

# The Writescape Companion

March 2010

## Escape to Win 5 Signed Giller Books

It's official. The mystery location for Writescape's **Turning Leaves** fall retreat has been announced: Elegant and historic **Sir William Mackenzie Inn** in Kirkfield offers Writescape exclusive use of its inn and access to its spa facilities on October 29 to 31.

This 19th century mansion and its magnificent grounds are perfect for creative workshops, quiet reflection and intimate discussions and readings.



**Writescape loves contests, don't you? And deadlines--every writer's inspiration!**

Register for [Spring Thaw](#) now or for **Turning Leaves** by **June 30** to be entered in a draw for a complete collection of the Giller Prize shortlisted books, all signed by their authors:

Kim Echlin's *The Disappeared*, Annabel Lyon's *The Golden Mean*, Linden MacIntyre's *The Bishop's Man*, Colin McAdam's *Fall* and Anne Michaels' *The Winter Vault*

Register now for [Spring Thaw](#) or **Turning Leaves** by **June 30** for your chance to own these great books.

### LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER for one-on-one manuscript feedback and consultation

Join an eclectic group of writers in an all-inclusive writing weekend. Enjoy daily guided writing sessions and your private space to polish a draft or start something new.

**Deadline: March 30**



Writescape's [Spring Thaw](#) retreat at Elmhirst's Resort includes full amenities and cottage accommodations on the shores of Rice Lake.

**Don't miss out on your private manuscript consultation PLUS a written ms critique by award-winning writers and professional editors, Gwynn and Ruth.**

### Dream big

Imagine your novel makes the Giller Prize shortlist. You attend the black-tie awards, and hear them call your name. Buffeted by applause, dazzled by camera flashes, you stumble to the podium to accept. Write your speech.

### Coming soon:

March 27

[It's Not What You Earn, It's What You Keep: Taxation Tips for Writers](#)

Oshawa Public Library, Northview Branch  
10 am – 4 pm

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April 16-18

[Spring Thaw](#)

Elmhirst's Resort, Keene

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May 29

[Tasting the Page: Beyond the 5 Senses](#)

JP Fitzpatrick's, Whitby  
10 am – 4 pm

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June 19

[Reason to Care](#)

Exploring what motivates your characters and drives your story  
JP Fitzpatrick's, Whitby  
10 am – 4 pm

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July 18

[Woods, Water & Words](#)

A day of writing with Ruth and Gwynn at Glentula on Lake Seymour

### To lie or not to lie

Write a scene where a character meets someone they are attracted to, but who could land them in trouble with the law. For example, a woman who has cheated on her taxes for years is matched on a dating service with a tax auditor.



## It's Not What You Earn, It's What You Keep: Taxation Tips for Writers

March 27  
10 am to 4 pm  
Oshawa Public Library  
Northview Branch

Register for  
[It's Not What You Earn,  
It's What You Keep](#)  
with Gwynn Scheltema



*We contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle.*

Sir Winston Churchill

Being a writer means more than coming up with great plot lines and sizzling dialogue – if you get paid for your writing, it also means dealing with Revenue Canada and taxes. Want to stop the taxman from cutting into your hard-earned cash?

Participants will learn the answers to questions like:

- How does Revenue Canada define “freelance”?
- Can I deduct research expenses?
- How do I value a work-in-progress?
- Do I have to register for GST?
- If I win a writing contest, is that money considered income?

### Tax Tip – Did you know?

Payments from Access Copyright are taxable. You should receive a T5 slip to include in your return.

## Take it from Rob Sawyer: Put the stamp on the envelope!

On cover letters and queries, top-selling sci-fi writer Robert J. Sawyer counsels keeping it ‘short and sweet.’ Include only relevant details – your contact info, the title, related publication credits (no, don’t add in your high school newspaper experience,) related expert or knowledge status. A degree in astronomy or physics might carry weight with a sci-fi publisher but your monthly writing critique group membership will not.

You’ll find plenty of helpful advice from Rob's experience as an editor (for instance, always spell the name of the editor correctly) and humorous anecdotes on his website, a great resource for writers. [www.sfwriter.com](http://www.sfwriter.com)

## Road Trips: Mapping Time Away to Write

*That perfect tranquility of life, which is nowhere to be found but in retreat, a faithful friend and a good library.*

Aphra Behn, 1640 - 1689. A dramatist when most women did not aspire to write plays, Aphra knew the importance of a quiet writing place.

So, what about you? What steps do you 'map out' to ensure that a tranquil place brings out all your creative thoughts? Maybe you need the clatter and bustle of a coffee shop for your writing space. Maybe you need a window. We are all different, but we all need the right space to release our muse and *imagine*.

### An excerpt from Writescape's upcoming book *Your Inspiration Station*:

Whether you are taking 15 minutes out of your regular day for an 'Anywhere Anytime' retreat or giving yourself a weekend to attend a writing retreat...

Remember to:

- Remove distractions
- Commit the time
- Breathe
- Write

#### ROAD TRIP WRITING

Hit the writing road with these prompts:

- visit a travel agency; pick a place you've never visited—write about all the senses at play: sounds, smells, tastes, touches, sights.
- imagine a long trip in a crowded vehicle; add in an obstacle and a threat.
- You stumble upon an old abandoned road; describe it.



*When you come to a fork in the road, take it.*

L. P. "Yogi" Berra



And suddenly there it was, the perfect opening for Tommy's novel, lying at the bottom of his bowl of Alphabet Soup.

**Need a reason to write?** Try Debbie Ridpath Ohi's delightful website for writers: [www.inkygirl.com](http://www.inkygirl.com) with "daily diversions for writers."

Earn your own **1000 Words a Day Badge** to post on your website or in your blog.

**What is YOUR daily writing challenge?** Send in your suggestions and we'll share the most original ideas in the newsletter and on our website.



*Thanks Debbie!* for permission to use your delightful comics for writers.

### Checking your rear view mirror...

Take an old chestnut and polish it to perfection. Reach into your files of older work and find something you haven't seen in a long time. Preferably years. Stop wincing, and think about the reason you wrote it in the first place. What's changed in you, in the way you write, in the way you read? Rewrite the piece and see what happens.

### On the flip side...

Take the opposite view today. Delve into something that makes you uncomfortable. Question a belief or convention you've always taken for granted. Write as yourself or one of your characters.



## Turning Leaves Fall Retreat

**Writescape** is changing it up for **Turning Leaves**. You're sure to love **Sir William Mackenzie Inn**, a charming historic mansion. Elegant rooms, fantastic workshop venue, excellent dining and spectacular grounds will inspire and energize writers of all kinds.

Writescape has exclusive use of the Inn for our retreat, just one hour north of Toronto in Kirkfield.

Mark **October 29-31** on your calendar. You won't want to miss **Turning Leaves 2010**.



Experience a customized escape into the art and craft of writing with **Writescape**. From all-inclusive weekend retreats to one-day workshops, Writescape focuses on your needs as a writer. Let award-winning writers **Gwynn Scheltema** and **Ruth E. Walker** help you escape to write.

**Writescape retreats** are a gift of time – time to recharge your creativity and listen to your muse.

**Writescape workshops** inspire and challenge you to explore your craft in ways you might never have imagined. Writers at all levels of experience find support and inspiration.

*Escape to write ... with Writescape*

## Writescape Announcements

### Hot off the press

Sometimes, going on retreat is just not that easy: time, money and focus may make 'escape' just not possible.

Our readers and workshop and retreat alumni inspired Gwynn and Ruth to publish a pocket-sized retreat companion.

*Your Inspiration Station* is over 100 pages of ideas, nudges, exercises, images and 'writerly' words, all packaged together to keep the 'retreat feeling' going or inspire your own private mini-retreat.

The first copies will be available in time for the upcoming Spring Thaw retreat, online at [www.writescape.ca](http://www.writescape.ca) after May 1st, or in person from Gwynn, Ruth or Heather.

### Another Writescape winner

Congratulations to clever reader **Sally Moore**, who guessed the correct location of our Turning Leaves Retreat. She wins a \$10 Writescape gift certificate.

### Grants, Scholarships and the Importance of Putting the Stamp on the Envelope

Writescape Team news:

**Ruth Walker** has been awarded an Ontario Arts Council Writers' Reserve grant.

**Heather O'Connor** was awarded a Len Cullen Scholarship for Writers.

**Gwynn Scheltema** was awarded a WCDR Scholarship for Writers.

### Grants for writers

Ontario Arts Council offers a range of grants: [www.arts.on.ca](http://www.arts.on.ca)

Canada Council for the Arts has grants for writers at all stages of their writing careers: [www.canadacouncil.ca](http://www.canadacouncil.ca)

### Want to contact us?

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