

Hamilton Mountain Writers' Guild *Newsletter*



January 2025



“Live first so you have something to write about! And persevere. It takes talent, which you can develop and train but perseverance will be the most important quality to get your work published.”

- Julie Weston

Welcome to our January newsletter!

In this issue, the Anthology team announces that submissions are now open, author Sheryl Fletcher shares her inspirational writing journey, you can read Lois Corey's prize winning poems and what inspired them, and Anita Joldersma begins her series on our Anthology journey with Book 1: 25 Compelling Tales.

If you would like to contribute to our newsletter, or if you have any comments or suggestions, please email Linda at lindalambert33@gmail.com

Happy Writing!

In this newsletter
you can expect:

Schedule
January 2025

**Submissions
Are Now Open**
Anthology
Team

**Writing
Journey**
Sheryl Fletcher

Poetry
Lois Corey

**Guild
Anthologies:
Retrospective**
Anita
Joldersma

**Bi-Weekly
Recap**

| Schedule: January 2025 | | |
|------------------------|-----|---|
| January 8 | AGM | Vote for Board Members & 2024 Summary |
| January 22 | TBD | TBD |

Submissions Are Now Open!

With the onset of 2025, submissions open for the HMWG's 7th short-story anthology, 'NEIGHBOURS'. This is an opportunity to improve your writing skills, practice the editorial process, and get your work published!

To submit your manuscript, email anthologyhmwg@gmail.com

Here are a couple of reminders before submitting:

- You should not be sending in a rough draft, but a finished good copy of your work (after receiving feedback from your peers). This is a good opportunity for guild members to support one another while practising editing and improving their work.
- Manuscripts should be double-spaced, up to size 12 font and be saved as either .doc, .docx, or .pdf files
- Do not include any personal details in your manuscript document, such as your name. This information (Name, Address, and Phone Number) should be in the body of your email, instead.
- If you wish to participate in the anthology but not the contest, state such in your email.
- All proceeds will be donated to the local charity Neighbour to Neighbour.
- Submissions close at midnight, March 31st, 2025.



Writing Journey, by Sheryl Fletcher

I first started writing at the age of seven, crafting short stories and poetry, knowing even then that becoming a writer was my dream. Later, I embarked on my journey as a novelist, inspired by my childhood love for Judy Blume's work. Determined to create books for tweens with a similar heartfelt tone, I poured my passion into stories that resonated with young readers. Seeing all three books published and earning membership in the Writers' Union of Canada remains one of my proudest achievements.

After completing my first three books, I dreamed of turning them into a TV series and decided to pursue a kids' production company. I was fortunate to meet a seasoned kids' producer who not only offered invaluable insights but also became a mentor. With her guidance, I learned how to craft a TV pitch and secured my first option agreement with her company.

We pitched the project, titled *Tween Queen*, to the Family Channel, and they liked it, taking it into pre-development for ten months. I was hooked—this form of writing was so different from novels and opened up a whole new creative world for me. Inspired by the experience, I decided to try my hand at screenwriting. I immersed myself in reading countless scripts, and after building enough confidence, I wrote my first indie screenplay.

As I continued writing and building my writer's CV, I focused on developing relationships with producers, steadily growing my contact list. I reached out through emails, phone calls, and countless "coffee trips" to Toronto and beyond to introduce myself and my work. This effort allowed me to compile a solid list of producers I could query whenever I completed a new project. A crucial tip for aspiring screenwriters is to stay informed about industry trends and know which genres are currently in demand.

Now, many years later, with over twenty scripts under my belt, I have several optioned projects with various producers, most of which have moved into pre-development. My first horror script, based on true events, is slated to film in 2025, and I feel incredibly fortunate to have award-winning scripts and shorts that reflect my hard work and passion. These accomplishments are a result of perseverance, dedication, and a deep love for the craft. Even during moments of exhaustion and frustration, I never gave up on my dream. If you persevere, believe in yourself, and stay committed to your writing, success will follow.

Skyline Hikers of the Canadian Rockies 2024 Lou Shulman Literary Competition

Congratulations to Lois Corey for winning both first and second place in the 2024 Lou Shulman Literary Competition!

Lois shares how her experience inspired her two poems:

"In September of 2024 I had an amazing experience with the "Skyline Hikers of the Canadian Rockies" hiking northeast of Banff. We camped beside the beautiful pristine turquoise Abraham Lake. I was surprised to learn the lake was manmade and that, in the process, traditional lands and burial sites of the Stony nation were flooded, the theme of the first poem. The second poem is more lighthearted and describes the pinnacle experience of climbing Coliseum Mountain and general camp life. Skyline Hikers is a non-profit organization soon to be celebrating its 100th Anniversary. The photo of me beside Abraham Lake, was taken by a hiking friend, Violetta Bubelish-Welsh."



Abraham Lake, by Lois Corey

The dark ominous mountains stand silent watch in the mist
over the watery graves below.
We will remember you.

Twas the Night Before Coliseum, by Lois Corey

'Twas the night before Coliseum, when all through the camp
Not a hiker was stirring, their clothes were all damp:
Their stockings were hung from the tent poles with care
In the hopes they would dry in the cold frosty air.
The toiletries were stowed, in the trailer fastidiously,
In an effort to ward off any visits by a grizzly.
Fuzzy socks were all donned, sleeping bags pulled up tight,
With prayers they would not freeze to death tonight!
The backpacks were stuffed with poles, band-aids, and whistles,
So hikers could dispatch in the morning at the speed of a missile.
The Campers were nestled all snug in their beds
While visions of Happy Hour danced in their heads.
Tent-mates in their long johns and I in my woolly cap,
Had just settled our brains for a very long cold nap!
When out on the campground there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my cot to see what was the matter.
My headlamp at the ready and turned on in a flash,
I stumbled to the zipper, and into my camp chair, I crashed.
The moon on the sheen of the crusty old dirt,
Gave a lustre of mid-day to objects inert,
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a little mid age hiker so lively and quick,
He exited the porta-potty with one little kick
More rapid than eagles to his tent he did aim
And he whistled and whispered and called me by name
See you in the morning, the mountain does call!
Now dash away, dash away, dash away all!
At first dawn we rose and rushed fast to the lodge
After tooth-brushing and showers, taken hodge-podge
Eggs, pancakes and sausage we imbibed in a hurry
Then back to our tents, we ran with a scurry
As leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky.
So on to the bus us hikers we flew
With our packs full of equipment, and box lunches too-
And then, in a twinkling, I heard at the wheel
Our driver exclaimed, "I will climb the mountain", with zeal.

So off the bus roared with the hikers in tow,
To our adventure in climbing, we were eager to go
To the top of the mountain! to the top of the plateau!
Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away, go!"
So, we all climbed Coliseum, even our driver so quick!
Like a mountain goat he went, lickety-split!
What a day we did have, from the top of the heights
Looking down in the valley at the beautiful sights!
We were grateful and tired when we returned to the bus
And sank with a sigh into our seats without fuss.
And I heard as the engine rumbled and we went on our way
"Happy Hour to all, and to all a good day!"



A Look Back at Hamilton Mountain Writers' Guild: Publication #1, by Anita Joldersma

In February 2017, Professor Barry Gottlieb began hosting meetings to give writing enthusiasts an opportunity to gather to talk about writerly things. He whet our writing appetites with his idea to create a publication of our own short stories. Over the spring and summer, we worked on our stories with an opportunity to read them in front of the group before we submitted them.

Submissions were limited to 2,500 words of either fiction or non-fiction. There was a contest with prize money offered. Barry arranged for the judging and for the submissions to be formatted and uploaded onto Amazon. Any costs were paid for by Barry. There were 25 stories submitted, and we were thrilled to see our work in print.

Hamilton Mountain Writers' Club (as we were known then) published its first Short Story Anthology Volume in December 2017.

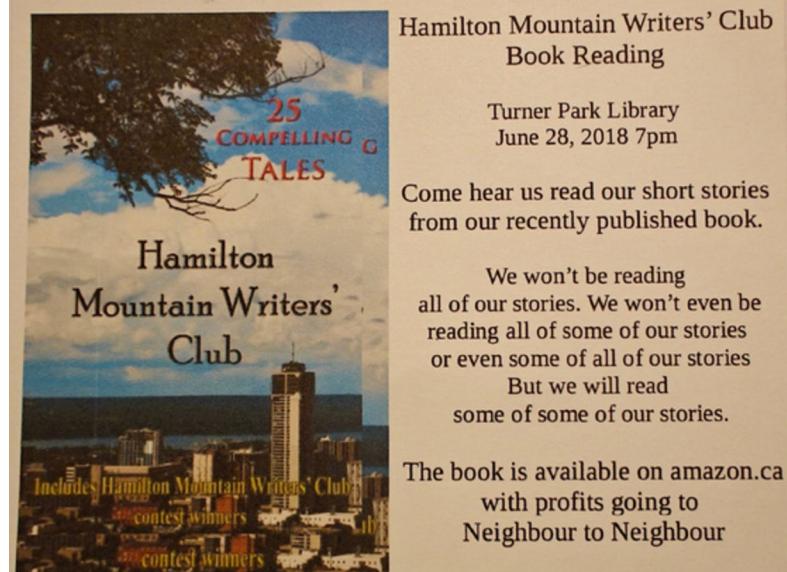




Reporter Mark Newman and the *Mountain News* were big supporters of the Guild and pictured our first contest winners.

By the spring, we created a 'Book Reading' event for the anthology that was held at Turner Park Library.

We were already looking forward to writing for the next book.



Hamilton Mountain Writers' Club Book Reading

Turner Park Library
June 28, 2018 7pm

Come hear us read our short stories from our recently published book.

We won't be reading all of our stories. We won't even be reading all of some of our stories or even some of all of our stories
But we will read some of some of our stories.

The book is available on [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca) with profits going to Neighbour to Neighbour



Bi-Weekly Recap: December 2024

Last month, we only had one bi-weekly meeting.

On December 11, j. l. oneill gave another informative presentation to help us improve our writing skills. In his guide to editing, he distinguished between developmental editing, substantive editing, line editing, and copyediting. He provided quick points on each of them, including helpful acronyms like **SWSBST** (Somebody Wants Something, But an obstacle blocks them, So they work to overcome it, Then they acquire or lose their want) and **GMC** (Goal, Motivation, Conflict).

Hamilton Mountain Writers' Guild



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