



Spring
2017

Vol 34:3 ISSN 1929-6193

Byline

Can Write!

Where ideas blossom

BY ARLENE SMITH

- Connect with writers from across Canada
 - Meet publishers and agents
- Retreat from hectic daily life and do some writing
 - Improve your writing skills
 - Have fun

THE MOST VALUABLE benefit of membership in the Canadian Authors Association is the opportunity to build relationships with writers from across Canada. The CanWrite! Conference and Retreat is the perfect opportunity to do that.

I encourage all of you to attend this year's CanWrite! to be held June 22 to 25, 2017, at Humber College Lakeshore Campus in Toronto. Organizers chose the venue on the shores of Lake Ontario because it is close to downtown Toronto so guests can plan to enjoy the city's many cultural activities, and it offers the perfect combination of accessibility to public transit and hiking, walking, and biking trails.

Registration opens in early April. I encourage you all to join me at this year's conference. Only good things can come from the experience.



March Meeting Historical Writing

Where to look for what you want, with L.D. Cross

DATE: March 14, 2017

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION - McNabb Community Center, Percy St. at Gladstone

Ottawa is a resource-rich research environment. Some sources are obvious, others not so. Then there is the online search—a bounty of data both factual and fictional.

Research never stops. You can always learn something new about an old subject.

Research is what I am doing when I don't know what I am doing
—Wernher von Braun, aerospace engineer



Surrey International Writers' Conference (SIWC) 2016

BY ADRIENNE STEVENSON

I HAVE ATTENDED SIWC several times, most recently in October, 2016. It's one of the best practical writing events in the country. It features many well-known Canadian and international writers, agents, editors and publishers.

There are several simultaneous tracks, offering something for every writer's needs. Commercial fiction and non-fiction are emphasized, but literary writing and poetry are also represented. Aspects of both traditional and e-publishing are discussed.

I value this conference for its interactive approach. Sessions are open and lively, with plenty of Q&A, and opportunities to pitch your work and have it "blue-pencilled". You can waylay presenters with questions, and they are usually willing to chat. There are few talking heads or inflated egos.

While not cheap, especially factoring in travel and hotel costs, it gives very good value. I've learned more in a weekend there than in years of reading writing guides or attending classes. They also run a contest, for which attendance is not required.

I sometimes did not attend complete sessions because pitches and blue-pencil sessions are held throughout the schedule and appointments will inevitably break into a panel or talk. After you've had your first of each, you can line up for more. I had three blue-pencil sessions and pitched four times.

Examples of sessions I attended, with key notes:

Master Classes

- 3-4 hour sessions, three slots available
- intensive instruction with Q&A; smaller sessions discussion-oriented

Bob Mayer: Write it Forward

- recommends romance or mystery writers groups for networking
- recommends Bouchercon, October 11-15, Toronto
- have clear, positive goals; ignore trends; work for yourself
- know your audience; analyse everything; know/use your emotional
- suggests Meyers-Briggs indicator for building/evaluating characters
- suggests offering to be a beta-reader for someone else's novel

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SHARYN HEAGLE

OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS - SEPTEMBER TO MAY

- The second Tuesday of the month
- 7 p.m.
- McNabb Recreation Centre, 180 Percy Street, Ottawa
- We meet at 7 for conversation and refreshments and start our meetings shortly after.

To be born Naked under Stars by Carol A. Stephen

"I was born in Nature's wild domain! The trees were all that sheltered my infant limbs, the blue heavens all that covered me..."

—George Copway, Ojibwa Chief, 1818-1863)
from *365 Days of Walking the Red Road*, Terri Jean

Stephen says: "This partial quote struck me one morning as quite wonderful in its imagery and poetic language, inspiring the following poem."

To be born Naked under Stars

shielded by a cloak of greening trees
beneath the blue vault of sky—

to feel the first spring rain,
gentle on this tender skin, to know

the scent of crocus bud and hyacinth—
and remember always I am a child of Spring.



canadian
authors

Writing Circles

The Ottawa Centre writing circle meets the **third Saturday of each month, 9:00 a.m.** at McNabb Community Center on Percy St., at Gladstone.

The West end circle meets the **fourth Monday of every month at 1:30 p.m.**

Writing circles are an exciting way to get valuable feedback on your own work and improve your writing through critiquing that of others.

Join a **CAA** Writing Circle—a great opportunity for a writer!

For more information or to join a writing circle, contact:

Ottawa Centre
West end



CAA-NCR Programs

MARCH MEETING

Historical Writing: Where to look for what you want

SPEAKER: L.D. Cross

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Research is what I am doing when I don't know what I am doing

-- Wernher von Braun, aerospace engineer

BIO: L.D. Cross (Dyan) is an Ottawa writer of business and lifestyle articles as well as books about unique aspects of Canadian history. Her creative non-fiction articles have received awards of excellence for features and editorial writing.

She won the inaugural Ontario Historical Society (OHS) 2010 Huguenot Society of Canada Award for *The Underground Railroad: The Long Journey to Freedom in Canada*

APRIL MEETING

Modernism and Micro-fiction in Creative Writing

SPEAKER: Cyril Dabydeen

DATE: April 11, 2017

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION – McNabb Community Center, Percy St. at Gladstone

Cyril will focus on some modern trends in writing, and ask the question: Does length really matter? He will dwell on the intersections between poetry and short fiction and the opportunities that arise for creative writers reflecting on the many possibilities, as well as the challenges of changing genres and voice, and the notions of plot, beginning and closure in the short-story form.

BIO: Cyril Dabydeen teaches Creative Writing at the University of Ottawa, and is a former Poet Laureate of Ottawa (1984-87). His work has appeared in over 60 literary magazines and anthologies world-wide. He has done more than 300 readings internationally and was twice adjudicated for the Governor General Award (Poetry) and the USA Neustadt Prize for Literature (UOklahoma) in 2000.

30th Annual National Capital Writing Contest

Sponsored by the

Canadian Authors Association - National Capital Region Branch

Awards Night

DATE: Tuesday, May 9, 2017

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION – The Auditorium of Ottawa Public Library's Main Branch, 120 Metcalfe Street

In addition to the presentation of the awards, finalists will be invited to read their entries.

The winning entries will be published in *Byline*, and all finalists' entries will be published in a 2017 Anthology celebrating the NCWC's 30th Anniversary.

We look forward to the friends and families of the finalists, and anyone wishing to support local authors, to attend and enjoy an evening of wonderful writing.

Green Shift

BY GILLIAN FOSS

The air is greening
with the calls of birds
shunning the long dark days
as winter wanes
eager to feel again the first
warm touch of spring
that speeds the weeping snow
to offer up the gift
of new life to the earth.

The air is greening
with the rise of sap
restoring life to every tree
as sprouting leaves bring
shade for hidden nests
from splatterings of rain
and flirting rays of sun
that hasten pleasure
with a lispng breeze.

The air is greening
with the insect wings
weaving among the trees
where beech leaves rustle
in the waking woods
the silent haunt of deer
after a winter's pall
when finding food was hard
and spotted fawns slept close.

The air is greening
we've one more chance
to change our ways
before pollution and our greed
reduce our air to smog
productive land to desert
and foul our drinking water
with spills and acid rain.
Where will humanity be found
when we have killed the earth?

2016 NCWC
Poetry
Honourable
Mention
GILLIAN FOSS



Gillian Foss
with NCWC Coordinator, Sherrill Wark

ARE YOU ON OUR MAILING LIST?

If you wish to receive *Byline* or our bi-weekly email updates, send your information to [Arlene Smith.](mailto:Arlene.Smith@ncwc.org)

Canadian Authors Association
National Capital Region
Branch

2016 - 2017 Executive and
Coordinators

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Writers Helping Writers

What you missed . . .

Our January meeting

The Writer's Journey, with Caroline Pignat

BY CHRISTINE BEELEN

WHILE MANY WERE kept away by bad weather and terrible driving conditions, several fortunate (and hardy) souls were present for the January 10, 2017 meeting presentation by local Ottawa author, Caroline Pignat.

A two-time winner of the Governor General's Award for Children's Literature for her novels *Green Grass* and *The Gospel Truth*, Caroline has written six young adult novels that address historical stories and important coming-of-age issues.

Her topic, "The Writer's Journey" set out the ups and downs of her twenty-year career and served as an inspiration to her audience. It turned out to be an interactive presentation with an exchange of ideas and experiences.

Pignat described the writing and publishing process as a circular journey that repeats: you have an idea, you write and create, pitch your product, sell, publish and promote and then say, now what and start all over again. Each stage may require a different amount of effort and while you learn at each stage, you hopefully don't repeat any mistakes. If you do make mistakes, you learn from those too.

Writers have to identify their personal definition of success. Is it Chai Latte with Oprah, book sales, or simply writing the End? Each writer will have their own, personal destination and when they reach it, should celebrate it. Most importantly, they shouldn't quit when the gap between ambition and success seems great. Eventually that gap will shorten.

The members in attendance were encouraged to go through the process of completing a short worksheet that had us answering some basic questions that were quite thought-provoking.

The questions:

Status Quo Start here and then work your way around the journey's path, accepting that it might not be quite a direct route.

The Call Who or what inspired you to write?

Allies and Mentors Who helps you to reach your creative goals; including people, this could include books, courses, associations etc.

Trials Identify your three top challenges to reaching your goal. The dragon - identifying the big fear. This question raised the most interest. You have to battle and slay your dragon(s) to succeed.

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Byline Advertising New Rates for Quarterly Publication

MEMBERS ARE ENTITLED TO A 1/8
PAGE ADVERTISEMENT IN EACH
ISSUE OF *BYLINE* AT NO COST.

New bits for the "Kudos" column, or member book reviews *are still free for branch members.*

Otherwise, Member Rates are:

Single issue: 1/8 Byline page: N/C
1/4 Byline page: \$15
1/2 Byline page: \$30

One year - (4 issues - price of three)
Quarterly 1/8 Byline page: N/C
1/4 Byline page: \$45
1/2 Byline page: \$90

Non-Member Rates

Single issue: 1/8 Byline page: \$15
1/4 Byline page: \$30
1/2 Byline page: \$50

One year: (4 issues - price of three)
Quarterly 1/8 Byline page: \$45
1/4 Byline page: \$90
1/2 Byline page: \$150

Note: Yearly prices reflect the cost of three issues; the fourth publication is free

For more information, contact [Byline](#)
[Byline](#) is distributed by e-mail to those on our extensive CAA-NCR mailing list. **To have your name added to our mailing lists, contact the editor.**

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Treasure Define success, then return to the Status Quo. Working through this self-examination can help you as a writer to approach your work.

In addition to the questions, we were challenged to identify our personal dedication to writing.

Pignat had us make circles with the words knowledge, creativity and commitment. Each overlapping and intersecting circle had to be the size we felt we gave our writing process. How much effort do each of us give to obtaining enough knowledge to include in our stories? How great is our creativity? How much do we commit to the work that is necessary to be a good writer? The ideal situation is to have equal amounts of these elements at our disposal but often one area is dominant.

The final task was to set three action items. What steps do you need to take to strengthen your calling to be a writer?

Pignat had the audience laughing as she described her own battle with procrastination, a common demon for writers. She called it procraftymaking, procrastibaking, procrasticleaning - you get the idea. Anything you allow to draw you away from your work as a writer.

Pignat has, as a high school teacher, taught a class called Writer's Craft in which students are required to write in journals as part of the creative process. Their exercise includes another form of the circular writer's journey to ruminate, rapid write, retreat, and revise. Once you have gone through the process with a piece of writing, you start over again.

During the presentation we watched a You Tube video by Mathew Winkler called What Makes a Hero? It used several characters from novels to describe the various stages of a hero's journey based on Joseph Campbell's book "The Hero with a Thousand Faces". A quote from Joseph Campbell that seemed to resonate with most of the audience was: "The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure you seek." Pignat pointed out that we should not allow fear stop us.

Throughout her talk, Pignat suggested a number of resources including: *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron, *Writing on Both Sides of the Brain* by Henriette Anne Klausner, *Writing the Breakout Novel Workbook* by Donald Maas, and several Ted Talks. She urged us to take advantage of workshops and retreats, anything to spark creativity and increase confidence to reach our goals.

Pignat described some of her own methods of researching history or detail and had some of that research on hand for us to examine. She also discussed some of her personal promotional products including teaching guides for *Egghead* which deals with bullying and is used widely in schools in Canada.

Pignat invited us to visit her website for more information: www.carolinepignat.com.



The Writer's Best Friend: Conflict

BY BARBARA KYLE



READERS LOVE TO see characters thrown into a crisis, forced to grapple with problems. Why? I don't think it's because we're sadists. It's because we read novels to experience an emotional bond with a character who faces a dilemma. We feel: what would I do in that situation? That's the reason we read stories.

Yet emerging writers often shy away from depicting their characters' conflict. This only undermines the power of their story. Instead, I recommend that you embrace all richness that conflict gives you as a writer.

What Could Go Wrong?

When I'm planning a book, scene by scene, I ask myself, partly in jest: "What could possibly go wrong for these characters?" Ask yourself that same question continuously about the story you're developing: "What could possibly go wrong?" Then, seriously, make that happen.

Conflict in a story occurs because the protagonist — the central character — wants something and comes up against some force of antagonism. That is, someone has a goal that's in direct opposition to the protagonist's desire.

Every compelling novel is built on situations that put increasing pressures on characters, forcing them into ever more difficult dilemmas, so that they must make increasingly risky choices, leading them to take actions that eventually reveal their true natures. Nothing moves forward in a story except through conflict.

I once heard bestselling author John LeCarré give an interview, and he spoke about this concept of conflict. He said: "'The cat sat on the mat' is not a story, but 'The cat sat on the dog's mat' — that's the beginning of a story."

Three Tips

Here are three tips for working with conflict in your story.

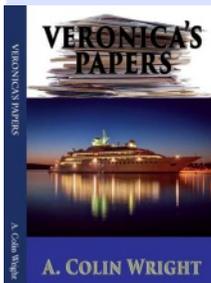
Tip #1 Don't be intimidated by the word conflict. Conflict does not mean combat. It just means problems. What problems does your protagonist — your main character — face in trying to achieve his or her goal?

Here's an example, a film by British writer-director Ken Loach called "Raining Stones." It's the story of a working-class man who loves his family and his religion. He's poor, but proud, and he's determined to get his little girl a beautiful new dress for her first Communion. But the dress is very expensive, and that's his problem. In his desperation to raise the money, he tries

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Author Showcase

Veronica's Papers
BY A. COLIN WRIGHT



Gerald Clayton, suffering from amnesia, receives a package of papers from Veronica, a former clinical hypnotist. She tells him they accomplished his fantasy of gathering together, on the ship *Marguerite*, his past loves with the two of them present, but in disguise. In hopes of discovering his own past. Gerald invites the passengers to share in a mystery by guessing what, or whom, they all have in common.

Available:
<http://www.coldcoffeepress.com>

Follow us @caa_ncr for writing tips and connections with other Ottawa area writers.

Follow us on
twitter 

THE POWER OF STORY STRUCTURE

Continued from page 8

ever more questionable and even dangerous measures, bringing him into conflict with his family, his friends, and eventually the law. This finally leads him to risk all that he loves and values – his family and even (as he sees it) his immortal soul– in pursuit of his goal. It’s a believable and moving story, without any “combat.”

The point is, you need to know the problem your protagonist is facing so that you can keep your story focused on that and not go off on tangents.

Tip #2 Escalate the conflict in your story gradually. To be believable, characters in a story, just like people in real life, will naturally start by taking the most conservative action possible to get what they want. If they don’t – if they leap into taking extreme action – they will come across as unrealistic, and you’ll lose your reader. So, the long middle section of your book will be composed of a series of events that spring from conflict that gradually escalates.

Tip #3 Your protagonist can be in conflict on three possible levels. The first level is internal conflict: conflict with oneself. The second is external conflict in the form of inter-personal relationships: family, friends, colleagues. The third level is extra-personal conflict, that is conflict with the larger community in the form of institutions, such as the government, the Church, the

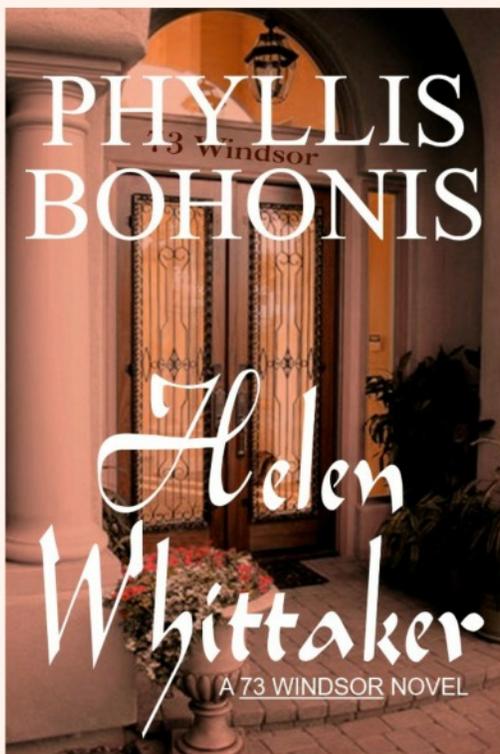
school system, the army — institutions that have power. The most compelling stories, the stories that stay with us forever, often involve conflict on all three levels: personal, inter-personal, and extra-personal.

Conflict in the Classics

In contrast, consider what we call “soap opera.” The term is often used as a pejorative. Why? After all, soap operas are highly engrossing. Most of us would be lying, myself included, if we said we hadn’t at some time been hooked on a soap.

I think the reason we sense weakness in the soap opera form is that it shows us conflict on only one level: the interpersonal. It does that with great panache — it’s the strength of soap opera, because interpersonal relationships are so engaging. But it’s also incomplete. Characters in a soap opera rarely face internal conflict – there’s rarely a crisis of conscience – and they never do battle with extra-personal forces. For example, if a cop enters a storyline on a soap, you can be sure he’ll soon be caught up in the highly personal concerns of other characters — the story will not be about corruption in the police department. So, there’s virtually no conflict with the self, nor with society. It’s all one level – momentarily very engrossing, but ultimately unsatisfying.

Continued on page 10



**As requested
Helen Whittaker is
Now Available
In PRINT**

(just in time for Christmas)

**Edward Joseph Whittaker is dead.
He’s lucky. A quick death in a car
accident robbed his widow of the
satisfaction of killing him slowly.**

**Helen Whittaker, set in Ottawa,
is the first book in the
73 Windsor Series**

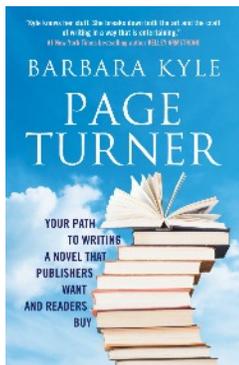
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THE INWARD VISION

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We are moved most deeply by stories in which the characters are engaged in all three levels of conflict. That's partly what creates the enduring power of classics like David Copperfield. Frankenstein. A Passage to India. Heart of Darkness. The Age of Innocence. The Grapes of Wrath. Gone with The Wind. To Kill a Mockingbird.

Never shy away from embroiling your characters in many swirling currents of conflict. It will prove their mettle, make them reveal their true selves. Conflict is the fuel that propels every page-turner.



BIO: Barbara Kyle is the author of the acclaimed Thornleigh Saga series of historical novels and of contemporary thrillers, with over 450,000 copies sold in seven countries. Barbara has taught writers at the University of Toronto, and is a popular presenter at writers conferences. Her master classes and manuscript evaluations have helped launch many writers to published success. Barbara's latest

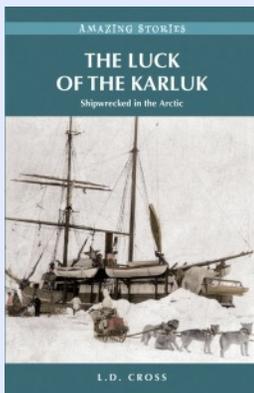
book is Page-Turner: Your Path to Writing a Novel That Publishers Want and Readers Buy

Visit www.BarbaraKyle.com.

Author Showcase

The Luck of the Karluk: Shipwrecked in the Arctic

BY L.D. CROSS



The amazing story of human nature under treacherous conditions.

ISBN: 9781772030211

Print and e-book

<http://www.heritagehouse.ca>

The Writers' Coalition Program Health and Dental Insurance

If you're a member of **Canadian Authors**, you are eligible for a group health and benefit plan.

Underwritten by ACTRA Fraternal Benefit Society (AFBS), the Writers' Coalition Program is a simple way to assist writers in managing health care costs. Writers get the coverage they need—minus the complications. No medical questionnaires and they won't deny access because of pre-existing conditions—guaranteed acceptance.

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Details: www.writerscoalition.ca



Creating and managing your own website

BY BARBARA FLORIO GRAHAM



EVERY AUTHOR NEEDS a website that's effective and secure. Unfortunately, taking the easy route of using a blogging platform or one of the many free website creation programs can be dangerous.

Many free websites add hefty charges after the trial period, and limit the number of pages, length of pages, colors, and designs. And, most important, ownership is in the hands of a company that can be sold, go out of business suddenly, or start to charge higher fees.

I've known several people whose websites or blogs disappeared from the internet when a company went out of business. All their hard work was lost forever.

Many email and blogging platforms are not secure. Keep in mind that a billion Yahoo users had their e-privacy compromised in what is being called the biggest-ever theft of personal data.

Rudy Giuliani, the former mayor of New York who is now in the Trump administration, had a company website which runs on an ancient version of Joomla!, a free to use content management system, which has more than a dozen vulnerabilities.

If you check the terms for using WordPress, for example, you'll find that they *reserve the right to display advertisements on your blog unless you have purchased an Ad-free Upgrade or a VIP Service account and the right to display attribution text or links in your site footer or toolbar...The toolbar may not be altered or removed. Attribution text or links may only be hidden if you are subscribed to WordPress.com Business or VIP.*

So one of the most popular website and blog hosts is not free, after all.

I recommend having total control over all aspects of your website. That means paying to register your own domain, so you have an email address attached to that which can't suddenly disappear if your current email host (yahoo, hotmail, gmail, etc.) is sold, or is compromised by hacking.

I bought WebExpress in 2001, when I wanted to create my own website without hiring someone else to do that for me. It's still available, sold by LabelGear.com. The direct link is at:

<http://www.labelgear.com/LG/Product.asp?ProdCode=11001>

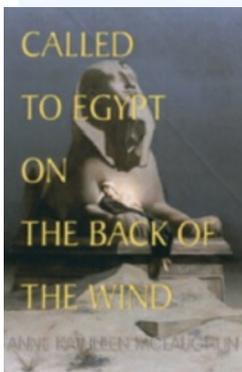
I was able to learn how to create my own site, and only needed a bit of advice from my ISP, a local compa-

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Author Showcase

Called to Egypt on the Back of the Wind

BY ANNE KATHLEEN MCLAUGHLIN



Jean Houston leads students through the temples, tombs and pyramids of Egypt in a quest for a new planetary spirituality.

The myth of Isis and Osiris becomes a catalyst for the healing of old wounds related to love.

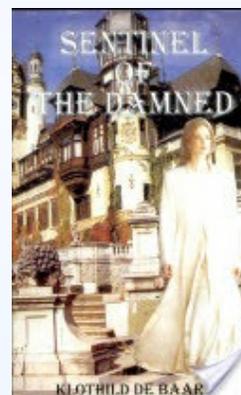
Copies available from [Borealis Press](#), at [Singing Pebbles bookstore](#) on Main Street across from Saint Paul

University in Ottawa, or from [Anne Kathleen](#).

Sentinel of the Damned

BY KLOTHILD DE BAAR

(Book Excellence Award Finalist 2016)



An epic tale of an ancient European dynasty whose youngest member, a magnificent daughter, is suddenly and mysteriously reported missing in far-off Canada. A story harking back centuries and told movingly by the family's eighty-five year-old nanny, as she traces each step of her lost charge, undaunted, to the very bottom of a modern-day hell.

CREATING AND MANAGING YOUR OWN WEBSITE

Continued from page 11

ny (Storm) with an exceptional reputation and terrific service.

Hiring a webmaster or even a student means you're dependent on someone else whenever you want to make a change. You end up paying for something you can easily do yourself, and run the risk of not being able to access your site if that person is suddenly not available.

I registered my domain with EasyHosting (one of many registrars who charge less than \$150/year), and pay Storm \$20/month to host my email and website.

Keep your initial website simple. You can always add colors and other details later. Joan Stewart, The Publicity Hound, pointed out several things about websites that, in Joan's words, *"drive people nuts. These include big clunky photos or artwork at the top that force people to scroll down to learn what your website is about, and those annoying sliders, also known as carousels, at the top of the homepage that feature a series of rotating photos, each with its own message. They change too quickly, before the visitor has had time to read them. They're bad for your website. And they're worse for search engine optimization."*

Joan also advises you make it easy for visitors to contact you. Instead of those clunky forms you have to fill out, provide a disguised email address, such as BFG (at) SimonTeakettle.com. That format keeps website trolls from harvesting your email, yet allows visitors to contact you easily.

It's important, also, to give visitors a photo of you and a brief bio. You can add links in the bio to other pages on your site containing your full resume, a list of things you've published, or other details.

If you have more than one book to sell, give each one a separate page, with the cover, a description, and ordering information. Link to reviews and to the publisher.

Every page should have a Home button which links back to your home page, which will make it easy for visitors to navigate your site. It's also important to include a copyright statement on the home page.

You can easily create a blog which is accessible only from your website. If you manage your own site, you can add to your blog as often as you wish, and also edit it at will.

Updating your blog regularly keeps your site high in search engines, as do updates to other pages and links to other sites. Link to other authors, organizations you belong to or support, and to resources that you've used.

I don't sell anything directly from my website. I worry about security issues, and the vulnerability of PayPal or credit card exposure on the web. Instead, anyone who wants to purchase anything from me is asked to email me. I'm able to verify who they are, give them a price (books require different postage costs to Canadian vs U.S. addresses), and provide a mailing address.

I prefer to receive an actual cheque, with an address on the cheque or envelope I can verify. This has worked for me, without any problems, for more than 15 years.

Recently, I received a request for my Canadian libraries database from Australia. I had to call my bank to find out what to add to the base price for exchange rates and bank fees, but the client was happy to pay.

My mentoring clients pay me in Canadian or U.S. funds, depending on where they live. If I had to use PayPal or a credit card, I wouldn't be able to deposit U.S. payments into my U.S. account.

Your website is the face you present to the world. It's worth spending money and effort to have it reflect the image you want to project.

BIO: *Barbara Florio Graham is an author and publishing consultant. The author of three books, Five Fast Steps to Better Writing (20th anniversary edition), Five Fast Steps to Low-Cost Publicity, and the award-winning Mewsings/Musings, she served as Managing Editor for Prose to Go: Tales from a Private List, which is now available as an ebook for just \$4.99. Her website, <http://SimonTeakettle.com>, contains a great deal of free information, including resources for writers and publishers.*

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www.canadianauthors.org/nationalcapitalregion
Current and back issues of *Byline* are available on the site.

When Jesus Died in My Neighbourhood

Short Story

BY SHARYN HEAGLE



MY VERY EARLY childhood memories include a tree-shaded Toronto street, and our very small backyard. These were the world to me.

My childhood was simple and filled with childish concerns: was it necessary to wash every day; when could I leave the backyard and play with the big kids on the street; why did mommy spend hours combing my sister's hair into ringlets then give my short bob a quick swish of the brush?

There were great concerns of a seasonal nature: how did Santa get down our minuscule chimney toting a bag of toys; how often did he stop before reaching our house and would there be toys left when he got here;

how did little Easter bunnies deliver chocolate and rainbow jellybeans to all the houses on the street; why did they leave large chocolate bunnies at one house and small ones at another? Why were bunnies delivering eggs? I'd seen them birth baby bunnies and no eggs were involved.

And Jesus. How did he get involved in all this? I'd heard about him – risen from the dead and living among us. But his relationship to a chubby fellow dressed in red, and strong, clever, industrious bunnies, was unclear.

Of course, God was part of Christmas and Easter, and Jesus was His only begotten son. These were family times, so it made sense that Jesus would participate in the events.

Father worked on Sundays. Mother was a C & E Anglican. I attended United Church Sunday School with Deretta. We'd heard about the virgin birth, with virgin explained as "untouched by man." How did Mary travel all that way, getting on and off the donkey, with Joseph helping but not once touching? Why did grown-ups not share my confusion at this?

And the cross! It was sad that Jesus enjoyed such a brief life – those few months between his birth at Christmas and his death at Easter. Yet he had grown to a man in that short time. God sure could pull off a miracle, and I was taught to trust in Him.

Then one magical day HE appeared in our neighbourhood. Jesus! In my memory he wore long, white robes; perhaps it was trousers and shirt. His hair and beard were golden curly, his complexion ruddy - just like in the picture books.

Resourceful about food (remember the loaves and fishes), Jesus made the rounds of local restaurant and grocery store garbage bins, brushing debris from meals abandoned by restaurant patrons, and peeling outer rotting layers from discarded vegetables to locate firm and edible morsels within.

"People are wasteful," Jesus would say in a quiet voice, as he offered to share. When I declined, he smiled gently and patted me on the head exactly as he did in picture books, suffering little children.

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WHEN JESUS DIED IN MY NEIGHBOURHOOD

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Jesus always appeared with spring weather. I worried about him in wintertime. Where did he go when cold winds blew? Too awed to ask him the question, I decided God must take care of His son. Maybe Jesus ascended into Heaven where it must be warmer, and stayed there until lilac trees burst into lime green buds and crocuses shoved curious faces through the softening ground.

It was a twenty-minute walk to hundred-acre High Park where I spent much of my later childhood playing Tarzan in the summer, ice skating and tobogganing in winter, feeding dried bread to zoo animals and the bag to the camel before we knew it caused pain.

One day a school chum was target practicing with his new bow and arrow. Bored with piercing trees and missing assorted agile small creatures, he shot an arrow into the air. Tracing the trajectory, he located the arrow's landing spot – barely an inch beyond the head of sleeping Jesus, where the edge of the halo must be.

It was a miracle - an example of God's protection of those whom He loved.

As my friend quietly extracted his arrow from the sod and crept away

from softly snoring Jesus, he was filled with extraordinary gratitude. Killing someone, especially Jesus, would have been an enormous burden to carry for the rest of his life.

I needed that miracle too, for I'd begun to doubt my beliefs. My persistent questions produced unwanted answers. The truth about the Easter Bunny was revealed, since I was now old enough to join the conspiracy.

Six months later I was asking about Santa Clause. Christmas was coming. I'd spent the year trying to be good and needed to know if there would be a payoff. Another thoughtful sharing of secrets occurred.

Which begged the last, big question. "IS THERE A GOD?" On that question most adults were decidedly guarded; sometimes a definite yes, never a definite no, frequently a grey area peopled with mumblers and dissemblers. I never questioned the existence of Jesus though, because he lived in my neighbourhood.

I was about ten when an article appeared in the newspaper. A vagrant, as they were called in those days, was found dead in High Park. He had no identification papers; no-body came forward to claim his body.

The artist's sketch of the vagrant looked exactly like my Jesus.

That could not be! He had endured crucifixion. He had risen. There was no way Jesus could be officially dead. Not in my neighbourhood!

Following the demise of that vagrant, Jesus never made another appearance in our community. His absence nudged me into a cynicism that lasted for many years.

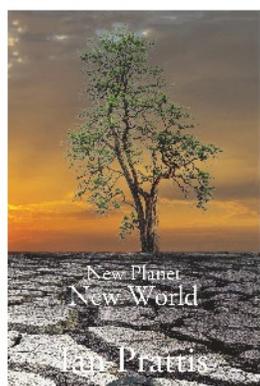
I've since grown up, come to terms with Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, established religions, and found answers to some of life's important questions,

But I sure miss having Jesus in the neighbourhood.



BIO: *Sharyn Heagle writes from her home in the country just south of Ottawa. Her religious views have changed over the years but she still believes in the overall goodness of people as historically represented by the lives of prophets, saints and people of good will in every culture, religion and ethnicity, who continue to strive for a global community living in understanding, harmony and peace.*

Author Showcase



New Planet, New World

BY IAN PRATTIS

Earth is dying due to Humankind's damage to the environment. The clash of cultures, late in the twenty first century, opens this epic novel of pioneers establishing community in a nearby galaxy.

Published by Manor House, Buy a copy (\$24.95) directly from the author and receive the two prior books for free. Order through

<http://ianprattis.com/NewPlanet.html>

Amazon, Indigo, Barnes & Noble.



Larry Brooks: Essential Nature of the Dramatic Arc

- focus on story structure
 - “it isn’t a story until something goes wrong”
 - strong proponent of “story in a sentence”
 - defines 8 key story beats in most commercial fiction
1. Hook : very early on, can use prologue to ask a question
 2. Setup: about 20%, introduces protagonist (P) in normal life, setup and foreshadow, stakes and quest introduced, inciting incident(s)
 3. First plot point: about 20-25% mark, P changes to new path
 4. Response: P reacts to change resulting from 1st plot point, 1st pinch point (tension) from antagonist (A), lots of flailing around
 5. Midpoint: about 50% mark (divides middle into 2 components)
 6. Attack: P proactively attacks and A ramps up too, P gets brave and tries things, escalation, 2nd pinch point, lull and dark moment
 7. Second plot point: about 70-80% mark, points P towards ultimate confrontation, forward momentum
 8. Resolution: P steps up, steps in, confronts, resolves, climax very near the end
- study the process using films e.g. *The Girl on the Train*, *Frozen*, *Collateral*

Angie Abdou: Creative Nonfiction (CNF)

- “storifying” vs “true stories well-told”
- use novel-writing techniques to tell facts in more accessible format than textbooks
- drama and intimacy; strong voice; vivid language
- approach a first draft by telling yourself the story
- be aware of ethical issues
- why does it matter to the reader? e.g. insights from history
- proposal – for CNF 60-100 pages
 - synopsis 1-2 pages
 - 1 or 2 sample chapters, enough to give a sense of action and voice
 - comprehensive outline with headings and 1 to 2 paragraph description
 - market analysis, readership
 - pictures/illustrations
 - CV – why you need to be the one writing the story

Pitch Panel

Tips from agents/editors about expectations for pitches or queries

A pitch must include

- who cares?
 - why should agent be interested?
 - conflict/stakes/what makes it different
 - content like back cover copy – crystallizes story arc, hook, characters,
 - your passion, your sellable feature as the writer
- don’t ramble
 - don’t read it
 - avoid too much information – focus on essentials (main conflict, key characters)
 - be prepared for questions, requests for query, synopsis, chapters or pages

Query letter essentials

- follow their guidelines
- plot info
- brief bio (CV, expertise where relevant)
- top line or back cover copy
- include “appeals to readers of” (examples)
- be professional
- don’t send until you have a complete manuscript
- do multiple submissions, but not within the same agency!
- notify everyone you pitched or queried if you get a positive response elsewhere

Conference Sessions

75 minute sessions (2 morning/ 2 afternoon)

Hallie Ephron: Voice and Viewpoint

- examples given: Dennis Lehane (*Moonlight Mile*) for use of voice; Joe R. Lansdale (*Edge of Dark Water*), Peter Abrahams (*Oblivion*) for unreliable narrator
- each character must do their own thing – can’t all sound like the writer
- choice of perspective will dictate how the story unfolds
- third person most versatile (can get close as with first person or be distant)
- first person – hard to show distance

continued on page 16

Eileen Cook (*With Malice*): Character, Conflict and Motivation

- ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances
- clear motivations/goals – character needs to be passionate about them
- do the characters know themselves? how do others see them?
- put obstacles in the way of the character getting what they want
- moment of crisis and choices made
- know the character's world view and how it will affect their actions

Women in History Panel: Writers of historical fiction

- remember that everything is curated – women have always worked and fought even if the records are scarce and often suppressed – find the unusual or unknown and highlight it
- baggage of reportage mainly by men – need to check primary sources e.g. laws, court records, diaries, letters, keepsakes, newspaper archives,
- check out small local museums for surviving info (very little survives about women because men didn't consider it important)
- always be aware of your own lens on the past - 21st century sensibilities can get in the way
- understand rhythms of non-technological times – seasons, life passages
- read what women of your period wrote, what they had available to read themselves

Jasper Fforde: Humour

- focus on small moments in life – atmosphere and incongruity
- comedy isn't humour – one liners vs slow burn/long set-up/good pay-off
- cultivate a humorous state of mind – look at things slant-wise, observe strange connections, envision bizarre possibilities
- family language and metaphors, fun with words, look to daily life

Anthony Dalton: Outlining

- different levels of outline may suit different working patterns
- useful to give order to thoughts – can be expanded as needed
- may assist in finding the story, at least provides a framework
- start with 1-2 pages and expand to 7-8 pages
- fiction may or may not use outlines, but non-fiction must

<http://www.advancedfictionwriting.com/articles/snowflake-method/>

<http://allindiewriters.com/the-snowflake-method-for-outlining-a-novel/>

Susanna Kearsley (*Catherine Cookson prize for Mariana*): Winging It

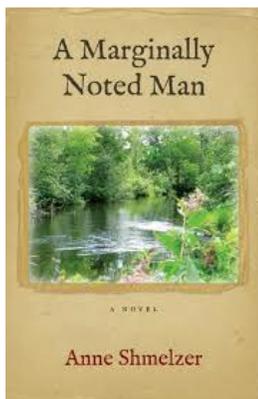
- pantsers – opposite of outliners/plotsers
- doesn't mean there's no organization or preparation or planning

continued on page 17

Author Showcase

A Marginally Noted Man

BY ANNE SHMELZER



This timeless and poignant story portrays Will Nicol's internal struggle to regain his sanity after five years in the WW1 trenches of Flanders Fields, and explores the central themes of lasting love and friendship and the moral ambiguity of war.

A Marginally Noted Man is available at railwaycreekbooks.ca Amazon, Kobo, iBook, Perfect Books and Books on Bechwood in Ottawa, The Book Nook in Perth and Novel Idea in Kingston.

Join the CAA-NCR
[Facebook group](#)

to receive updates on meetings, workshops, author activities and other news of interest to writers.

Add your suggestions or comments about our programs, or share your news.



- use hard-copy binder or [Scrivener](#) to organize background info on characters (names), plot (ideas, pictures, snippets of dialogue), setting (brochures, maps, pictures, sensory detail), research (depending on project – families, battles, weapons etc)
- can know where you want to go but may end up somewhere else
- freedom to let things happen while you're in the process of writing
- some specifics on historical fiction – can see characters at normal first and then throw them for a loop – don't follow history slavishly – less than 10% of research will appear in book

Jack Whyte: Weaving history into fiction

- it's fiction, not just history
- leeway to imagine and put words in mouths of characters but need to flesh out character first
- can't know dialect of past, but can use regional words for colour if available
- always beware of anachronisms – try not to use any phrase more recent than turn of 20th C
- find a question nobody knows the answer to
- intensive reading to get the sense of the period – primary documents, fiction/essays/poetry of the period, paintings, architecture
- recommends Colleen McCulloch's *First Man in Rome*
- be aware of the amount of time it took to do things

Keynote speakers

Cat Rambo

- set daily goals and rewards
- make sure to send material out
- volunteer at writing conferences

Don Maas

- it's an angry age – writing useful to fight anger
- what kinds of inspiration matter? conviction, caring, personal truth
- connection through writing with people of like mind

Check the SIWC web-page <http://www.siwc.ca> for more information. The 25th annual SIWC will run October 19-22, 2017, Surrey, BC, Canada (master classes October 19). It sells out early, so if you plan to go, keep an eye on their site and be ready when registration opens.

Will I return in 2017? You bet I will!



Surrey International
Writers' Conference



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Byline is a quarterly publication of the National Capital Region Branch of the Canadian Authors Association.

Submissions of articles, poems, writing tips, interviews, literary events and member achievements are welcome.

Deadlines:
Fall Issue: August 15
Winter Issue: November 15
Spring Issue: February 15
Summer Issue: May 15
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