

The Reading-Writing Connection

In partnership with The Haliburton County Public Library

Website: www.reading-writing-connection.ca/

September 2014 Newsletter

UPCOMING MEETINGS FOR The Reading / Writing Connection

Wednesday, September 17 (10 a.m.) in the Rotary Room of the Minden Library

Wednesday, October 1 (10 a.m.) in the Howard Robert's Room of the Dysart Library

Wednesday, October 15 (10 a.m.) in the Rotary Room of the Minden Library



The Tall Pine Tales events

put on by Cottage Country Writers in Haliburton and Muskoka this summer were a huge success. Haliburton's event, which took place on July 16, had 49 people attending. Attendance numbers were even higher in the other venues. Videos can be viewed on the Reading / Writing Connection website at www.reading-writing-connection.ca/. They can be accessed by clicking on Activities, then Archives -- July 16, 2014 -- Tall Pine Tales. Each of the speakers is identified; just click on them to watch the video. Videos from Bracebridge and Baysville are available for sale. For those who would like copies, call us and we will send you contact information.

HUNTSVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY EVENT

Poetry Readings, in celebration of Culture Days, will take place on Friday, September 26 at 6 p.m. A selection of local poets will do short readings of their original works. More spots for poets are available. If you are interested, call the library. The event is free, but please reserve a seat so enough refreshments can be prepared.

BARBARA BUDD'S PRESENTATION

of *As it Happened to Me* on August 17 at Haliburton Forest Festival.

See a separate review in this newsletter.

CANADIAN AUTHORS ASSOCIATION – *NEW* BRANCH

Join the Canadian Authors' Association in Bracebridge. The cost is only **\$112** for the year and presentations/speakers are included in this price. Just pay for your supper or coffee and enjoy speakers and the company of other writers. Benefits include discounts to the North Words Literary Festival as well as other events. Contact Wendie Donabe for more information at wdd550@gmail.com.

[See a separate article on the August 26 speaker, Sue Reynolds, in this newsletter.](#)

Next CAA Branch meeting on Thursday, October 2. Anthony De Sa is doing a more 'intimate' speaking engagement to kick off the North Words Literary Festival. A poster will follow soon.

Calling all Writers! Are you an aspiring writer looking to get published?

NorthWords Muskoka Literary Festival

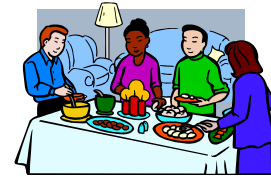
Bracebridge, ON. October 3 to 5, 2014

Muskoka's new Canadian Authors Association is hosting a full day writing workshop on Friday, October 3 at Nipissing University in Bracebridge. The event is open to anyone who wants to take their writing to the next level, learn the secrets to getting published in today's tough market or get face-time with an agent.

With breakfast and lunch included, the event is a bargain at only \$79 for the full day. For a nominal additional fee, participants who think their writing may be ready for the market will also have the rare opportunity to bring 10 pages of a manuscript for a one-on-one review by a literary agent. Spots are expected to fill quickly so, if you're interested, check out www.northwords.org to register.

Each event has two price levels: general admission and a discounted price for members of the Canadian Authors Association. Also, we are offering a Discounted Weekend Pass (does not include the Writers' Workshop) that is further reduced for CAA Members. If you join the Canadian Authors Association before the festival, we can offer you the discounted prices. Please see www.northwords.org/our-events/event-registration/ for event pricing and registration.

Please share the NorthWords information with avid readers...This festival is also designed to entertain book lovers with the opportunity to speak with those whose stories transport us to other times and places!



WEEKEND LINE-UP: [The price for each event includes your meal.](#)

Friday, October 3: Cost -- \$79

Writers' Workshop with authors, Anne Lazaruko and Michael Wutchik. Plus an agent panel discussion with Rachel Letofsky (The Cooke Agency), Olga Filina (The Rights Factory), Monica Pacheco (Anne McDermid & Associates Ltd.)! 9 am – 3 pm

Pitch Sessions: Looking to get your work in front of an agent? Here's your chance! Register to book a session with one or more of three agents!

Wine & Cheese with the authors, Anthony De Sa and Terry Fallis, 6:30 pm – 9 pm

Saturday, October 4:

The Saturday Morning Funnies - Richard Scrimger and Jim Foster will entertain you over Breakfast, 9 am – 11 am

Conversation with four debut novelists, Krista Foss, Ali Bryan, Janet Turpin-Myers and Anne Lazaruko as they share lunch and the excitement of their first novel publications. 12 pm – 2 pm

Mid-Afternoon Chat with non-fiction authors, M.G. Vassanji and Patrick Boyer, 3 pm – 5 pm

Gala Dinner with novelists, Michael Wutchik and Craig Davidson, 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm

Sunday, October 5:

Breakfast with Novelists, Michelle Berry and Catherine Bush as they share their literary journeys, 9:30 am – 11:00 am

After Breakfast with authors, Claire Cameron, Glad Bryce and Diana Aspin, 11:30 am – 1 pm

Canadian Authors Association Evening in Bracebridge on August 27

Guest Speaker: Sue Reynold's on the Topic of Memoirs

By Pauline L. Johnson

As a psychotherapist and writer, Sue Reynold's proved herself eminently qualified and insightful in her presentation to writers at the last Canadian Authors' meeting in Bracebridge. Some of the points she discussed are worth repeating.

Describing autobiography as more of a factual account, supported by actual data, she advised that written memoirs should have a narrative arc showing how someone was transformed by what happened in any situation. **Transformation** or change makes your protagonist's experiences resonate with others and gives your story emotional appeal.

Rather than put in every single detail of a story, Sue said the difficulty for a memoirist was to know what to leave out to create the most important focus. Always, however, make a **disclaimer** at the beginning of any story collection that the memoirs are "events as **YOU** remember them." Other family members may remember things differently, and memory being what it is, the "truth" may differ. She gave the example of one lady who read a story to her family of how she had jumped a fence, when young, and torn her calf on a protruding wire. Her brother said, "Good story, but that happened to me." The woman vehemently disagreed but her brother raised his pant leg and showed the scar down his leg. Memory is not always as reliable as we would want.

Motivation is a powerful factor in people's lives. In your memoirs, explain what desires drive a person's behaviour and how they get what they want.

Don't just write about what happened. Write about **what you thought about what happened**.

Keep in mind that as we grow up, we learn behaviours that allow us to get by and not get into trouble. For example, it's frowned upon to be whinny, get angry or stand up for ourselves when told what to do. As adults, we become entitled to **express the full range of emotions** and we should include them in our stories.

If an event is more than 10 years old it's likely you can think about it with your ego less involved. You can acknowledge that you may not have always acted right and therefore can portray yourself in a memoir as more vulnerable. It draws the reader in and when you can criticize your own actions, the reader trusts you. The

deeper you go with your feelings and vulnerabilities, the more you will **connect with your audience**.

"**Show, not tell**" is an important concept in writing. Telling a story is recounting events in an abstract way without any involvement of the reader. "Showing" is crucial to the reader. "*The writer must be so present in the scene that he lights up his reader's brains,*" said Sue. How do you do that? Let the reader hear **dialogue**. **Use imagery** appealing to the reader's senses -- not only seeing but hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. "When we fall into a book and forget we are reading, the writer is using imagery well."

As a memoirist, try to **discern the important truths**. Details may be platonically wrong. In other words, you may add or change insignificant story details to support the point you are trying to make. Sue claimed that when people do memoirs, over time they end up becoming healthier human beings.

Get together often with family and friends and talk about your memories. Always have a pen and pad handy to write down things that come up in conversation. **Triggers** are ideas for stories that you might have forgotten or just didn't think of.

Transformation of character is important in a story but you may have a story about someone who was unable to change. Look at the reasons why. Also show how this affects the lives of those close to them in positive or negative ways.

Look for the **inciting incident** in a story, the thing that sets events in motion, the moment when everything changes; for example, the wife comes home to find her husband's bag packed and he says he is leaving. In crime stories, the police will look for a stressor that sets off a person, sending them on a crime spree.

If you're not sure where your story is going to go, use the technique of **mind mapping** where you put the inciting event in the centre of a page and, with radiating spokes, list connected events, feelings, descriptive words, emotions, the influence of others or anything else that pertains to the subject.

Sue left participants with a lot of useful advice and a clearer picture of how to improve our memoirs.

Barbara Budd Presentation

at Haliburton Forest on August 17, 2014

By Pauline L. Johnson

What do comedians and authors have in common? Each looks for that slice of life conveying meaning for others and it's even better when a dash of humour is involved. They also like to listen. Listening isn't necessarily the same as hearing. Listening involves questioning what one hears, striving to understand what has happened, seeking a deeper meaning than the obvious and relating ideas on a universal level to other experiences and truths. Writers should be good listeners and with her breadth of knowledge of the human condition, Barbara proved herself an excellent listener. As she said, steal ideas for stories from conversations, from friends, from bumper stickers, from films, from newspapers and so on but only steal what elevates you as material for your stories.

As an actress, radio personality, or friend to the stars, Barbara's presentation was engaging, entertaining and insightful. She's learned over many years what people enjoy hearing and what life should be about so that her stories resonated well with the audience members at the Haliburton Forest in her one-woman show *What Happened to Me*.

Six members of The Haliburton Reading Writing Connection as well as two friends attended Barbara's presentation. As writers, currently working on memoirs, Barbara gave us lots of fodder for story sources emphasizing how important it is to listen to children and be aware that happenings are expressed from individual perspectives, whether they are heard correctly or mis-heard. She had the crowd laughing about lines from songs that are habitually sung incorrectly, getting audience members to acknowledge that some sang *Proud Mary* as "Brown Berry" or *Oh Canada* as "Oh Canada, our home is made of land."

Kathy Jurgens, an American Friend of Sharon Lawrence, kibitzed with Barbara when she satirized the quintessential traits or habits of Americans, even admitting that Americans could manage to make love in a canoe like Canadians. In turn, Barbara later got a little salty and stated, "The joy of being a well-

educated and mature woman is that you don't have to fear using expletives or putting someone in their place." If this can be done with humour or wit, all the better. She related how, when having tea with Judy Dench one afternoon, Judy received an indecent phone call offering her a "hot, steaming @#%&@." Without missing a beat, Judy said to the obscene caller. "That would be lovely. Please wrap it up and send it around." The degree to which one uses expletives in one's writing is personal and it's worth having a discussion with writing colleagues on that subject some time.

Humour and laughter ruled the afternoon and it was certainly worth the drive to Haliburton Forest to take in Barbara's show, one which she has performed on the radio for almost 20 years and at the Stratford Festival.

Sue Reynolds



Barbara Budd



