



THE WRITE PLACE

BRAINSTORMING – A USEFUL TOOL FOR WRITERS *by Anne J. Fotheringham*

Brainstorming is a technique used in many professions and one which is extremely helpful for writers. There are several ways to brainstorm and it is an activity you can share with others or undertake on your own.

Brainstorming involves getting a group of people in a room and letting them throw out ideas for solving a particular problem. Participants are usually invited to the session based on their expertise and their involvement with the subject under discussion. Sometimes, outside expertise is brought in to freshen the idea pool. A scribe is usually appointed to record all the suggestions.

This is a situation that can work well for writers. If you have writers' block or you are stuck at a particular place in your novel or you are just looking for new ideas to spark your creativity, bringing a diverse group of writers together can bring about some interesting results. Listening to the viewpoints and ideas of other writers and learning about their genres can open your mind to finding solutions for your writing problems.

If you are not one for group activities, go ahead and brainstorm on your own. Tape a couple of large sheets of blank paper on the wall and use stickie notes to record the ideas that come to you while brainstorming. Then stick the notes onto the sheets of paper and sort through them to find possible solutions.

Here are a few of the tried and true brainstorming techniques you can try out in a group or on your own.

SCAMPER: Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify/Distort, Put to Other Purposes, Eliminate, Rearrange/Reverse.

Using this technique, you take a scene or plot situation and examine it by asking yourself the following questions:

Can I **substitute** an element of the plot for another and what happens if I do?

Can I **combine** two elements of my plot problem in order to find a solution or to improve the story line?

What elements of my plot can I **adapt** to solve the problem?

What can I **modify/distort** to achieve a solution and what will the consequences be?

What elements can I **put to other purposes** in another part of my story? How does that affect the plot outcome?

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CLONES, DRONES AND SMART PHONES *by Arnold Hanna*

I'm walking past my old high school, not for sentimental reasons, but because it's between legal street parking and my destination. When I was in high school I didn't understand graduates who came back for a visit. There's something creepy about a person who yearns to relive the most miserable and awkward time of their life. It's precisely that sort of self-deluded revisionism that leads to organizing a cotillion or voting Conservative. I'm cut from the "Cage aux Folles" cloth, so I believe "the best of times is now," if for no other reason than we can still alter the outcome.

Classes ended minutes ago, so the streets and sidewalks are filled with the bright young faces of tomorrow. I have to leave the sidewalk and walk in oncoming traffic a few times, because teenagers today are just as self-absorbed and inconsiderate as I was at their age. It doesn't anger me. In fact, I make it into a self-congratulatory moment because it demonstrates how maturity improves us. With age, most of us acquire empathy and consideration, with the possible exception of dentists, and those who work in the financial sector.

The ragamuffins who push past me in packs of three to seven have two major differences from the delinquents I grew up with. Collectively, they're ten to fifteen pounds heavier, and they don't smoke.

I'm proud of our 'nanny state' government and their successful campaign to make this terrifying health risk 'uncool'. From its psychologically infantile birth in the back seat of a school bus, I dragged that wicked addiction all the way into my thirties. That's when I finally dealt with the pusillanimous baggage, and kicked the filthy habit.

These kids are growing up smoke free, and hopefully will be spared

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How can I **eliminate** the story elements that are hampering my plot line, thereby preventing its resolution?

What will happen if I **rearrange/reverse** the situation? Does this help me to find a solution?

The SCAMPER brainstorming technique can help you see your work through new eyes and generates suggestions for improvement.

Escapism is another good brainstorming technique. Take the situation which is giving you problems and drop it in the most ludicrous solution you can imagine. Then look hard at the new situation and see if any of it is feasible. What benefits can you derive from having your main character kidnapped by aliens in the middle of downtown Montreal? Work through the craziness to find solutions for moving your work forward.

Random Word technique requires you to pick a word at random (letting the dictionary fall open, covering your eyes and pointing to a word is a fun way to do this). Use that word within the context of the writing problem you are

brainstorming about. The random word will create new images, feelings, complications, etc., and this can help you see your work differently.

Role Playing is a fun technique. Give the character involved in your problem scene another profession or life situation and then brainstorm to see how that affects the outcome of the problematic scene. Turn your serial killer into a pet groomer for the day and brainstorm what changes that can make in your plot.

Wishful Thinking is making your dreams come true. Determine your ideal writing solution and work backwards to find out how you can reach that destination. It will help you take your story where you want it to go. But be careful what you wish for!

Anne J. Fotheringham is a professional writer and book editor – visit her website www.bookeditorplus.com where you will find a range of resources to assist and inform writers. Anne's creative and non-fiction work has appeared in a number of publications. Her latest is This Jagged Winter, a book of poetry published by Shoreline Press.

Submission Guidelines

An eight- to twelve-page B&W news magazine, dedicated to the English-language community of the Greater Montreal Area, will be published every three months. Submissions for entry into the paper will be accepted from any writer, with preference given to those resident in the Greater Montreal Area.

There will be no compensation to the writer for any work that we might publish. All submissions will be reviewed by our team of editors. There is no guarantee that any submission will be accepted for publication, nor that any accepted submission will be published. Submissions can be made a number of ways:

by e-mail : the.write.place@hotmail.com (subject line: Submission)

by fax : (514) 383-6683 (with a cover page)

by snail mail : The Write Place, C/O 9770, boulevard Saint-Laurent, Montreal, Quebec H3L 2N3

Please include, with your submission, your name, an e-mail address where we can contact you, and a short bio that we might include with your story, if it is accepted. If you have a picture, please feel free to include it. If you want your snail mail submission returned, please enclose a SASE with sufficient postage. Any submission you provide should try to stay within a reasonable limit of these word count guidelines:

Short story :	500-2000 words	Postcard story :	250-500 words
Poetry :	3-50 lines	Book reviews :	500-525 words
Articles (by experts in the field) :	500-1000 words	Letters to the Editor	50-250 words
Advertisements:	increments of 1/8 page (contact us for rates)		

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Before publishing an Author's Work, a publishing agreement will be signed by both parties, specifying that the Author grants to the Publisher, and the Publisher accepts from the Author, Primary first serial, one-time rights and license to print and publish the Work in the English language in Canada. In no event shall the Publisher be obligated to publish or cause publication of the Work if, in the Publisher's opinion, the Work violates the common law or statutory copyright, or the rights of privacy, publicity, or any other right of any third party or contains libelous or obscene matter.

CLONE WANTED, APPLY WITHIN *by James Edwin Branch*

I was recently approached to write something about myself. Wow, that's difficult. Is it because I'm not interesting, or because I never do anything worth writing about? That could be it, but what really strikes me is that I might have to explain my creative process.

I suppose, in order for you to grasp what works for me, you have to understand where my desire to write comes from. I started writing poetry as a teenager. This was partly out of my need to express how lost I was and partly because my generation thought it was fashionable... you know, Bob Dylan and so on. I never did anything with my poems except look them over a few years ago and ask myself, "What was I thinking?" It was proof positive that I belonged in an asylum somewhere. By the way, don't let this scare you, because I think that anyone in today's world that thinks they're perfectly sane is probably the real nut case.

After the poetry, and somewhere in between song writing and books, I entered the Army and served my country. When I got out, I decided to go back to school and, for me, now 21 and single, that required some way to fit in and chase college girls. I know, I'm being honest, but someone has to do it. My big sister thought that a cheap guitar might help me along and gifted me with an old one she had found somewhere. It was horrible, but I got the bug anyway. Within two weeks I had bought a much nicer version and began taking lessons from anyone I could find to teach me. By the time my freshman year of college had passed, I was putting my poems to music. Did I have plans to become the next Bob Dylan? No, I just liked putting my thoughts to music. This actually worked for me for about 15 years, until I began to write country songs instead of rock.

You'd be surprised how different the two types of music are. In country, you're always telling a story. Someone

lost their dog, shot their wife and burned down their farm. Or was that backwards? I really don't remember, but I do know that it went something like that.

As the songs got longer and the story clearer, I realized I had to change. I tried writing some short stories, but they don't really work for me. When I begin to write, I get so involved in the story that it seems to stretch out to larger proportions. So, I'm admitting I can't write a two page tale, a five page tale or even a fifteen page story. If it's not over 100 pages, I'm not interested. So how did I get this way? Well, that brings us to the madness.

I think every writer has a little madness in them. I'm certainly no exception. I began to find myself sitting in quiet places, deep in thought, immersed in my story and contemplating the next scene. At first, it bugged me a little. I mean, it's hard to get chewed out all those times when your mate or friends accuse you of not paying attention to them. Yep, I really was like that for quite some time. Now I've refined that process and I manage to keep the writing in the early morning hours and my immersion in the late evenings when I'm on the porch. I enjoy watching the world go by while I fill my lungs with fresh air and imagine that I'm in another place. Oh yeah, I truly believe that we have to see ourselves in the story in order to get it right. Now you might not be the hero, you might even be the bad guy, but either way if you can find that magical place in your imagination that allows you to enter your story, you can write it, unless you have a clone that can do it for you.

Happy writing everyone, let's write something to leave behind this month. Something that the people who follow us can read 100 years from now and learn something about who we were. I'm going to leave out my fetish for clown shoes and rubber chickens. Happy writing.



IN MEMORIAM *by Rosalie Avigdor*

A light went out in our fair city recently.

Syd Bernstein, a good friend and fellow writer passed quietly away.

He was a modest man who loved everyone more than he loved himself, a caring and generous man who donated all his paintings in memory of Tilly.

Syd introduced me to Tilly through his unpublished memoir dedicated to her, the love of his life.

He was proud to become an honorary member of the Canadian Writers Society and we were honoured to have him.

Accepting of all the ups and downs in his own life, he always had a ready smile for everyone he met and found his greatest joy in painting and writing.

His winter scenes came to life through his direction and golden hands.

Although Syd is no longer with us, his light will always shine, through his paintings, in all the hospitals and residences, adorning their walls and making life a bit brighter for all those who will find solace and enjoyment in viewing them.

A good friend to many, may he rest in peace. He is missed by all who knew him.

I CAN'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT *by Cal Teichmann*

My thoughts take me back to the sixties when, in some regard, life was simpler and the only time I carried anything was usually my notebook, books, brown paper bagged lunch and, on occasion another paper bag to bring home gym clothes for a much needed washing or a plastic bag which I would sneak out of the house to carry my winter galoshes. Oy, how I hated those sloppy, black rubber, mid-calf boots with the horizontal ladder-shaped buckles that clanked as they swayed back and forth. They always made me feel like a self-conscious, awkward, slushy, big-footed nerd, not to mention how they never went with anything fashionable I would wear to school. That was a top priority for me. I had to look good at all times! Anyway, I digress.

Yes, those were the days when you were really free to roam, travelling light as a feather, without a care, just a little money in your pocket. Ahhh, to go about without much thought of what you might need . . . those were the days! Backpacks were unknown back then, but I sure wish they had been. Books were heavy and they would create such pain in my skinny wrists! The only ones who would be caught dead with school bags were the studious ones who never cared what others said. They were soooo focussed (a word which was never in my vocabulary, let alone my thoughts!)

Anyway, the seventies came and the only thing I carried was a man's very fashionable black leather European clutch bag for my keys, money, wallet, comb, cigarettes, lighter, subway tickets, pens and a little pad. It looked very smart and I was extremely fashion conscious, living in Toronto as I did at the time, a very sophisticated city where one had to look good! I did anyway.

The eighties arrived and fashion was at its height, in my estimation. Staying healthy and looking trim was the bugle call of the time! I needed to carry a backpack on a daily basis, filled with the necessities: lunch, a book or magazine to read riding the streetcar, subway or bus to and from work. Then, of course, to listen to the music you desired, you had to make sure you had a Walkman, in order to escape the crowds. Cassette tapes, of course, were a must . . . one needed a choice of music. You needed another clutch bag to carry money, comb, identification, cigarettes, lighter, possibly a pocket umbrella, a trusty agenda, Kleenex tissues, bottled water and other odds and ends that tended to end up in the bag, for those 'just in case' moments. Yes, all that to carry me through the day and then, on the other 3-5 times a week, another bag for my "Jazzercise aerobic" classes and, once or twice a week, my modern jazz dance classes. That bag

would hold my colourful spandex tops with bottoms to match, runners, socks, soap, shampoo, blow dryer, cologne, toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant, moisturizer, head bands (to catch the sweat), and towels (one for wiping the sweat from my brow, and another for the shower). Of course, I can't forget the plastic bags for all the items that needed cleaning. I didn't want to contaminate any of the clean garments that had been worn to the class, and I would have another change of clothes, according to my social obligations of the evening. I am certainly grateful that coat check rooms were very trendy back in the day. I had some place to dump all my necessities of daily living!

Once I got into the habit of making sure I had everything I needed for the day or the week, I started to obsess about the 'what ifs'. Eventually I found myself in the mental quagmire of "I can't leave home without it"! What a state I was in. The collection of my bags ranged from a simple backpack to duffel bags in varying degrees of sizes, fabrics, and colours to match my mood and social demands! Such a dilemma! I can't tell you what it did to my body! I needed to stay in shape just so I could carry all my baggage! This incapacitating fear followed me right into the new millennium. What burdens I carried, all to look good, perfect in every manner, at all times!

So what has changed since that bygone era? Well, I still carry a backpack, (more stylishly designed, of course), with fewer contents. It's easier on the back, and I still carry another bag along with it for my munchies, coffee, water (needed due to my hyperglycaemic condition) and, on two other days during the week, another bag for my chef knives, cooking utensils, cleaning cloths, apron, hair net or a baseball cap, depending on my mood (to make sure my hair does not fall unexpectedly into the food I prepare for consumption). And I can't forget all those bags for the different grocery, liquor and dollar stores! Yes, I still carry all those different bags, for my occupation and life require this of me.

Alas, the days where "I can't leave home without it" have faded into the ongoing sunset. By the grace of God, I can accept that my hair is thinner, and shorter (finally) and I still enjoy looking good with the finery I place upon my person, but now it's more for my enjoyment. No longer do I need to be 'perfect' in every manner. The only thing I really need to take with me now is my cell phone. I must keep in touch with the world, just in case it calls, you know! I'm thankful that life is seemingly more simpler again, now that I have a seven-passenger van that I can't leave home without, to carry all those endless bags!

The End (I Hope!!!)

(Clones, Drones and Smart Phones, continued from page 1)

the cancerous cull that is starting to harvest some of my fellow graduates. "Bravo," I thought to myself, but what do they do with their hands when they enter unfamiliar social situations?

My cigarette was a great prop, my 'go to' strategy, when I felt someone might be looking at me. Pulling out the pack, opening it, selecting my cigarette, closing the pack, putting it back in my pocket, fumbling for my lighter, lighting my cigarette, putting my lighter away, and then looking for an ash tray was my 'smooth move' until I felt publicly at ease.

What occupies their hands and keeps these kids from doing dopey things such as sticking their fingers in their mouth, or cupping their opposite elbow? The answer is obvious...they play with their cell phones. There's very little conversation going on as the gangs move past me. Most of them can't talk because they're wearing earphones, and have no idea what 'real world' noise is going on around them. Many times, when I have to step into the street, the person walking toward me never even notices because their nose is buried in a tiny screen as they doggedly text someone, possibly the guy right next to them.

It all starts to feel unsettling, being amongst these drones bent over their devices. They look like worshipers in silent prayer, each of them lost in their own thoughts, or sharing what pointless activity they might be doing later. These are the tubby children who used to instant message or chat on their parents' home computer while they listened to music through headphones. They've grown up, and are being sent out into the world to make something useful of themselves. Problem is, they've grabbed a smart phone and are just as insulated from life as they were in mommy's home office.

They're oblivious to their surroundings, and they couldn't care less. I remember that poor girl who was so lost in her smart phone haze that she stepped into the space between two subway cars instead of walking through an open door. She paid for her mistake with her life, and right away, not 20 years down the road.

So, texting friends and flipping through playlists can be far more dangerous to your immediate health than the long term health risks of smoking. This lost herd of wired kids look to me like a pack of silent lemmings trudging aimlessly toward a cliff, not the connected and 'with it' horsemen of

our illustrious future.

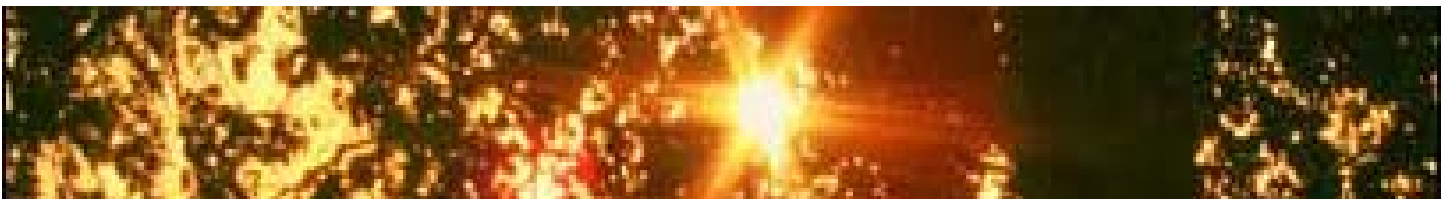
Since I'm early for my appointment, I decide to go look for the smokers. I know they still exist, because teenage rebellion is an irrepressible force, and doing something dangerous and forbidden is just too tantalizing to pass up. Since I had whiled away my youth on these streets, I know every nook and cranny within a half mile radius. I had exploited them all during my bad old days of ducking classes and just generally being an ill-mannered, wise-assed punk.

I find the fresh-faced puffers who keep the tobacco industry alive gathered in a circle chatting animatedly. They're on the little side street, behind the school, near the railroad tracks. As any typical teenager is expected to do, they ignore me as I walk by, so they don't see me beaming with self-satisfied glee. They just continue their slightly seductive, sophisticated banter, which is the hallmark of the cigarette smoker.

Smoking is an even greater illicit pleasure now, and I get a small measure of satisfaction noticing that they're standing in the exact spot where I used to smoke pot. I also notice that none of them have their cell phones in their hands, or earplugs blocking conversation. This is not the 'Tommy' crowd of "put on your eyeshades, put in your earplugs, you know where to put the cork." They're just acting like young adults, unwinding over a social cigarette, future health problems be damned.

The cell phone clones don't seem like the desirable demographic. No matter how technically sophisticated we get, our greatest asset is still our face-to-face skills. The most interesting people I know are either outraged, or outrageous, and this quality only exists in live, 'real time' communication. Knowing how to listen to someone, and react with your best idea, off the top of your head, makes you charismatic. Getting, or sending, a text asking: "R U 4 real?" just doesn't cut it, and is nowhere near as clever as the sender thinks it is.

I quicken my pace so this excursion doesn't make me late. My passing interest in sociology makes me believe my time isn't wasted because important decisions grow from simple observation. My own daughter, a tween who is already burdened with all my own unfulfilled ambitions, is approaching a critical stage. I know she will soon ask me for her own cell phone, I'm going to give her a pack of cigarettes instead.



Spotlight on SHARMAN YARNELL *by Rosalie Avigdor*



You probably know her from her shows *The Chris Robinson Travel Show* and *Showtime* on CJAD, but Sharman Yarnell is a multi-talented woman who, refusing to rest on her laurels, is constantly re-inventing herself, having worked hard to earn the respect of

her fellow broadcasters during her many years in the industry.

After numerous appointments to meet, along with the same number of cancellations, due to a hectic schedule and last minute emergencies on both our parts, we finally managed to exchange e-mails, through which we conducted this interview:

1) You've been in the industry for over twenty years now, quite obviously a large portion of your life. Was there a specific time when you first knew you wanted to be a broadcaster?

I became a broadcaster because Gord Sinclair told Rick Moffat to give me a call - he liked my voice. He also liked the fact I wore a skirt when I went in to see him.

2) You have a good foundation in education, with a BFA and a certificate in Journalism from Concordia University, as well as having studied Drama at The Banff School of Fine Arts in Canada, and also at The London Drama Studio and The Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London. Was there any one person who influenced your decision to direct your studies in that direction and did he (or she) play a continuing part in your development?

My wonderful mother brought me up with a love of books, music, dance and Theatre. Really worthwhile things for a little girl who loved to sing, dance and tell stories. At

one point, I had such a large book collection, I actually made up library cards and loaned them out to my friends. I would also write short plays and put them on for my friends - I played all the roles! My husband, who is also an actor (Walter Massey), was the one who encouraged me to study in England and to write. He is trying to get me to pick up my pastel work again - He is a solid support in everything that I do.

3) You have numerous credits besides your work on the radio with CJAD's acclaimed Showtime and the Chris Robinson Travel Show, including voice overs and appearances on national TV in shows like The Heritage Minutes as 'Nellie McClung' and narrating monologues on Mystery Ink, airing on The Mystery Channel. Other principal TV roles include "Melba" in More Tales of the City, Who's Afraid of the Dark, Urban Angel and, most recently, as "Mundane" in The Ladies Room. If you had a choice of only one, which of these areas of the industry would you concentrate on, either for the enjoyment you garner from it, or to master a craft you feel needs work?

I could never choose one - they all pull together to make me the person that I am. To take even one away from me would be like losing a limb.

4) You've taught others as well, having instructed Writing for Radio and Television for Concordia's Continuing Education program and Voice for the Montreal Radio and Television School. How do you feel about molding the minds and lives of these budding journalists?

I particularly love working with teens - I think if there is one thing I can do, it's to teach them that Arts & Culture takes front row in molding them intellectually and spiritually. I will be directing a musical with students at Rosemount High starting this fall and I am so very excited about that. It's wonderful when a student realizes that he can achieve something he/she never even dreamed of - have fun doing it. I will also be taking my Radio Project into James Lyng - working with students in a radio setting at the same

time teaching them about history and literature, etc. The project takes kids beyond the talk/chalk system and supports topics that the teachers are working on with them. Imagine a student who is studying Richard III, interviewing another student who is pretending to be Richard III - both will have to study the era, will get points. All done in front of a mike as if on radio - segments of the show will be put on the school's website.

5) *The industry is notorious for irregular hours. How do you manage to juggle your personal and professional lives and how does your family feel about your professional responsibilities?*

I am writing this after writing three articles, editing Curtains Up, taped Showtime, packed for a Press Tour that I am going on in about eight hours from now - prepared another Press Tour for July ... it is going on 1:30. That's simply my life. My husband is an actor and totally understands - there is nothing normal about us or our lives.

6) *You're associated with the Facebook site CurtainsUP, which has now expanded to its own website www.curtainsup.tv. How would you describe it and what were your intentions for it when it was created?*

Curtains Up was created with my two partners, Esteban Vargas and Carolyn Flower, to support and promote English

Arts & Culture in Montreal and the surroundings. It is doing enormously well and we see only good things for the future for it. It's kind of overwhelming when people come to you to advertise on your page and you haven't asked for it as yet.

7) *If you could have any one thing in your life, what would it be and why?*

I have all I need - support from friends and a brother and sister who I'm very close to. A wonderful man - There's nothing but Peace and a bit more of a caring society that I wish we could all be a part of...

8) *Where do you see yourself in five years?*

Travelling and writing about my travels - meeting more of that huge world that's waiting for me to discover it!

It was a great pleasure to speak to Sharman and get her thoughts on the entertainment world, from Montreal's point of view. Congratulations on a job well done. Montreal welcomes *CurtainsUp* on Facebook, and online, as the new place to post local theatre.

Personally, I would like to thank her for generously sharing her time and energy with me to finalize the interview, and wish her good luck with her wonderful *CurtainsUP* site, and all her future endeavors!

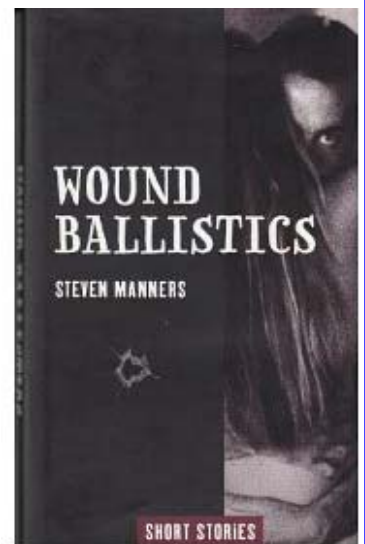
BOOKS

WOUND BALLISTICS, a searing collection of short stories by Steven Manners, is now available as an e-book. Short-listed for a Hugh MacLennan prize, the 15 stories in *Wound Ballistics* probe the existential depths of individuals at critical moments of inflection.

Stories include *Journey with Maps*, in which Ray and Margaret discover that the road ahead is as uncertain as their relationship and neither can find the way. *Commitment* is the story of Anna, committed to a mental institution by her caring ex-husband. But is he acting out of compassion or revenge? Ontario cottage country is the setting of *Summer Story*, as Maggie sifts through the fictions surrounding the death of her first love.

Wound Ballistics is "subtle and complex" (Books in Canada), and "perfectly paced works" that are "film noir at its finest" (Globe and Mail). "Manners could become a major voice" (Quill & Quire).

Now available from Garret Editions at www.kobobooks.com, or for Kindle readers at amazon.ca.



Spotlight on GERDY'S RESCUES AND ADOPTIONS *by Rosalie Avigdor*

I met Gerdy for two seconds about a year ago at the Sherbrooke Street Festival. The quick 'hello' was because she was so busy with her rescue dogs and greeting people.

This year was different. I had just put down my loving dog and was devastated about losing him, but I was very interested in learning more about rescue dogs. Gerdy kindly gave me her phone number and we bonded on the phone.

I admire her and her 'girls' as she calls them. She works endlessly in rescue and fundraising and, of course, transporting animals to the vet. She deserves our thanks and our support.

1) *How many years have you been doing this?*

All my life, according to my mother and aunt. I started at age two, bringing the next door neighbour's cat off their porch to my home because "the kitty was lost". They kept returning it. In 1994, I joined the Montreal SPCA as a member of their Board of Directors but went with the SPCA Monteregie on their Board of Directors in 1995. There, I was present at many puppy mill raids, and involved in their rescue program, adoptions and any help that I could give where needed. I also did my own adoptions out of Baker Animal Hospital, on my own.

2) *When did you start your organization?*

In early spring of 2004, I began my own rescue, Gerdy's Rescues and Adoptions, as a government registered charity not for profit, and we have been operating ever since. I might add, it is a seven day a week labour of love.

3) *Was it the love of animals that motivated you?*

Of course, but more so it was the SUFFERING of dogs and cats. Suffering in puppy mills and with back yard breeders, making their financial profit on the backs of helpless animals. The cute pups in pet shops have parent dogs living in filth and excrement, bodies burned by the ammonia from the waste they sit in, often blinded by the fumes, or eyes affected in some way. They live their lives as breeder dogs, in a type of hell, as long as they are producing pups well for profit. Often "retired" about four to five years old, but some bred well into their senior years, the lucky few are found abandoned in bad shape (puppy millers never pay for vet care, they just replace the dog with another to keep costs down and profit high.) Some of these dogs are old and need various surgeries when we get them. We see to it they are operated on, if needed, sterilized, eyes and ear infections treated, teeth removed or cleaned, whatever needs doing. Womb infections or tumors are common, and we have done whatever was needed to fix them. Heartworm infected dogs are treated by us if they test positive for active Heartworm—it is a killer otherwise. And increasing cases yearly here in Quebec! We have had dogs unable to bark. These millers, to keep them quiet, often use pliers in a do it



yourself debarking. There are over two thousand puppy mills in Quebec alone. It is a multimillion dollar in sales business. We have complained at demonstrations to the government of Quebec at various times that the puppy mill industry needs to be shut down as it now exists (I and a number of others of like minds) but, considering that sales tax on pet purchases is great, nothing is done. It is all about profit. I am trying to be as brief as possible here, but you need to know the IMMENSE challenges we have to face here in Quebec. In POUNDS all over Quebec, they are still using GASSING OVENS to put down unwanted dogs, for which they get paid per body by the municipality concerned. Farmers and people living in the country still use the old time get rid of a dog by a bullet to the head. Drowning pups and kittens, instead of sterilization or euthanasia in a humane way by a vet. I understand that ELECTROCUTION in country pounds is permitted as well. So much DO IT YOURSELF, the gas ovens are often inefficient and living animals are found amongst the dead, only to be regassed in the next batch. We have TRIED so hard to get municipalities to stop the cruelty but they want the problem taken care of at the least expense possible. It is the CRUELTY that is so heartbreaking. A dog dead, frozen to the ground when left out tied to a post on a minus 30 winter. Some people actually THINK because it has a fur coat it is impervious to cold! People who move and throw their cat or dog onto the street, or dump by the side of the road, to suffer in one way or another. Dogs given a little doghouse as a pup to live in 24 hours a day, 365 days (and nights) of the year, outgrow the doghouse and can only get her head in for shelter. NO food or water that is not rotten or filthy. See SOULA on our FB for instance. It goes on and on. We see only the tip of the iceberg of misery here, yet it sickens us. But we do what we can. If we look at only the broad picture, it is a defeating scenario, but if we look at a dog or a cat at a time, then we can make life better for THAT animal, for whatever time they have left. We are rewarded by the loving recognition in their eyes that help and

kindness and love has arrived AT LAST, often feeling them say "what took you so long to find me?" I could go on and on!

4) *You call your volunteers "your girls". How do you attract such devoted volunteers?*

I don't call them that! They call THEMSELVES Gerdy's Girls, the volunteers, and even the men in the group are referred to as HONORARY Gerdy's Girls! They started that! My core volunteer group, who have had my back and have given so much of themselves because they BELIEVE in our mandate, we will do whatever is in the best interests of the ANIMAL in question. These people (a few seniors or close to it) work with devotion, sense of humor as a working team needs at times, ALL VOLUNTEERS, - to do our website, schlepping boxes of goods to garage sales, unpacking, trying to sell, and packing up again at day's end. And so much more, one volunteer makes lovely occasion cards for FREE to send out as thank you's, birthday and anniversary cards, In memoriam cards, etc... Another is a stamp benefactor for same. I am surrounded by good, caring people who support what I do and try to help in any way they can, come up with new ideas. It is definitely not all me but those behind me who enable us to do all we do, as a team. People who adopt old or abused cats and dogs, the ill animals, to just give them a GOOD life before their end, so they have known LOVE even for a short time. My team have HUGE hearts and are very BRAVE, because not everyone will invite an animal into adoption who might only live a short time more. It takes COURAGE and these folks are very high in my estimation. I have the best Earth Angels who help in this way, they just arrive when needed. Even to help pay off the med bill for a certain case when we need help. Joining together, we make it through somehow and one more life saved. Mutual respect for a joint effort is our special glue that holds us together!

5) *There are many rescue organizations. What sets you apart from all the rest?*

We do REAL rescue, do not pick and choose and think which ones are most likely to go out fast! We have often taken the leftovers of other rescues, med cases, the old, the ones needing \$\$ help, who are suffering for want of a needed medical procedure or are injured. The ones needing help the most. If we happen to get a purebred it is not for trying! We prefer to take the ones that will otherwise fall through the cracks of rescue, and be destroyed or passed over. NEED is important to us. The one still there, that no one wanted to help.

6) *Do you have specific vets that you use?*

St Lazare Vet Hospital primarily, Vet Hospital Des Trois Lacs, Baker Animal Hospital DMV, Hopital Veterinaire des Sources, St Hyacinthe vet teaching facility, Rive Sud and we get calls from out of town vets for help with animals they get in as well, with no one to take over the patient.

7) *What you do with rescuing animals must have a high cost. How do you manage with the expenses?*

Fundraising - garage sales, donations from public. Fundraising events given in our honour, appeals for help in specific cases from the public to help a specific case. It is expensive what we do, but somehow we've done it for nine wonderful years. Our treat is to have dogs visit us at events that we had helped with various surgeries, and this LOVED dog comes with his adopted person to show us how he is doing! THEY NEVER FORGET US! THAT is the reward I feel as well as my volunteers. To remember how he came to us, a broken animal maybe in spirit and body - who has learned to be a DOG, happy, giving of himself, trusting again - life is good when I see that.

8) *Do you take animals into your own home as well?*

Some volunteers foster some of our animals. My Aunt of 96 and almost blind, who lives with me, has a rescued cat, but it's unsafe for me to take on any more at home in case she has a fall.

9) *If you had something to ask of the public, what would it be?*

For their financial help, we get NO government funding!! We have a constant need for boarding and vet care. We give tax receipts for donations \$10 and up. We welcome cheques made out to *Gerdy's Rescues and Adoptions* sent to Gerdy's Rescues, P.O. Box 21, Victoria Station, Montreal, Quebec H3Z 2V4, or see our DONATIONS on our website for donating through CanadaHelps or PayPal, www.gerdysrescue.org

I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to meet this generous lady—she is in a class all her own. Unfortunate as it is that her work is necessary in this day and age, her resolve and dedication to these animals should be signaled out as a role model for our youth..

Best wishes, and keep up the exceptional work.

Canadian Writers Society
For the Love of Writing

Rosalie, Joseph, and the members of the Canadian Writers Society, would like to take this opportunity to thank the Cote Saint Luc Recreation Department for their continued support.

SWEET JUDY ONE-EYE *by Andreas Kessaris*

I can remember the first time I saw Judy. She was wearing Capri jeans, which showed off her perfectly formed calves, and canvas sneakers. Her blemish-free alabaster skin was more pinkish than pale, and dark red hair was cut in a stylish mushroom, with one of the bangs so long it obscured her right eye, (her left eye was a soft powder blue). Her ears were large, and one of her front teeth was blatantly askew, but that only added to her charm. She made it all work. On top of that, she spoke with a refined English accent and had a strong, care-free, independent demeanour, unlike anyone else I had ever met, and a maturity and charm way beyond her nineteen years (she even had a large, red rose tattooed on her upper left chest). Because of her looks and outgoing personality, all the guys chased after her. For the same reason, most of the co-eds resented her.

I was in my first full year of university, majoring in communications, after transferring from English Lit, (which I had retained as a minor). I was a few years older than the other students in my new department, most of whom were self-centered and had the pretentiously inflated egos of elitist bohemians (*What? You like a movie that was made in Hollywood? The only great films come from Bulgaria in the 1930's!*), so had a difficult time fitting in socially.

At first, I resented Judy. Her accent made her appear a little snobbish and, when I spoke to her, she seemed to dislike me. The ice was finally broken a few weeks later when we were paired together by our professor for a team project. I made some kind of smart-ass comment about her right eye being covered with her bangs, and she pulled the hair away to reveal the scarred remnants of her iris. Apparently, as a child, while playing with neighbourhood children, she fell into a thorn bush and the eye was badly damaged. She had limited vision and cut her hair that way to hide her disfigurement. I, of course, felt like an A-One jerk and apologized profusely. She just shrugged it off, said it was okay, and took no offense. That's when I started to like her, and we started to get along exceptionally well. It turned out we had a lot in common and a great chemistry, once things got rolling.

I also discovered she was from Ottawa, and had picked up her manner of speaking while attending a private girl's boarding school in England for six years.

A short while later, I gathered up the courage to ask her out on a date. I waited for a moment when we were alone on campus and said: "What say you and me get together some time for a drink or maybe dinner and a movie?"

She charmingly looked me in the eye, smiled brightly and said in a mien befitting her accent: "I would rather not, thank you."

I've had women get uncomfortable when I asked them out and look away while replying with something like "sorry no," give me fake phone numbers, make a date and cancel at

the last minute or event stand me up (boy, I've been rejected a lot of times!), but I had never been shot down in such an elegant, classy way before.

I just stood there, unable to speak or even move. I had no idea how to respond. Finally she broke the silence.

"Very well," she said "go along now."

I slowly walked away and said "thank you", or something equally obtuse.

The next time we saw each other, there was not a hint of awkwardness from her, as if she were used to being asked out all the time and had grown some kind of immunity. She did not treat me any differently and that made it much less difficult for me. But that did not prepare me for what was going to happen next.

Several weeks later Judy approached me in the cafeteria line and said: "So, when are we going for that drink and movie?"

I was shocked.

What the hell happened? Suddenly she wants to go out with me? Should I ask her why she changed her mind?

Instead I said, "how about tomorrow?" as coolly as I could, which was probably not at all that cool.

"Okay, it's a date," Judy said with a cute grin as she handed me a piece of paper, "call me."

I unfolded the paper and on it was a phone number. Her name was written above it with an exclamation point.

We went to see a Warren Beatty movie and had a coffee afterwards. The date went well enough that we had another. And then another. Soon enough I met her friends, (none of whom attended our university), and we got along well. Judy and I even went to a karaoke bar one night and sang the duet *Summer Nights* from *Grease* together.

Once word got out in the communications department that we were seeing each other, I became the target of resentment and scorn from all sides. All the guys were jealous and the girls started to hate me because of my association with her.

Then something occurred that would prove to be an omen: Christmas break came along, and Judy went back to Ottawa for three weeks. She did not tell me she was leaving, nor did she give me the means to contact her there (one must remember this was the early nineties, sans email or social networks to keep in touch). I was confused and curious as to why but, after the holidays, she came back and we picked up where we left off. I asked no questions, just relieved she came back to me.

She took me with her friends to a bar on Bishop Street where every Thursday was ladies' night. She and her friends would drink for free and, when we hit the dance floor, Judy would feel me up and kiss me more passionately and aggressively than when we were in private, and certainly more than any other couple on the dance floor. We

ended up going there every Thursday for the rest of the semester.

Finally spring came along and Judy once again went back to Ottawa without saying goodbye or letting me know how to get in touch with her during the summer, leaving me perplexed. I had no idea what she wanted from me or what we were all about. I took it in stride, even going so far as to date someone else during the summer. But when the new semester rolled around that relationship fizzled and I could not wait to see Judy again, foolishly assuming we would be dating again.

When I saw her, she was friendly but she seemed a little different, a little colder. We had lunch together on the first day of classes, but she wouldn't hold my hand. After a few days of this, I finally confronted Judy at her apartment.

Judy told me she was involved with someone in Ottawa and was never looking for a steady relationship with me. Over the summer, their relationship had become serious and now she could no longer see me.

It was quite a blow, (I was very fond of her), but I took her explanation at face value and we parted on good terms. By that time, we had no classes together and I was spending more time with the down-to-earth students in the English Department. I knew I would not run into her as often, and I didn't for the rest of the semester. Or year for that matter. By the spring, I had not seen her in so long I asked Phil, one of the few people in the communications department with whom I got along and a friend of Judy's, if he had seen her. He informed me that she never returned from the latest Christmas holiday, and had dropped out of the university.

I thought I would never see or hear from her again. And I would always wonder what happened. If we got along so well, why didn't it work out between us?

About fifteen years later, I found myself suddenly out of work and with plenty of time on my hands, so I joined a new internet social network that was gaining popularity (and would soon engulf the planet). I first made "friends" with people I knew well, and eventually expanded to people I had lost touch with. Every time I made a new "friend" I would search their lists of "friends" for anyone I knew that I didn't find 100% objectionable, and a few I did. When I got in touch with Phil, I scanned his list, and low and behold there was Judy. I took a chance and asked for her "friendship" (on the site at the time one could put what the past relationship was, and for her I put that we dated). A few days later she accepted my "friendship" and that we had dated. But when I went over her lists of friends, things suddenly started to make sense.

I was the only man whom she had dated. Judy had "dated" several other people, all women. And if that were not enough, she had a recent picture of herself, a few pounds heavier, holding hands with a woman sporting a pair of round eyeglasses. And they could not have looked more like Peppermint Patty and Marcie from the old *Peanuts* comic

strip if they had been drawn by Charles Schultz himself.

After a while, I gathered up the courage to send her a message. We made on-line small talk and it was, well... it wasn't unpleasant at least. Finally, I asked her why she went out with me.

I could tell she was uncomfortable with that question, but she answered me honestly.

Ever since her early teens, she knew that she preferred female companionship. But it was a different time, and she knew she would have to go to great lengths to hide her lifestyle. In England, while at boarding school, she had a secret girlfriend, but she outwardly dated a boy named Simon, whom she referred to as a "twit." Back in Ottawa she had someone she cared about greatly, and there was another "dope", oblivious to her true self, who she dated as a decoy. In Montreal, all the guys on campus were hitting on her, so she chose me as her shield.

"You know," I wrote, "my involvement with you made me a pariah at school and prevented me from making friends."

She wrote back as only Judy could: "Don't be silly. You didn't lose anything. No one cared much for you anyway."

Okay then.

"Of all the guys, at school why did you choose me?" I asked.

Was it because she liked me? Because I was so handsome? Smart? Interesting? Because she thought I was a great guy?

Of course not.

The reason she selected me for the honour was because most of the students at the university were afraid of me and she figured if we were dating, they would leave her alone. Judy's logic could not have been sounder if it came from Mr. Spock himself, because it worked. Same deal with ladies night. The first time she went with her friends they were groped on the dance floor by a bunch of drunken jerks, so she brought me along so they would leave her alone and she could get loaded on the free booze.

I should have been angrier. After all, I spent a long time wondering why it didn't work with us. At times it tormented me. And I hate dishonesty. But I also understood how difficult it would have been for her to come out at the time.

Judy told me she was committed to her partner and now lives her life openly. There had been some rough times, but her parents and family had accepted them, and she is now comfortable with her life and how she was living it.

That was the last time I contacted her. A few years later, I'm not sure when or for what reason, Judy "unfriended" me.

It felt good to finally get to the truth, even after all this time, and I was glad she was happy. But, then again, when I think about it, she never apologized for using me either. And if one guy was a "twit," and the other a "dope," what was I?

KIC COUNTRY 89.9 MONTREAL is the city's newest and most talked about business this side of, well, anyplace. Our unique city is well known around the globe for many things. Like our Jazz Fest, for one (a no brainer there). Food is another (I've seen at least 20 different ways of making poutine... that's something to be proud of). And, for sure, the best source for comedy anywhere on the planet when it comes to policing oral diarrhea, stamp licking and tongue jousting is our own Comedy Festival.

There's one more thing Montrealers can be proud of. No longer is our city the only place in North America without a dedicated country music radio station. Montreal now has a 24/7 country station that serves one objective: play the best country music and do it for love.

Yes, our city beside the mountain now plays country music for the love of it. The brainchild of area Montrealers, 89.9 Kic Country, an independent business, is owned and operated by three country music musicians. No corporate profiling, market demagoguery or quick sales gimmicks. 89.9 Kic Country owners want one thing, to share their love of country music directly with the people of Montreal, without corporate filters.

For example, when one of Canada's best-loved troubadours passed away, 89.9 Kic Country immediately did a live, on-air music dedication to Stomping Tom Connors. No radio station can do that as quickly, nor as efficiently, with a sense of sincerity often not found in mainstream Media.

Country music is an untapped, unifying potential for Montreal. Attempts in the past to market country music failed because of many factors. However, for Kic Country owners, previous attempts failed because broadcasters did not believe in country music. Their motive was profit. Our motive is love. The love of country music with the belief that Montrealers have always loved country music.

"If dreaming where a crime, we'd all be doing time", is a motto the owners group live by. We believe that 89.9 Kic Country Montreal can become the number one station in, and for, the city of Montreal. How, you may ask? By broadcasting the best in country music, and having live, in-studio performances by Montreal artists, bilingual Dj's and advertisements, special country music programming for French performers, and participating in Montreal community fund-raising events. But mainly, because we believe in it.

We believe in country music, and we believe Montrealers love the same thing we do. That's how! Simple, direct and sincere.

Established and new businesses can take part in this new and exciting country music adventure while expanding their market, simply by advertising on 89.9 Kic Country Montreal. There's also another trend taking hold in radio advertising. Businesses and institutions can obtain spots to just "say hi" to all the city's country music lovers.

"Hi, Montreal, we (business/institution name) love and welcome country music back to the mainstream!" Love and acknowledgement has always been great for any business or service outlet!

Like the free-spirits that country music often emulates, 89.9 Kic Country Montreal is here to connect with all Montrealers. No matter what language you speak, or walk of life you aspire to, the love of country music is Kic Country's only objective. Shared together as one city, 89.9 Kic Country Montreal is a major player in connecting our inner musical child with all English, French and First Nations music lovers. A country music nation in, and for, Montreal.

For more information as to how your community group, business or institution can connect with 89.9 Kic Country Montreal, contact:

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NEXT ISSUE — Deadline for submissions for our next issue: **October 15th, 2013.**

We look forward to receiving your SUBMISSIONS . . . short stories, poems, articles, book or movie reviews, letters to the editor. We know you can do it. Let's get your name, and your work, out there for the public to enjoy! Be a part of our new and exciting plans!