



SUMMER 2009

The newsletter of the Vancouver International Writers Festival

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THE 22ND VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL WRITERS FESTIVAL PRESENTS INTERNATIONAL LITERARY STARS

This year has been a big one for Canadian literature and this year's Festival is going to be a big one for the VIWF. In May **Alice Munro** was awarded the Man Booker International Prize. By then plans were already well underway for a tribute to her at this year's Festival. A group of international literary luminaries including **Richard Ford**, **Ali Smith**, **Alistair MacLeod**, **Elizabeth Strout** (winner of this year's Pulitzer Prize) and **Joan London**, will gather to celebrate the life and work of our magnificent Alice. We are pleased to announce that Alice will be in attendance to hear what her work has meant to other eminent writers.

We have other special events as well. On October 1st **Margaret Atwood** will be here with her new novel *The Year of the Flood*. This won't be a simple reading, but something close to a theatrical performance with Ms. Atwood accompanied by actors and a choir bringing the book to life. And after the Festival on November 1st, the inimitable **David Sedaris** will return with a new book and more insightful, humorous ruminations on his entertaining life.

This year there will be something for everyone at the Festival itself. For fans of crime novels, **Kathy Reichs** will make a welcome return after a many-years absence. **Seth**, whose cartoons, graphic novels, magazine illustrations and book designs have been lauded around the world, will make his first appearance at the Festival. And the newly appointed Poet Laureate of England, **Carol Ann Duffy**, will be reading in the Poetry Bash.

The Bill Duthie Memorial lecturer this year will be CBC Television news anchor **Peter Mansbridge**. His new book takes us inside his interviews and encounters with the major newsmakers of the last decade.

Of course there are lots of literary delights to be enjoyed including **Lorrie Moore**, **John Irving**, **Audrey Niffenegger**, **Douglas Coupland**, **Bonnie Burnard** and **Leon Rooke**.

On the international front **Marc Levy** and **Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt** will join us from France, **Andrea De Carlo** from Italy, **Xi Chuan** from China, **Edmundo Paz Soldan** from Bolivia, **Debra Adelaide** and **Alexis Wright** from Australia, and **Eleanor Catton** from New Zealand.

The Québec contingent for this Festival is truly formidable. One of the most prominent Québécoise writers of the last half-century, **Marie-Claire Blais** will return to the Festival along with the irrepressible **Dany Laferrière** and **Monique Proulx**.

Our hometown continues to be one of the hottest writing spots in the country, providing established writers like **Michael Turner**, **Cynthia Flood** and **Annabel Lyon** and emerging novelists like **June Hutton**, **Gayle Friesen** and **Ian Weir** all of whom will demonstrate their considerable talents with new work.

Look for our full program in August and remember that as a VIWF member you're entitled to advance ticket buying privileges to make sure you don't miss out on popular events like the Literary Cabaret and the Solo Author Series.

See you at the Festival!

Hal Wake
Artistic Director



From left: Alice Munro, Tash Aw, Douglas Coupland, Richard Ford, Kathy Reichs, Margaret Atwood, John Irving.

Check out the newest information at www.writersfest.bc.ca

SPREADING THE WORD

The Festival's Spreading the Word outreach programs are living up to their name—inspiring young writers and readers who cannot attend the Writers Festival due to economic or geographic limitations.



Susan Juby at Gulf Islands Secondary School. Photo: Ilona Beiks

SPRING WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE SUSAN JUBY

This spring, Nanaimo-based author Susan Juby was Writer-in-Residence at Gulf Island Secondary School on Salt Spring Island.

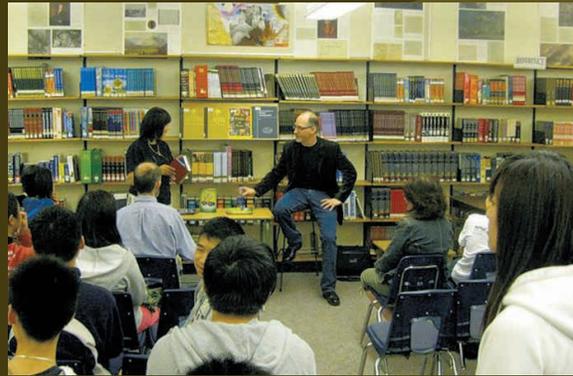
Susan is an award-winning writer recognized as one of the rising stars of Canadian young-adult writing. Her "Alice" trilogy: *Alice, I Think, Miss Smithers*, *Alice MacLeod*, *Realist at Last* are known around the world and became a TV series.

Juby drew on her experiences as a young writer, working with GISS teacher Ray Colleran's English 12 class every day for a week. By the second day word had gotten out about her presence, so Colleran's class got a little bigger, he said. But the English students weren't the only ones benefiting from the high-calibre literary instruction — Colleran himself had his notebook out at the back of the class. "I was doing the activities alongside the kids," he said. "They were a lot of fun."

Juby's *Alice* stories draw heavily on her experiences growing up in Smithers, B.C. She encouraged the Grade 12 students to consider their own local environments when writing. "This town is going to influence them a lot," explains Susan, adding that writing about one's hometown "gives a lot back if you're willing to risk it."

Susan says the overall experience "was extremely rewarding. The teacher, students and I made a great connection and bonded over our love of good writing and great stories. I also got to tell them a little bit about the highs and lows of the writing life. We laughed a lot and I hope they went away encouraged to honour their own stories and convinced of the importance of good writing. Several of them told me they found the program inspiring.

"This program is a tremendous benefit to any school and to the writer who



Don Calame at Gladstone Secondary School. Photo: Ilona Beiks

gets to participate. Often writers get only an hour with students. Spending an entire week with them makes it possible to tailor exercises to their interests and to find out more about the kinds of writing they are most likely to do. It also makes it possible to cover a much wider range of topics and styles. Being writer in residence at Salt Spring was one of the highlights of my year."

Susan also taught an evening workshop to local English teachers. The next Writer in Residence will be Rukhsana Khan, who will work with students in Prince Rupert this October.

Reading with Writers

This spring's HSBC Bank Canada's Reading with Writers program was more popular than ever, as requests from inner city schools for an author visit tripled, and all six authors were booked by the end of the first day's notice—with a waiting list for next October's program.

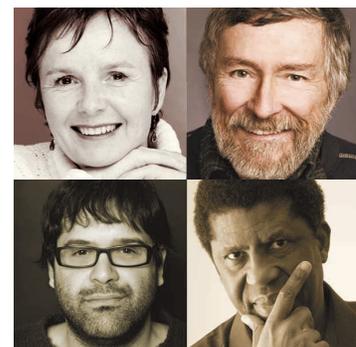
This year's authors talked with students about being a writer, the writing process and introduce them to their books: William H. New entertained 125 primary grade students at McBride School, K.C. Dyer held court with enthusiastic Grade 4s at MacDonald Elementary, James Heneghan cast his spell on Grade 6/7s at Mt. Pleasant Elementary, Gayle Friesen captured Gr. 7s at Carleton Elementary, Don Calame had Gr 9/10s at Gladstone Secondary spellbound and Meg Tilly moved some Grade 11/12s to tears and to write.

Thank you very much for the wonderful opportunity to have Gladstone students meet and hear Don Calame, author of *Swim the Fly*. As a result of the Writers Festival's generosity, three very lucky classes of students enjoyed his reading, were mesmerized by his presentation and were active during the question and answer period with good questions. At Gladstone, one third of male students do not graduate. Our goal is to encourage boys to read more—and a male author visit was just right! There has been a demand, from males, for Don's book as a result of his reading/presentation. What motivation!

Pat Parungao - Teacher-Librarian, Gladstone Secondary School

LA JOIE DE LIRE

This year **La Joie de Lire** (the joy of reading) will present the work of four authors from Québec to school students from K-12. Students studying French as a second or third language will find a colleague in **Elaine Arsenault** who grew up speaking English at home and French everywhere else and who taught herself to read and write English by reading English children's books. She will bring to the Festival her fantasy trilogy *L'or des gitans* (literally, gypsies' gold) and her series on the dog *Passepoil*, for younger readers. **François Barcelo** and **Sylvain Hotte** have also written for students at both the elementary and secondary levels. Readers of Hotte's prize-winning sci-fi *Darhan* series will be happy to learn that by October, there will be nine volumes in the series. Our fourth author, **Dany Laferrière**, who we've only known through his adult books, has now written, and will be presenting, two books for young people based on his childhood in Haiti.



From left: Elaine Arsenault, François Barcelo, Sylvain Hotte, Dany Laferrière.

PROFILE OF DR. YOSEF WOSK

Dr. Yosef Wosk is a renaissance man — a rabbi, philanthropist, author, community leader, religious art consultant, bibliophile, musician, businessman, and an academic. The Director of Interdisciplinary Programs in the Department of Continuing Studies at SFU, he is the founder of both the Canadian Academy of Independent Scholars and the Philosophers' Café.



Photo: Marion Wood Kolisch

Over the past few months, Yosef Wosk has received three significant awards in recognition of his superb efforts in the fields of education, philanthropy and community service. The accolades include a British Columbia Community Achievement Award, an Award for Outstanding Achievement from the Canadian Museums Association, and an Honourable Mention Program Award from the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education. Dr Wosk is an appointed member of the Order of British Columbia, the highest form of recognition the province can extend to its citizens.

Dr. Wosk is also a visionary. In 2007 he established an endowment to create the position of Vancouver's Poet Laureate — Dr. Wosk's donation, matched by the BC Arts Renaissance Fund and held in trust by the Vancouver Foundation, ensures that the poet laureate position will continue in the City of Vancouver. (The City's first Poet Laureate, George McWhirter, was recently succeeded by Bran Cran.)

Dr. Wosk's eclectic interests are reflected in his support of local and international communities, libraries, museums, archives and galleries as well as education, social services and the performing arts. As Paul Whitney, City Librarian of the Vancouver Public Library says, "Yosef is a Vancouver treasure. His passion for books, art, learning, libraries and museums combined with strategic yet extensive philanthropy makes a real difference in improving the intellectual life of our City and country."

In 2007 Dr. Wosk made a leadership donation to the Alma Lee Legacy Fund, the endowment fund of the Vancouver International Writers Festival that was established in 2005 to honour the Festival's founder. Dr. Wosk's generous gift, together with donations from hundreds of members, supporters, writers, and corporate partners enabled the VIWF to reach its initial goal for the endowment fund within two years of its launch. The Festival now has an annual revenue stream from the ALLF that allows it to present Canadian and international literary stars and exciting new voices, as well as supporting the Spreading the Word education program for BC schools and contributing to the growth and sustainability of the Festival.

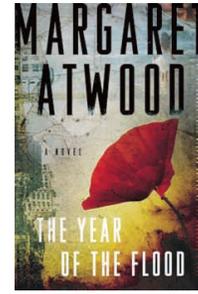
Miles Without Borders

Looking for a novel way to support the Vancouver International Writers & Readers Festival? Look no further! The VIWF is once again partnered with Aeroplan's Miles Without Borders, a program that enables non-profit organizations to pool donated Aeroplan miles in a self-administered, charitable account.

This year the Festival will be responsible for covering international travel costs for a handful of writers including US author Richard Ford and Cape Breton author Alistair MacLeod. Your donation of Aeroplan miles will help us with this extraordinary expense.

We will accept donations of any amount because they all add up. You can download an Aeroplan donation form at www.writersfest.bc.ca or call 604 681 6330.

The Vancouver International Writers Festival and McClelland & Stewart



Margaret Atwood

The Year of the Flood

Featuring a dramatic reading by Ms. Atwood from her forthcoming novel *The Year of the Flood*, accompanied by actors and a choir.

St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church (Burrard at Nelson)

7:30 pm, October 1st, 2009

Tickets: \$17/\$15 (students, seniors).

Services charges will apply.

Tickets available through Vancouver Tix www.vancouvertix.com or 604 629 8849
or from September 14 - 30 at the VIWF box office
(1398 Cartwright Street, Granville Island).



MCCLELLAND & STEWART

Volunteers Needed



Festival Volunteer Heather Capocci Photo: Lalo Espejo

**Join our team of 280 fantastic volunteers
for the 22nd Vancouver International
Writers & Readers Festival.**

If you have some spare time and would like to immerse yourself in the literary world for a week or two this fall, please contact us at kfowler@writersfest.bc.ca or call the office at **604 681 6330**. Volunteer Co-ordinator Katherine Fowler will be on staff in August and will be happy to speak with you about our volunteer opportunities.

VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL WRITERS & READERS FESTIVAL

The Vancouver International Writers Festival strives to encourage an appreciation of the written word and to promote literacy by providing a forum where readers and writers can meet. We produce special events and an annual Festival featuring Canadian and international writers for readers of all ages.

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PRIVACY POLICY

The Vancouver International Writers Festival is committed to protecting the privacy of our members and patrons. We will not trade or sell your contact information to other businesses or organizations.

The 11th Annual VIWF Poetry & Short story Writing Contest

Submit your finest prose and poetry to the Writers Festival Poetry & Short Story Contest. Prizes will be awarded to the top two entries in both the poetry and creative short fiction categories.

1st Prize \$350
2nd Prize \$250

Prizes will be awarded to the top two entries in both the poetry and creative short fiction categories. First place winners in each category will be published in subTERRAIN magazine ; all winners will be published on the Festival website www.writersfest.bc.ca.
 Sponsored by Book Warehouse

Contest deadline:
5 PM, October 25, 2009
Check our website
for complete submission details.

VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL WRITERS & READERS FESTIVAL

October 20 – 25, 2009

Tickets on sale to VIWF members Sept 3, school groups on Sept 8, general public Sept 14. Check the Festival program guide or our website in late August for complete program details.
www.writersfest.bc.ca

Again this year, tickets to Vancouver International Writers Festival events will be on sale through Vancouver Tix. Vancouver Tix is a ticketing service created by the Arts Club Theatre Company to serve the arts community's ticketing needs as well as those of the Arts Club's rental clients.
 See the Festival program guide and our website for full details in September.

Finch

I keep a crooked wooden bowl
 half full of birdseed in the garden,
 where the siskins and the finches,
 crossbills, cowbirds, chickadees
 and red-winged blackbirds meet.

Each day among the finches
 there is one – a female house finch,
Carpodacus mexicanus, I believe –
 who must have tangled with a predator,
 or maybe with a truck.

Not one among the others acts
 concerned. No one seems, in fact,
 to notice the black cavity that once
 was her right eye, the shattered
 stump that used to be her upper beak.

And no one gawks or whispers
 at the awkward sidewise motion
 that enables her to eat. And no one
 mocks, crunching a sunflower seed,
 her preference for millet.

Where ostracism, charity or pity
 might have been, there is reality
 instead. I mean that their superlative
 indifference is a kind of moral
 beauty, as perfect as the day.

If the red-tailed hawk comes by,
 or the neighbor's cat, they mention
 that to one another and are gone.
 They also say hello; they say I am;
 they say We are; they say Let's finch

and make more finches. But I never
 hear them talk of one another.
 They speak of what they are, not who
 they do or do not wish to be.
 That is a form of moral beauty

too, as perfect as the day. Which is
 to say they sing. By nothing
 more than being there and being
 what they are, they sing.
 They sing. And that is that.



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Robert Bringhurst will be appearing at the 2009 Vancouver International Writers & Readers Festival.