in the calendar was slanted at fiction, I put together an outline for a non-fiction course to be run in the following term.

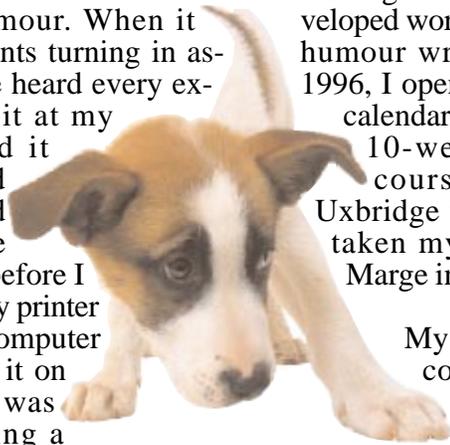
On a Monday in mid-September, I had a frantic call from the head of the Continuous Learning division of the campus. She had 12 people signed up for the Creative Writing course that was to start that Wednesday, and the instructor had just called and cancelled out on teaching it. She said she looked down at her desk and there was my proposal, and asked if I'd teach the course already advertised in the calendar.

I said, "Sure, no problem" – then hung up and thought, Dorothea, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? I had just two days to prepare my first lesson plan, but I did it, and I've run this course each fall ever since. The moral of the story: market yourself as a

teacher/instructor/workshop leader, and things happen.

Remember, the rewards of teaching go far, far deeper than a paycheque. Anna Therien's recent story that appeared in the "Cup of Comfort" book, for example, started out as an assignment for my Creative Writing course. That kind of student accomplishment is priceless. If you have an inkling to teach writing, go for it! And if an occasional puppy eats someone's homework, well :-)

*Dorothea Helms is a successful workshop instructor and freelance writer.*



# October/November Challenge

WELCOME TO THIS

*Allison Baggio*

Abandoned curls dot the floor around her feet. Displaced from her head and given refuge on the dirty linoleum. Her fingers, transparent to the vein, trace circles on her empty scalp in and amongst the remaining tufts of silk. She puts down the scissors. The damage has surpassed its limit.

She can't hear them but outside heels click on the damp sidewalk. Strangers clasp palms in greeting. Welcome to this. No phone rings inside her apartment with concerned friends attached. No knock signals invited companionship. Only this. And then she smells it. Rot. Mould, rotten coffee grinds, dishrag ground in cheese, snot. Her own sweaty armpits. All odours mix as one beast that peruses her.

It happened five days ago. Cedars soaked with rain and soothing moss taking the shape of her bare feet. She greeted him like time had given its notice. With her body falling into his lap and pushing him down against prickly tree skin. Inhaling his neck as if she could.

"We shouldn't be here," he said and she responded with giggles that inched gingerly up her throat and escaped through her mouth into the moist air, grazing his thick eyelashes as they disintegrated. And then a change in tone. "I mean it," he repeated. "I feel too guilty."

But guilt was the last thing swimming in her own mind. Love, lust, cocktails in the city, perfumes that sleep in her nose, two colours of hair strung together on pillows, secret meetings in a forest behind a church.

This time it's for real.

"I'm sorry," as he leaves. And her, with a piece of chocolate cake melting in a box beside her, two plastic forks in her pocket and her body flung on top of discarded twigs that poke her spine. Icing tears coating her face, mixing with droplets from evergreen fingertips.

She sees him only once more after that. Saturday afternoon and the sun sneaks a peak of the earth from behind a mess of black clouds. Her with bald head and pimply chin. Feet in dusty sandals that glomp on the asphalt beside the highway intersecting town.

And then him.

Dimples, crisp white T-shirt that has been ironed, shiny watch that pinches his arm hairs, small hands holding his. A tall woman with magenta lips ordering ice cream.

She loses her intention to walk around the on-coming roar, which proves to be a truck with eighteen wheels. Driver looking to the sky and her own gaze stuck left on tiny tongues licking vanilla. Nowhere safe to meet in the middle, except with a bang that stops it all.



THE SWIM ACROSS THE LAKE

*Grace Stevenson*

"I'm going to swim across the lake today," said 14-year-old Dick, standing on the wooden dock.

"You can't. It's too far." Jennifer lay on her stomach at his feet, dabbling her hand in the clear water. This was the first summer she could reach the water without stretching.

"It's not too far. I got halfway there yesterday and Mum called me back."

"She'll call you back today, too," said Jennifer.

"No, she won't. She's gone to town."

"Then your dad will."

"He's busy. He brought his laptop and he's doing some work in the back room. He won't even notice I'm gone."

Jennifer, frightened, sat up. "Please don't go, Dick. You might drown."

"I won't," said Dick. He took off his sweatshirt and walked to the end of the dock.

"I'll go and tell your Dad," Jenny shouted after him.

Dick came back. "If you do, I'll never speak to you again." He turned and sprinted to the end of the dock.

"Don't go! Please!" Jennifer screamed, scrambling to her feet.

Splash! Her words were lost in the sound of Dick hitting the water.

Jennifer watched him. Dick was a really good swimmer. He was taking it slow and easy. Maybe he could make it.

Last month's challenge was to submit five-minute fiction — stories of less than 500 words — for consideration. As always, thanks to all who entered. I wish I could have included them all.

This edition of the Word Weaver focused on education and learning. The challenge now is for anyone who's ever learned something in their life - "The Hard Way". In fact, that's the title Word Weaver hopes will inspire you to share your story in prose or poetry. But we'd like a little sugar with that medicine so try a humorous twist. 500 words max.

He'd

been training all summer, swimming farther and farther towards that distant shore. And he'd been telling her he was going to make it before the summer ended. The days were already getting cooler. This was probably his last chance to try.

But suppose he couldn't make it.

Should she get his dad? She

couldn't. Dick had said he'd never talk to her if she did. Dick never said anything he didn't mean. She couldn't stand it if Dick never talked to her again. He was her best pal. She loved Dick. Someday, she hoped he'd marry her.

What should she do? Get the boat and go after him? She wasn't a good rower and she didn't know how to start the motor on the motorboat. If only she were older and stronger. Being ten-years old and having skinny arms made her useless at a time like this.

She walked to the end of the dock. Dick wasn't too far away yet. Suddenly, she knew what she should do. Cupping her mouth with her hands, she shouted, "I'm coming too," and jumped in.

As the water closed over her head, she remembered the heavy brace on her left leg. She'd forgotten to remove it. It took her to the bottom immediately. With a great effort, she fought her way to the surface. She lost count of the number of times she went down and struggled up again, her heart beating wildly.

Suddenly strong arms grabbed her, dragged her the few yards back to the dock and lifted her onto it.

"You little idiot," Dick sputtered. "O.K., Jennifer. You win. I won't try again until Dad has time to follow me with the boat."

# WOTS IT ALL ABOUT?

By Kevin Craig

The 14<sup>th</sup> annual Word On The Street took place throughout Canada on Sunday, September 28<sup>th</sup>. This self-proclaimed 'literary theme park' is Canada's largest one-day celebration of the printed word, put on to promote literacy by bringing words to life.

If you went to Word On The Street you would have been treated to book signings, author readings, children's activities and musical performances just to name a few of the exciting goings on. The greatest part, for all of us book and magazine junkies, was the phenomenal deals that could be found on (you guessed it) books and magazines!

This was my first year attending WOTS and I was overwhelmed by the excitement of such an event. Imagine one of Canada's busiest, hippest streets closing down its main corridor to celebrate the written word! It's unimaginable. If I hadn't finally seen it with my own eyes I wouldn't have believed it. And the stretch of Queen Street between Spadina and University was not even the end of this event. At the same time, this celebration was being played out in Vancouver, Calgary, Halifax and Kitchener. The entire country



was stopping -if you'll pardon the terrible attempt at humour- to spell the roses.

Though I cannot speak for the happenings at other WOTS stagings across the country, I can say that there was no shortage of author readings at WOTS Toronto. There were, in fact, over 75 authors, poets and storytellers taking part in the event. To name a couple, we had **Kim Moritsugu**, the WCDR's November breakfast speaker, as well as **Stuart Ross**, who was last year's WCDR Writer In Residence.

Durham Regions' own literary journal **lichen** was there with an eye-catching booth of their own, complete with a beautiful lichen-covered rock, which I'm sure was the topic of many conversations.

There were also special events for children, including a reading of the Canadian Children's Classic, *Jacob Two-Two*, by the late Mordecai Richler's own children, Daniel and Jacob. There was much excitement about a Ms. Frizzle showing up in the late afternoon, as well as local improv artist, Ryan DiMarco, who not only entertained but also promised to paint the faces of kids everywhere.

There were far too many attractions to mention here but the best part of WOTS, in my opinion, was the little booth at the corner of Duncan and Queen. You guessed it...The Writers' Circle of Durham Region was there to take part in the Canada wide celebration of words. This organization still excites me as much as it did when I first discovered it. Imagine all of these people with the love of the written word coming together to celebrate this common thread. Sounds a little like WOTS, doesn't it! WCDR is a year round Word On The Street...of course we would be there!

*Kevin Craig's writing career is taking off but he still manages to find time to be an enthusiastic WCDR Board member.*

## THAT'S CLASSIFIED!

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casorensen@sympatico.ca



### "Seasons of the Heart"

Tom Easthope has just published his second grief book entitled. Tom's second grief book is written in a sensitive, soothing manner and yet is provocative and leaves the reader with a powerful message of hope. (ISBN 0-9688020-1-X)

Tom's first book, entitled "Teach Me How To Lose", is now going into its third print. (ISBN 0-9688020-0-1)

To order either book please send \$20.00 CAN or \$15.00 US + \$3.50 S&H per copy to:

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Or contact Tom at:

# Paeans

**Kevin Craig** had his piece 'Adobe Dreams' published in the e-zine 'The Green Tricycle', issue #13, word challenge was "SAGE". You can read Kevin's submission at [www.greentricycle.com](http://www.greentricycle.com)

**Carole M. Lidgold**, Author of *The History of the Guild Inn* is pleased to mention that she gave a short tour at the Guild Inn to four classes from Guildwood Public School on Tue. Sept. 23rd.

Congratulations are in order for **Ruth Walker**, who has a short fiction piece published in the current issue of the on-line journal, *Regina Weese*. You can read Ruth's story, *Better Lighting*: for Ernest Hemingway, on-line at: [www.reginaweese.com/pages/pages/09proserwpg.html](http://www.reginaweese.com/pages/pages/09proserwpg.html)

October will be an exciting month for **Valerie Poulin**. In addition to being invited to read at Toronto's Art Bar with the Shaunt Basmajian contest winner and other finalists, some of Valerie's work is scheduled for publication on-line at [www.reginaweese.com](http://www.reginaweese.com). And sometime in the near future, she will appear on an upcoming episode of "Living Romance" on the W Network!

**Kathleen Martin** recently had a publication with the Alzheimer Society of York Region. The piece, entitled "I Lost Me", appeared in their August 2003 News Bulletin. Kathleen's publication began life as a freefall exercise from a WCDR retreat.

**Diana Cawfield** was awarded third prize from the Investment Funds Institute of Canada for an article she co-wrote for *Forum* magazine on financial retirement options. The biggest thrill for Diana was their comments on her plain language, informative writing and journalistic style. She says the energy boost from the award is fueling future articles.

**Sherry Hinman** just had an article appear in the Fall 2003 issue of *East of the City*, Durham Region's upscale lifestyle magazine. The article is entitled "The Ingredients for a Divine Kitchen".

Congratulations go out to **Ken Burtch**, who has just signed a contract with Sams Publishing (a division of MacMillan US) for his first book! "Professional Linux Shell Scripting" is being released under their professional line and is slated for release in January 2004. The book is 400 pages in length and is aimed at programmers and administrators using the Linux operating system.

**Tom Easthope** has just published his second grief book entitled "Seasons of the Heart". Also, Tom's first book, entitled "Teach Me How To Lose", is now going into third print! On September 23rd Tom was featured on CHEX TV's "The Today Show", discussing his new book. Our own Marjorie Ludlow Green edited both of Tom's books.

**Catherine Daley** has been busy this fall. She was featured in the September newsletter for the Uxbridge Arts Association in an article by Anna MacKay-Smith. Catherine also had an article in the September issue of *Watershed* magazine, produced in Cobourg on the rebirth of four theatres in eastern Ontario. Her bedroom renovation will be featured in the January issue of *Homes and Cottages* magazine and most recently she has been hired to do promotional writing for Harrowsmith Country Life magazine.



## Grammar Puss

What did the cyclops groom say to his bride on their wedding day? Eye do! Eye do!

Ah, the homonym, where bears run around bare; where you can have two pieces of cake and if you want to, eat them too; where you never tire of tire shopping; where you hope the weather's fair for the fair — and that the fare there is fair too!

These little brain-teasers are words that sound and/or are spelled the same, but have different meanings. Among the most common is the two/too/to family. For the record, "two" is a number between one and three; "too" is a synonym for "also" and "to" is that multi-functional little preposition indicating movement (going to the store), result (much to my surprise), connection (dance to the music) etc. Another oft-misused example is the they're/their/there group.

"They're" is a contraction of "they are," easily identified by the apostrophe. "There" is an indication of direction — it's over over there! And "their" is possessive, as in belonging to them. (Along the same lines as they're/their are you're/your. Again, the apostrophe is your best friend here: "you're" is a contraction of "you are"; "your" is possessive, as in belonging to you.)

If you can't remember which homonyms are which, it's a good idea to start a list of the ones you encounter most often and tack it up in your workspace. Getting them wrong just looks sloppy, and lets an editor know that, at best, you have a false confidence in your knowledge or, at worst, that you simply don't care.

Of course, as we illustrated with that appalling cyclops joke, the best part about homonyms is that they're the stuff that puns are made of!

Send your grammar, punctuation and style questions to GrammarPuss at [wordweaver@wcdrr.org](mailto:wordweaver@wcdrr.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.



Check out these titles :

*Writer's Market*

*Canadian Publishers Directory 2003*

*Guide To Literary Agents 2003*

*The Canadian Writer's Market 2002*

*Government Assistance Manual*

*Canadian Writers' Contest Calendar 2003*

*Canadian Writer's Handbook*

*Writing Freelance*

**Christine Adamec**

*The Creative Writer's Style Guide*

**Christopher Leland**

## Breakfast Info

**October 11**

Featured Guest: **Betty Jane Wylie**  
Author

Betty Jane Wylie, who will be speaking about her successful freelance writing career and issues facing freelancers in Canada today. Betty Jane is the author of more than 35 books including *The Write Track: How to Succeed as a Freelance Writer in Canada*. She has written dozens of plays and is a founding member of the Playwrights' Union of Canada. She was chair of the Writers' Union of Canada from 1988 to 1989, and has served as writer-in-residence for a number of prestigious libraries. She has received several accolades in the form of awards and prizes, and was host for two television series, *Women, Lifestyle and Money*, which aired on CKVR (Ontario), LIFE network, and SCN (SK), as well as host, researcher and writer for the TV series *CrossTalk* on VISION TV.

Betty Jane Wylie will appear thanks to the the financial assistance of The Canada Council for the Arts through The Writers' Union.

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**November 8**

Featured Guest: **Kim Moritsugu**  
Author

Kim Moritsugu holds B.A. and M.B.A. degrees from the University of Toronto, and worked several years in a corporate setting before turning to the writing of fiction. She is the author of the novels *Looks Perfect* (a romantic comedy shortlisted for the City of Toronto Book Award), and *Old Flames*, a domestic comedy for which the Toronto Star dubbed her "the Tom Wolfe of midtown Toronto." Historic homes, ravines and family secrets all figure in her new novel, *The Glenwood Treasure*, a work of literary suspense about overcoming disappointment that updates and honours the traditions of such well-loved classics as Josephine Tey's *Brat Farrar* and Daphne DuMaurier's *Rebecca*.

Kim Moritsugu's talk "How I Beat the Odds and Became A Published Writer" is the entertaining, frank, and informative story of her mid-life decision to become a novelist and the struggle to get her first novel published.

Kim Moritsugu's talk "How I Beat the Odds and Became A Published Writer" is the entertaining, frank, and informative story of her mid-life decision to become a novelist and the struggle to get her first novel published.

**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@wcd.org](mailto:breakfast@wcd.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  
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
Call for location  
*Ruth Walker*, 905-728-7823

## Inkwell

First and third Tuesdays of the month  
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
Coffee Time Donuts  
Liberty Street and Baseline Road  
Bowmanville  
*susana gomes*, editingink@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  
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  
7 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.  
Oshawa Public Library,  
Northview Branch  
*Mike Ward*,  
wardswords@hotmail.com

## Write in Whitby

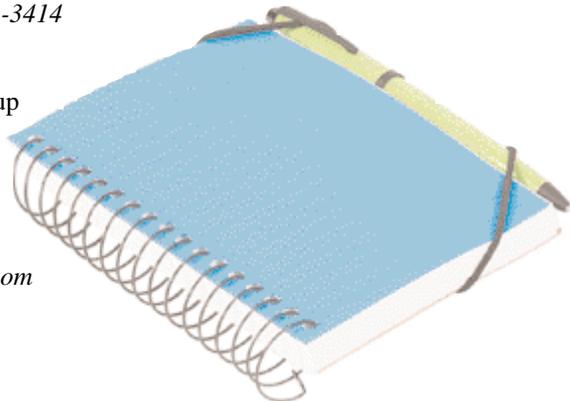
Second and fourth Tuesday of each month  
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
Whitby Public Library  
*Lloyd Blair*, 905-430-0075

## Write Now

A group for on-the-spot writing  
Every second Thursday  
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
Uxbridge Public Library  
*Sue Reynolds*, 905-985-8389

## 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

October 11  
**Breakfast**  
**Bettie Jane Wylie**  
Author

October 18  
**Workshop**  
**Unleashing the Writer Within**  
Susan Lynn Reynolds

November 8  
**Breakfast**  
**Kim Moritsugu**  
Author

November 14-16  
**Workshop**  
**Weekend of No Excuses Writing**  
Susan Lynn Reynolds

November 22  
**Workshop**  
**Novel Writing from A to Z**  
Nancy Lindquist

November 29  
**Workshop**  
**The Power of Words**  
Jane Bow



For workshop information, contact Sue Reynolds at [workshops@wcdr.org](mailto:workshops@wcdr.org)  
To register for breakfast meetings, contact Sherry Hinman at [breakfast@wcdr.org](mailto:breakfast@wcdr.org)

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# the Word Weaver

[www.wcdr.org](http://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](http://www.wcdr.org)

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**Editor/Desktop Publishing**  
Aprille Janes

**We welcome your input**  
Send comments and submissions to  
[wordweaver@wcdr.org](mailto: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

Writers aren't exactly people...they're a whole lot of people trying to be one person.

F. Scott Fitzgerald