

The Writescape Companion

Summer 2010

Summer Heat



Summertime, and the living is easy. But is the writing easy?

How do you find motivation when you are distracted by the sweat trickling down your spine and the clink of ice cubes and sizzle of the barbeque?

Ruth is heading to Saskatchewan to find motivation at the renowned Sage Hill Writing Experience. **Gwynn** will nestle in by peaceful Lake Seymour to let the waterway vista take her imagination away.

Whatever your plans this summer, take it as easy as you can. Inspiration and great ideas can be cooked up in the summer heat -- or they can arrive with the flash of a sudden downpour. The

trick, as always, is to keep yourself open to those great ideas.

Speaking of keeping yourself open, keep the evening of **June 22** free. It's our fabulous book launch and celebration at **Blue Heron Books in Uxbridge** at 7 pm. Details on page 6.

We've opened up registration for our fall writing retreat, and rooms are filling up! Don't be disappointed; if you are planning to attend **Turning Leaves at Sir William Mackenzie Inn** this October, reserve your spot with a \$250 deposit or email Gwynn and Ruth at info@writescape.ca.

We hope this expanded summer issue of *The Writescape Companion* will keep you writing through the summer. Look for our next issue in September.

Ruth & Gwynn

Magical History Tour

Music can bring back memories of summers past. Choose a song. Let it transport you back in time.

Return with the details of that summer. The squishy feeling of tar between your toes or the searing heat of the sidewalk on bare feet. The freedom of a day with nothing to do but read a book in the hammock. Your first sweetheart. Your first kiss. The smell of fresh-mown grass or the rain as it falls. The taste of mom's



potato salad or a frosty orange popsicle. The whine of mosquitoes and the sharp slap as you kill one. The red splat of blood when you do.

Life's in the details. Recapture them.

Coming soon:

Tues., June 22
Imagination Station Book Launch
Blue Heron Books,
Uxbridge
Time: 7 pm
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Sat., July 17  
**Woods, Water & Words**  
A day of writing with  
Gwynn at Glentula on  
Lake Seymour  
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Aug. 15
**Writescape's
fall/winter workshop
lineup posted at
www.writescape.ca**
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Oct. 29-31  
**Turning Leaves Retreat**  
Immerse in *Time and Place*  
at historic **Sir William  
Mackenzie Inn**, Kirkfield,  
Ontario  
~~~~

November 19-20
**Putting Flesh on the Bone
and 17 Ways to Edit for
Energy** – Writescape goes
to Montreal, Québec. C'est
bon!



**Woods, Water and Words:
A day of writing activities at
"Glentula" on Lake Seymour
Saturday, July 17**



Register for
Woods, Water and Words with
Gwynn Scheltema



*"You get ideas from
daydreaming. You get
ideas from being bored.
You get ideas all the time.
The only difference
between writers and other
people is we notice when
we're doing it."*

Neil Gaiman, English
sci-fi author

If you can't get away for a full weekend retreat, try this one-day getaway filled with inspirational writing activities to get you writing. We'll draw inspiration from the woods, the wandering garden paths, the lake and streams as well as the energy of writing in a community of other writers.

The day will be a mix of group-led writing exercises, situation-themed writing prompts and time to write and reflect. Gwynn will be available at several points in the day to answer any questions you may have about your personal writing project.

If you wish to stay, we'll finish the day around a cosy campfire to read and share, and discuss writerly things. A light lunch and buffet dinner will be provided, as well as an all-day beverage station.



10 am – 4 pm
Writing activities

5 pm – 8 pm
Optional campfire reading and
discussion



Congratulations to raffle winner Kate Arms-Roberts of Ajax. She wins a copy of **INSPIRATION STATION**, Writescape's new creativity manual. Her name was drawn from all the others at Writescape's booth at the Ontario Writers' Conference.



"Why can't you get your bursts of creative inspiration in your office like any other writer?"

INKYGALDOM: Daily Diversions For Writers
Copyright © 2007 Debbie Ridpath Ohi

Cartoon used with permission from Debbie Ridpath Ohi

Need inspiration? Look no further



Check out a sample page

Just
\$15.95



Pick up a copy of *Inspiration Station*, Gwynn and Ruth's new creativity tool. Think of this handy pocketbook as your portable writing workshop – it goes wherever you do. Bring it to the beach, stash it in a picnic basket, tuck it in a carry-on bag or pull it out on a lazy summer's afternoon. You'll find writing prompts and tips that get your pen moving and heat up your writing.

Launch details page 6
Pssst ~ Haliburton Bound?
Writescape's creativity book is featured all August at the R.D. Lawrence Place, Minden.

"I don't believe in writer's block. All writing is difficult. The most you can hope for is a day when it goes reasonably easily.

Plumbers don't get plumber's block and doctors don't get doctor's block; why should writers be the only profession that gives a special name to the difficulty of working, and then expects sympathy for it?"

Philip Pullman

Beating writer's block

Sometimes, you just need NOT to write. That's right. We said NOT to write.



Writing is not all about putting a steady stream of words onto the page. If the words won't come, maybe it's because you haven't 'filled your inner inkwell.' Give your fingers and mind a rest with the tastes, colours, sounds and scents of the summer season. Take a page from the child's book of creativity: play!

Poke a stick in the mud. Pick dandelions. Watch the clouds morph into creatures. Be 'in the moment.' If you forget about writing long enough, inspiration just might sneak up and tickle your muse. At the very least, you'll have a bit of fun.



Photo © Martin Tosoian

The Ultimate **Writer's** Fantasy Trip: **THE YUKON!**

Yup. You heard us. On the corner of Eighth Avenue and Hanson Street in Dawson City sits the quaint childhood home of Pierre Berton, one of Canada most prolific and acclaimed non-fiction writers. Those lucky enough to be accepted into this program get a writers' retreat residency with no rent or utility costs, plus an honorarium to help pay for food and incidentals. Sweet deal! <http://www.pierreberton.com/bertonhouse.htm>



Want to stay closer to home?

Try day tripping to Ontario writers' festivals

In the spring, go north to Cobalt for the Spring Pulse Poetry Festival, or southwest to Hamilton for gritLIT. In the summer, visit Orillia for the Stephen Leacock Summer Festival, or Marmora for the Purdy Country Literary Festival. In early fall, you could try the Eden Mills Writers' Festival or Word on the Street in Toronto. So much to see, so little time ...



"I think writer's block is simply the dread that you are going to write something horrible. But as a writer, I believe that if you sit down at the keys long enough, sooner or later something will come out."

Roy Blount, Jr., author of *Crackers* and *One Fell Soup*

The Ultimate **Reader's** Fantasy Trip: **WALES!**

Yup. You heard me. Wales has a town of 2000 that has thirty !! bookstores. One even operates on the honour system; no clerks, just a tin here and there for you to drop in your payment. My, my, my ... a fantasy indeed!



Hay-on-Wye is world famous for its secondhand and antiquarian bookshops. At present there are approximately 30 major bookshops in the town, some specialising whilst others carry general stock.

www.hay-on-wye.co.uk

Writescape doesn't know about you, but we think that any town that can carry off "whilst" has got to be a must-see for that word alone. Who cares if they can't spell 'specializing'?



Want to stay closer to home?

Ferret out local secondhand bookstores

Peterborough can boast five bookstores within one block of Water Street alone, specializing in rare books, out-of-print books and scholarly texts, as well as all your favourite fiction and poetry. Leah's Bookstore even stays open till after 11 pm on summer nights.

More beating writer's block

Mix up the way you write physically: change pens, turn your paper sideways and ignore the margins, switch from computer to longhand or visa versa.

Set a timer. Challenge yourself to write on a topic or scene you want to get written for a set time WITHOUT lifting your pen. It doesn't matter what you write – just write. Sooner or later you'll get past the garbage and sink into "the zone." When you get on a roll, ignore the timer and keep going.



"Try drawing or painting a scene you're working on. Often this will help free up your imagination."

Kevin Henkes, author of *Chrysanthemum*



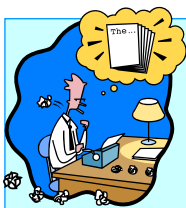
"I've often said that there's no such thing as writer's block; the problem is idea block. When I find myself frozen – whether I'm working on a brief passage in a novel or brainstorming about an entire book – it's usually because I'm trying to shoehorn an idea into the passage or story where it has no place."

Jeffery Deaver

LAST CHANCE! Giller Contest Countdown

Last call for your chance to win a complete set of shortlisted Giller-nominated novels, signed by the authors. Just register for [Turning Leaves](#) before June 30 and we'll enter your name in the draw.

All 2010 Writescape retreat registrants are eligible.



Even more beating writer's block

Write about something that doesn't interest you. Pick the most boring topic you can imagine -- dryer lint, shoe sizes, sock knitting, sewer grates -- anything that is as dry as unbuttered toast. Now, make it interesting by adding some 'spice.'

Write something that is 'wild and crazy' -- step outside the box and make up words, write backwards, upside-down, mix up your words. Or write about something that is wild and crazy. Have some fun with this!

Imagine you are in a place where no one understands your language. Write a scene where you are asking for help – since no one speaks your language and you must find another way to show them what you want.

Writescape Announcements

Poet Ingrid Ruthig attended the Spring Thaw 2010 retreat and wowed everyone when she read her work on Saturday night. It seems Ingrid is also wowing Canada's Poet Laureate, Pierre DesRuisseaux. He has selected two of her poems, "Apple" and "The Arbitrary Text Of Wreckage," for the Poet Laureate's official website. The poems will appear consecutively in June and July, on the "Poem of the Month" page. Ingrid joins poets Barry Dempster, Carmine Starnino, Steven Heighton, Mary Dalton, and others whose work has been featured on the site. Read Ingrid's work at www.parl.gc.ca/sites/LOP/poet

Want to contact us?

Writescape
C/O 101 Morningside Dr.,
RR3 Havelock ON
K0L 1Z0
info@writescape.ca
www.writescape.ca
(905) 728-7823

3, 2, 1 ... Blastoff! Launching Inspiration Station



Please join us at
Blue Heron Books
62 Brock Street West, Uxbridge
Tuesday, June 22 at 7 pm

Explore your imagination
with fun on-the-spot writing activities

Enjoy readings with award-winning authors
Gwynn Scheltema and Ruth E. Walker

Immerse in the music of singer-songwriter
and Writescape alumnus
Kathlyn Himbeault

~ Light refreshments ~
~ Free admission ~

Tickle your creative muse and
escape to write with Writescape

Ruth and Gwynn "Out and About"

Gwynn presented at the Ontario Writers' Conference on May 1, and received this note from the organizers:
Your workshop had one of the highest sign-up numbers and was one of two workshops with the most feedback responses and the highest satisfaction in ALL areas. Writers were obviously drawn to the practical topic and loved your hands-on approach of presenting/teaching.

Gwynn and Ruth were 'scouted' by a writing group in Montreal. The power of the Internet led local writer, Patricia Vollstaedt, to invite the Writescape duo to offer workshops in the Point Claire area. *Bien sûr!* they replied and booked November 19/20 for their first Québec foray.

On May 11, Gwynn and Ruth offered Part II of Creative Communicators for the Ontario government. Here's what one participant had to say:
This course was really great - one of the best I've taken. A very creative way to re-boot government writing. Excellent instructors (haven't had better.) I have raved about this course to my colleagues!
Part I and Part II are being rebooked for this coming fall.

On May 28, Ruth was a special guest at Uxbridge Senior Scribes writing circle.

This July, Ruth flies out west for Saskatchewan's Sage Hill Writing Experience. She'll be focussing on her ms, a retelling of an old Breton tale, Ivon Tortik, and expects to return with a full draft manuscript. May the muse be with her!

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