



AUTUMN 2012 vol¹⁴ no⁴

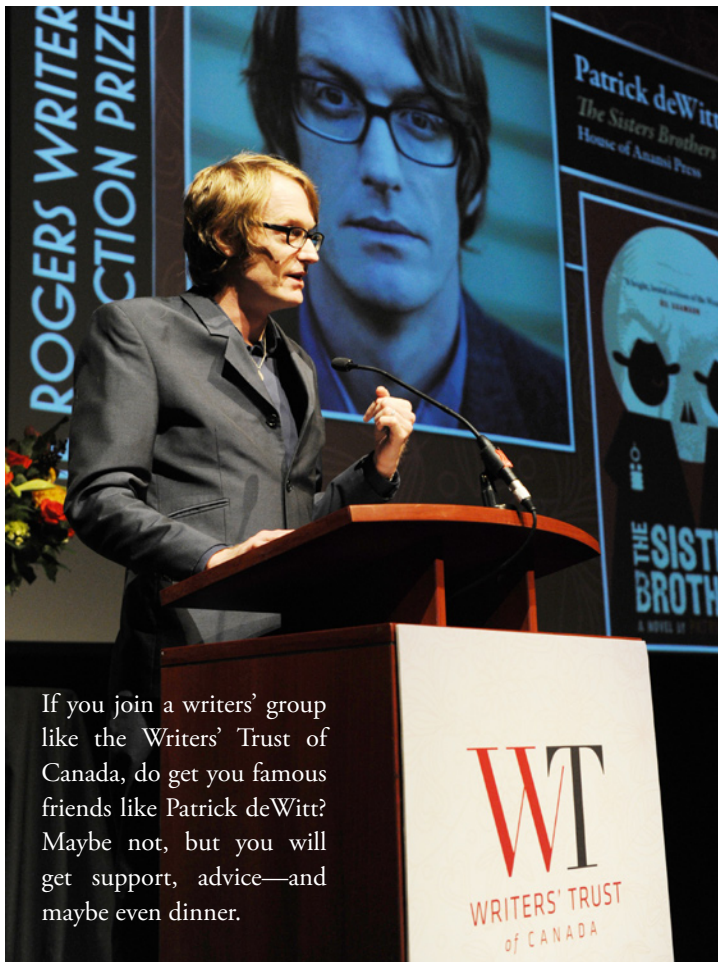
ARE WRITERS' ORGANIZATIONS NECESSARY?

EAT YOUR ALPHABET SOUP:
QWF, UNEQ, WTC,
LCP, PWAC, SATW,
CANSCAIP, ELAN



BY BECKY TOYNE

GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP



If you join a writers' group like the Writers' Trust of Canada, do get you famous friends like Patrick deWitt? Maybe not, but you will get support, advice—and maybe even dinner.

Patrick deWitt accepts the 2011 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize for his novel *The Sisters Brothers*. Photo: Tom Sandler.

When a number of Canadian writers were asked “What is the Writers' Trust of Canada?” the most simply put answer came from Graeme Gibson, one of the organization's founding members. The Writers' Trust, he said, is “a great big friend for writers.”

We all like to have friends—they're the family we get to choose. Friends make us feel liked, supported and listened to. Over the course of a friendship they become our heroes in a million tiny ways, from their lent muscle on moving day to confiscated phones when a drunk dial to an “ex” is imminent. Friends make us think, make us laugh, make us consider different points of view. Sometimes, they also make us dinner.

From coast to coast to coast, the Writers' Trust is a support system and a true friend to Canadian writers. Here's why:

Friends are people we trust. Well, that part's easy—the word's right up there in our name and logo.

Friends are for travelling with. As a writer you're likely an intrepid sort who is no stranger to touchdowns on unfamiliar terrain, whether you fly solo or with a buddy in tow. But sometimes a friend at your destination makes the travel less daunting (not to mention easier on the wallet). Each year, the Writers' Trust sends four writers to the Berton House Writers' Retreat in the Yukon and pays them a \$6,000 honorarium. Past residents of the House include Charlotte Gray, Carmine Starnino, Mylène Gilbert-Dumas and Phil Hall.

...continued on page 6

DAVID HOMEL

373 WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

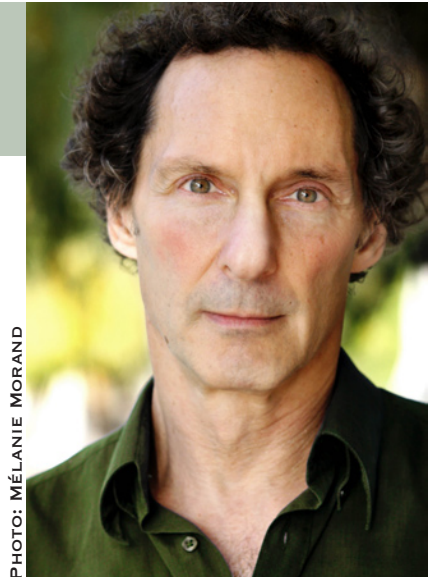


PHOTO: MÉLANIE MORAND

The QWF has been purring a long through the summer, with some work getting done in this quiet season. The Writers in CEGEPs Committee met to consider new applicants, and the Workshop and Writers Out Loud committees got together to plan the 2013 season. I've been in communication with writer Charles Montpetit, who has organized opposition to the erosion of the Writers in the Schools program (primary and secondary levels). We're preparing for the September 26 event with the *Union des écrivains québécois* (or UNEQ) as part of the *Festival international de la littérature* (or FIL).

As a member of too many creators' organizations, which means paying too many dues, I've always thought that membership in UNEQ was one of the good deals going in terms of what a writer can get back. There are a few English-language writers in that group—too few, if you ask me. To join as a full member, you need to have published two books in a literary genre, and be born and/or living in Quebec. UNEQ offers associate membership to authors of one book in a literary genre. Considering that

a number of UNEQ members are part of the English-language minority, and that UNEQ itself is quite clear about defending its status as a minority within Canada, I was struck by that group's July 19 communiqué (to use a word we borrowed from French) attacking the federal government's decision to give \$4.4 million to English-language community groups in Quebec. This money is part of the government's strategy to support minority language communities across Canada; a much larger sum is given to French-language groups.

The French language is in decline in Montreal, according to UNEQ, and this is the reason for their opposition to these grants. Is supporting minority English-language communities—helping them retain their vitality—a step toward the decline of French in Montreal, if indeed it is in decline? Logically, no. Another point that the July 19 communiqué—sorry, press release—makes is that some English-language organizations “have clearly expressed their opposition to the primacy of French as the majority language of Quebec” (my translation). Too bad, but UNEQ doesn't name names. Which groups are guilty? I wonder if they mean QWF... Probably not. ¶

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La Quebec Writers' Federation remercie le Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, et le Conseil des arts de Montréal, de leur appui financier. The QWF also thanks the Canada Council for the Arts for its financial support, as well as QWF members and sponsors for their generosity.



SHE WROTE:

HE WROTE:

WILL A WRITING ORGANIZATION HELP YOUR WRITING?

By Rowena Woods

by Lance Jones

Community is beneficial—plain and simple. Take a colony of penguins who march across Antarctica, share incubation duties, and exercise their impressive vocals to court. On the surface their community may seem like a far cry from...oh, let's say a writing organization. Yet their cute waddles and tuxedo dress aside, these creatures need a place to grow, to dive and play, and develop their skills—much like the often inquisitive, sometimes lonely, always-pondering wordsmith.

I had an English degree and a small children's book under my wing, but little else to justify the awkward "I'm a writer" shuffle at Christmas parties. In addition, creative isolation began to hatch. What I needed was a place where I could extend my flippers, connect with like-minded people, and hone my skills so that one day I could survive as a writer. That's when I stumbled across the QWF. Curious, I dove in and enrolled in a couple of screenwriting workshops with script veterans Leila Basen and Gerald Wexler. That dive created a ripple effect that continues to this day. Not only did I find a place to garner important writing information, I found a community. My flippers continued to flap. What followed was a sense of camaraderie, completed projects, experiences on the editorial board, contract work and friendships.

When you join a writing organization it doesn't make you an instant Hemingway or Atwood, but it does provide opportunity. Through community and networking, I learned new things; things I would have missed as a lone penguin on an ice floe who watched the community move forward without her. ¶

Rowena Woods is a children's author and scriptwriter who lives in Montreal and enjoys feisty conversations about the meaning of life. Oh, and penguins... she likes penguins.

As a place to help writers meet each other, a writing group is fine; but as a place for the more experienced to improve their skills...not so much. What helps a writer write is to write. While some organizations like the Quebec Writers' Federation offer workshops, they are generally geared toward the novice.

Don't get me wrong. I have met a lot of interesting people as part of QWF and the Writers Guild. I see a lot of value in those organizations. However, I get more "writer's stimulation" when I put myself in unusual situations or mix with disparate groups of people.

Some more cynical than I have told me that if you join a writing organization you run the risk of stolen ideas and clients. While I'm sceptical about that, what I have noticed is that when we get together, half of the people talk only about their own writing, and the others want to know for whom I recently worked. As a Gemini I fear I fall into both groups.

And editing advice from a member of a writing group? If that person has the requisite experience, talent and knowledge, great. Let's face it though: if you have all of that ability you'll charge for your professional services. And rightly so! A novice writer shouldn't give advice. Otherwise, Shakespeare might be in straight prose, not iambic pentameter, Rhett might have stayed with Scarlett instead of not giving a damn, and Carl Sandburg might have written about Milwaukee instead of Chicago. ¶

Lance Jones has spent most of his life as a writer for TV and radio advertising, documentaries, and educational videos. While he has also written a novel, a children's book, a musical play, dozens of poems and several song lyrics, only the play has been seen by the public so far. He needs to change that.





MORE GREAT BIG FRIENDS

Professional Writers Association of Canada THE TOP 3 WAYS PWAC CAN HELP YOU, THE FREELANCE WRITER

BY OLIVIA KONA,
PWAC QUEBEC CHAPTER VICE-PRESIDENT



It's a well-known fact in the PWAC community that we refer to ourselves as a family. We're a tight-knit, diverse group established in 1976 with over 600 members and shore-to-shore reach. As professional "hired pens," we write for print and online publications, media, corporations, institutions, governments and more.

Camaraderie

Past PWAC President and 30-year member Kathe Lieber put it best when she said, "I joined PWAC to learn how to run a professional writing business, but I stayed for the wonderful people I met, the great social events and the informal mentoring. Several "senior" members took me under their wings many years ago, and I've been happy to do that for younger writers. There's a fantastic spirit of camaraderie among our members."

As writers and editors, we work hard to succeed in a profession that can be very solitary, especially for those freelancers who telecommute. We often crave contact, connections and ways to boost our skills. When you become a PWAC member, we'll cheer you on, share our knowledge and help you network and find new business opportunities.

PWAC Marketplace Website

Our brand new PWAC marketplace, writers.ca, is the ideal way to start. Once you become a member, you can profile your work and communicate with clients, publishers and other writers. Visitors can post a job and find a writer, while members can look for jobs and visit forums on the site. You'll also find publishers' tip sheets, a best practices guide, information on copyright basics and what to pay a writer.

PWAC National and Local Events

To connect on a national level, there's no better place to go than our annual PWAC Conference for professional and social activities open to the larger writing and publishing community. Next

year it'll be held in Toronto in conjunction with MagNet, Canada's Magazine Conference.

Join us at our local PWAC Quebec chapter events for professional development, networking and socializing. This year our calendar included "The Great Blog Debate" with media guru Mitch Joel, the "How to Find Your Ideal Client" workshop, a lecture by CBC radio documentary producer David Gutnick, and our festive holiday party and annual "Pub Nite." ¶

The Society of American Travel Writers BRIDGING PEOPLE AND RESOURCES

BY GINA ROITMAN

Some 20 years ago I joined the Society of American Travel Writers (www.satw.org), a continent-wide organization that enjoys a well-earned reputation as travel's most trusted voice.



Believing that travel is a bridge between peoples, SATW's earnest desire is to make and keep travel a quality experience for everyone. And for its members, SATW is an invaluable resource for contacts and professional development.

Founded in 1955, the Society now has more than 1,200 members, including travel writers, photographers, editors, film lecturers, broadcast/video/film producers, bloggers, website contributors and owners, and creators of mobile apps. The membership is also composed of communications and public relations practitioners who may represent a destination, a property, an attraction or a carrier.

The Society works to raise the standards of the profession, guard the right of freedom to travel, and encourage conservation and preservation of historic sites and natural wonders. More importantly, in an era where anyone has the power to sway travel choices for hotel, restaurants, carriers and more, SATW works to promote responsible journalism provided by people who make reporting on travel their profession.

The Society is divided into four chapters and three councils. Canada is one of the four chapters along with the Eastern Chapter (Atlantic seaboard) the Western Chapter (the Pacific coast) and

Central Chapter (the Midwest). Actives (all media members), Associates (marketers and public relations professionals) and Editors are the three Councils that work within their disciplines to support their members and provide relevant and timely professional development.

James Michener and Jan Morris are among some of the best-known popular writers to have held membership in SATW.

On a personal level, the Society has provided me with countless opportunities to broaden my horizons. I've travelled with some remarkable people who, having seen so much of the world, have a tremendous openness of spirit and a desire to share what they have learned. I've attended Society conventions in Dublin, Santiago de Chile, Manchester, Honolulu, Dresden and Cardiff.

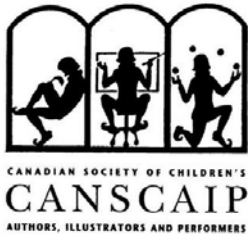
Each chapter holds an annual meeting and the Canadian Chapter has held theirs in such exotic locales as the Azores, Egypt and the Czech Republic (as well as Montreal, Banff and Churchill).

If you expand your horizons through writing about travel, explore the possibility of becoming a member: <http://satw.org/index.php/membership/join>. ¶

Canadian Society of Children's Authors, Illustrators and Performers

Champion of Kidlit

BY RAQUEL RIVERA



The Canadian Society of Children's Authors, Illustrators and Performers is represented here in Quebec by the Montreal-based chapter YesOuiCanscaip. In past years the chapter has hosted monthly member meetings at which the public was welcome: "A great opportunity

to check in with fellow writers, to compare notes, and provide and receive support. The snacks are good, too!" notes member Monique Polak, whose 12th novel, *Pyro*, is released this month.

YesOuiCanscaip hosted readings and presentations by visiting authors and illustrators, as well as two annual conferences, all of which brought luminaries from across Canada and the USA together to celebrate, discuss, and practice the fine art of creating literature for children and young adults. "Listening to first-hand experiences of other writers and illustrators has been especially inspiring," says emerging illustrator Constantina Kalimeris.

At the moment, in the absence of a Quebec representative, YesOuiCanscaip has become considerably less active. But our strong, supportive community of local authors, illustrators, and children's performers welcomes contacts through Facebook's YesOuiCanscaip group. As J.L. Scharf, author of *Grace & the Ice Prince* puts it, "over the years YesOuiCanscaip has grown into one cool collection of writers, artists and performers."

On the national level, CANSCAIP is an excellent resource for anyone interested in "kidlit." As a National Arts Service Organization dedicated to the celebration and promotion of practitioners, CANSCAIP serves more than 400 professional members and 600 associate members across Canada.

The organization is open to aspiring and professional children's authors, illustrators and performers, as well as librarians, teachers, designers, parents, editors, publishers—all who support children's culture. Services offered include:

- What's new in Canadian children's literature
- Marketplace information: which publishers seek what
- Biographical and bibliographical information on favourite children's artists
- Networking opportunities
- Tips on writing, marketing, illustration, and presentations
- Writing critique by a CANSCAIP mentor

This year, CANSCAIP's Toronto-based "Packaging Your Imagination" conference will be held in November. For more information, visit canscaip.org. ¶

The League of Canadian Poets

THE LEAGUE—BY AND FOR POETS

BY BRIAN CAMPBELL



THE LEAGUE OF CANADIAN POETS

If you write poetry or perform English spoken word in this country, the League of Canadian Poets (LCP) could be a most beneficial organization for you. For those who have never heard of the League, or for whom the name only conjures images of poets who wear hockey jerseys and rush madly up and down a

rink—well, in the words of its website, the LCP is the professional association for established and emerging Canadian poets.

One significant attraction of the League is that it is the main body through which funding from the Canada Council of the Arts and other provincial organizations is directed for paid public readings, book tours, poets in the schools programs and the like. Full members can get up to five paid full readings over a two-year period, with reimbursement for travel expenses. Readings can be divided into half-readings so poets may cover more territory. Details can be found on the LCP website (www.poets.ca).

To become a full member, you must have published a minimum 48 pages of poetry, in book form or in chapbooks or maga-

MORE LCP AND FRIENDS NEXT PAGE...

EVEN MORE GREAT BIG FRIENDS

A LITTLE HELP

...continued from cover

Friends help you celebrate

success. It can be a lonely business being a writer, but when the work is finished, published and out in the world, it's time to celebrate, and the Writers' Trust oversees the most lucrative non-governmental literary awards program in Canada. Past winners and nominees for fiction, non-fiction, short stories and bodies of work include Saleema Nawaz, Kathleen Winter, Nicole Brossard, Rawi Hage, Merrily Weisbord, Taras Grescoe and Charles Foran (who won the inaugural Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction for his biography of Mordecai Richler).

And the benefits don't end with the prize money. Said Patrick deWitt of his 2011 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize win, "[The Writers' Trust] is extending the life of my work, and you can't put a price on that."

Friends value your opinion. The Writers' Trust doesn't only reward writers for their current projects. The jurors for our many programs are all Canadian writers, which make our awards and grants the most peer-influenced in the country. Heather O'Neill, David Bergen and Madeleine Thien are among the long list of those who've shared their time and expertise in recent years.

Friends might teach you a thing or two. The Writers' Trust awards \$1,000 scholarships to the Humber School for Writers' correspondence program. More than 270 students have gone on to be published, among them Vincent Lam and Kim Echlin.

Friends are there for your firsts. OK, so maybe we weren't there on prom night, but we have two awards that support emerging Canadian talent. Past winners of the RBC Bronwen Wallace Award for Emerging Writers and the Dayne Ogilvie Prize for an emerging writer from the LGBT community who have gone on to establish successful careers in Canadian letters include Stephanie Bolster, Zoe Whittall and Michael Crummey.

Friends (generous friends) might buy you dinner and a cocktail. The Writers' Trust hosts a number of fundraising events throughout the year, and at the Writers' Trust Gala in Toronto and the "Politics and the Pen" Gala in Ottawa, Canadian writers are the guests of honour. Dinner and drinks are on us. Dancing is up to you.

And yes, when times get particularly hard, friends might lend you a dollar or two. The Writers' Trust's Woodcock Fund, established in 1989, gives grants to writers in financial hardship. Since its inception, it has distributed more than \$800,000—for



keeps, by the way, not as a loan—to more than 180 writers. The Woodcock Fund has contributed to the completion of books that circumstances might otherwise have consigned to a drawer forever.

In the past year alone, the Writers' Trust has helped 87 Canadian writers to the tune of \$410,200. It has generated publicity for authors and their books, provided a platform from which writers have promoted their work to Canadian readers, and provided a venue for Canadian writers from every province to benefit from the experience and support network of their peers. "A country without a rich culture is a very bleak place," said Graeme Gibson in the same interview with which this piece began. The Writers' Trust's mandate is to see that all Canadian writers have the support they need to make that rich literary culture a reality. ¶

Becky Toyne is a books columnist, editor and publicist. She works with the Writers' Trust of Canada on many of their programs to support Canadian writers.

...continued from page 5



zines, and pass assessment by a membership committee elected at the annual Poetry Conference and Festival (formerly AGM). Full member dues are \$185 annually. To be an associate member, a sample of poetry (or spoken word) must be approved by the same organization. Associates cannot get paid readings, but can avail themselves of all other benefits. Dues for associates are \$70 per year. Student memberships are \$30 a year.

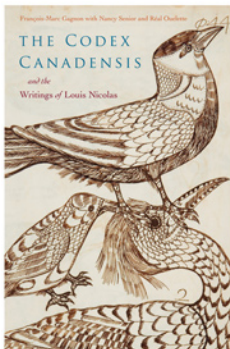
The organization does offer plenty of other benefits. Its annual conference is a kind of poetry festival as well as policy forum, with panel discussions, open mikes, and book launches. Many of our best poets and spoken word artists (including Margaret Atwood, George Elliott Clarke, Stephanie Bolster, Anne Simpson, Catherine Kidd, Ian Ferrier, Sheri-D Wilson, Erin Mouré, Lillian Allen, Barbara Nickel and Maurice Mierau) are members; you get to hobnob, make friends, find out who's publishing where and what. At the annual conference, three awards are given: the Gerald Lampert Award for best first book, the Pat Lowther Award for best book by a woman, and the newly-minted Raymond Souster Award, for best book by any member. The LCP has an excellent website (poets.ca) and sends out a monthly e-newsletter that fills in members on competitions and events. Membership provides free access to "Poetry Markets for Canadians," a very useful service. On the site you will find a list of poets who will do manuscript consultation for a fee. The LCP list-serve is also a forum for exchange and feedback on poems. The LCP's youth

website (youngpoets.ca) offers plenty of initiatives for students and teachers.

Founded in 1966 by Raymond Souster, Louis Dudek and others, the LCP has a long and storied history. It's a friendly, unpretentious organization with many talented members. It provides connections that lead to interchange, publication and friendship. This organization makes an effort to attract cultural minorities to its fold; it strives to give recognition, funding and prizes to alternative forms of poetry. As a long-standing member, I encourage interested poets and spoken-word artists to check out the website and apply. ¶

Member News

Send your news to info@qwf.org (please keep to a 60-word limit) with "Member News" in the subject line—and you'll be entered in a draw to win a beautiful book.



This issue:
*The Codex Canadensis
and the Writings of Louis Nicolas:
The Natural History of the New World.*
a 335 year-old lavishly
illustrated manuscript

This issue's winner is: **Helen Wolkowicz**
*Members of the Qwrite Editorial Board and staff
are not eligible for the quarterly prizes.*

Julianna Kozma's debut short story, "Beautiful Insanity," is appearing in the first-ever edition of an edgy collection of written and visual works called *Warpaint, An Anthology*. Check out an interview with the author on www.facebook.com/warwithpaint. Concordia University also highlighted the author and her latest book, *Secrets of the Dunes*, in their June Alumni on-line newsletter.

Monique Polak's YA novel *Miracleville* made the Canadian Children's Book Centre's Best Books for 2011 list. In June, Monique traveled to the Netherlands to celebrate the launch of *Een Andere Wereld*, the Dutch-language translation of her YA novel *What World Is Left*. Monique was interviewed on stage at Amsterdam's Jewish Museum. She also spoke at the Anne Frank House and the Stedelijk Museum Zutphen. Monique's parents (her mother's childhood experience in the Netherlands and a Nazi concentration camp inspired the novel) accompanied her on the trip. Her feature story about the visit appeared in the *Montreal Gazette*. Monique's next YA novel, *Pyro*, will be released by Orca books in September. Another YA novel, tentatively entitled *So Much It Hurts*, is scheduled for publication by Orca in fall 2013.

André K. Baby's thriller *Dead Bishops Don't Lie* (the English version of *La Danse des évêques*, published by Marcel Broquet) is now available though Amazon Books, Amazon Kindle and their affiliated retailers.

Helen Wolkowicz received an honorable mention in the 2012 Short Articles Writing category for her article, "A husband's inner femme," from the Professional Writers Association of Canada (PWAC). The article was published in the *Toronto Star*. www.thestar.com/news/insight/article/918456--a-husband-s-inner-femme

Philip Amsel's chapbooks of short stories are available at Librairie Drawn & Quarterly.

This June, **Rae Marie Taylor**, poet and author of the environmental memoir *The Land: Our Gift and Wild Hope*, performed in a solo spoken-word performance in French with award-winning bass player Pierre Côté at the Domaine Pointe St. Vallier on the St. Lawrence River. In July, she read in New Mexico at Bookworks in Albuquerque and the OpCit Bookstore in Santa Fe. Both readings were followed by public exchanges under the theme of "Land, Loss and the Partnership of Hope." A. Kyce Bello, river activist and editor of the anthology *The Return of the River*, joined Taylor for the Santa Fe reading. ¶

THIS IS A CONTEST

OUR "BEST STORY YOU'LL EVER READ" CONTEST DEADLINE has been extended to October 1, and the winner will be printed in the next issue of Qwrite. Your mission: write your best 250-word story about being published (or trying to get published) in a literary journal and send it to Qwrite. You could win a shopping bag full of back issues of some of the best literary journals in North America.

Deadline: October 1, 2012
Address to: The Best Story You'll Ever Read
admin@qwf.org
1200 Atwater Ave, Room 3
Westmount, Quebec H3Z 1X4

CARTE BLANCHE LITERARY MAGAZINE is now accepting poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, translation, photography and audio submissions for its Fall Issue (#16). If you've got a narrative, we want to see it.

The theme for this issue is CONFLICT. We want to read your war stories from neighbourhood spats and sibling rivalries to life-threatening situations. Tell us about the conflicts you've experienced—big and small—that have changed your life.

The submission deadline for the Fall Issue is September 15, 2012. Contributors receive a \$45 honorarium per published piece. Check out our submission guidelines for more information: <http://carte-blanche.org/submissions/>

THE Q MUNITY COLUMN BY MICHAEL LAKE

Geoff Agombar grew up in the small village of Bridgetown, in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia. He was closer to nature there than in the city, and because of that, a sense of interconnectedness permeates his thoughts and continues to influence his views on city life and the interplay of the diverse arts communities in Montreal.

For the past ten years Agombar has been enmeshed in the Montreal arts scene; he currently works as the office manager for the English Language Arts Network (ELAN). He worked for many years at the Fringe festival, took over as general manager of Mainline Theatre in 2005, and has worked with his partner Cat Kidd on several theatre productions, the most recent of which was the acclaimed one-woman show, *Hyena Subpoena*. When I met with Geoff we talked about everything from animals and evolution to the synecdoche that is the Mile End.

Biking with the Tailwind

“I remember being about 10 years old,” Agombar says, “biking down the street and going through the churchyard behind my parents’ house. The wind was screaming in my ears, I was coming around the corner, then all of a sudden I was going the same speed as my tailwind. I was biking my guts out but the air around my ears was still. I remember there were kids on the swing and I could hear the creaking chains and them laughing, even though I was bolting as fast as I could go. I think that a lot of what happens in history, the way things are, is much more contextual and ecological, in that it’s a whole interlocking system. The tree can’t live without the fungus; it’s all interlocked. It’s the same way in our societies.”

Mainline Theatre

“The first thing I was tasked to do in my first month as general manager, September 2005, was to write a grant application to Canada Council for a show called Johnny Canuck. We were supposed to use the money to rent a theatre but instead we rented the space that Mainline is in now and spent three days poring over cash flows. It was ridiculously low rent, but we assumed we’d only be able to keep the thing open and occupy it for half the year. In the end, we applied for a grant, got less than we asked for, and used that money to open a theatre that has been open for more than six years.”

Student Protests

“I got involved in a translation site surrounding the student protests. After the passage of Law 78 there was a feeling of disbelief—it

just didn’t compute. In the French media the coverage was very balanced and very passionate and kind of shouty. There was a huge spectrum of what was wrong and what was right, what was true and what was not true. On the English side, it was mostly pushed all over to one side. A bunch of people got together spontaneously because we thought this was a problem; we thought it was a much more complicated situation than was being presented in the English media. There has been more attention paid to it now that it’s been tied to a horserace surrounding provincial elections. It’s getting more airtime again. On the Anglophone side of the issue, there has been a long history of thinking that education is something you invest in personally. And in Francophone history there is a long line of thinking of education as a system that isn’t right, and that something could be built collectively to address the problem.”



GEOFF AGOMBAR:
AN INTERLOCKING SYSTEM

Cultural Flypaper

“I’ve lived all this time in the Mile End area and there is something really unique that has been happening in the neighbourhood and in this town as a whole. People talk about Yorkville in Toronto back in the 60s, which is now essentially stores, high-rises, and condos. But at that time it was the centre of a big buzz—there was a huge folk explosion there. There’s been a similar confluence, an emergence if you will, in the Mile End. There are dozens of ways to explain why, but there’s been a great deal of vibrancy and synchronicity and energy going on, and I just wanted to stay close to that. I want to be in places where interesting things are happening and people are doing surprising things—and this has been one of them. You find them everywhere, but not with such density and over such a long period of time and covering so many different fields. I’ve heard people, maybe Cat, describe Montreal as cultural flypaper.”

Community

“I’ve found myself gravitating toward communities and opportunities that have a tendency to be crossed—small-town communities within the large-city environment—and tried to contribute to their health. I’ve tried to find roles within those communities where I felt satisfied to be making some contribution. And not necessarily for short-term gains but for those long-term pendulum swings. And a swing toward what? Toward a society that respects its own balances, to respect that opposite doesn’t mean in disagreement. Montreal is the place where I’ve come to feel at home. Nova Scotia is still home—the kind of home where the horizons are the right shape—but Montreal feels like the place that is a source: it is the most enriching. Montreal is the community that intrigues me the most.” ¶