

# *The Quill*

**The Monthly Newsletter of the Monadnock Writers' Group  
March 1, 2024**

*Supporting Writers Since 1984*

The Monadnock Writers' Group is a registered 501(c)(3) organization.

PO Box 3071, Peterborough, NH 03458

[www.monadnockwriters.org](http://www.monadnockwriters.org)

[www.facebook.com/groups/monadnockwriters/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/monadnockwriters/)

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**Welcome to the Monadnock Writers' Group!** Since 1984, the MWG has provided community, inspiration, and support to the writers of the Monadnock region. All are welcome! Our membership includes writers of every variety: from poets to journalists, from mystery writers to playwrights, and from career writers to those just getting started. We meet on the third Saturday morning of each month, September through June, at the Peterborough Town Library, unless otherwise noted. Monthly meetings start at 9:45 a.m. and go to about 11:30 a.m., but times can vary. Meetings include a 15-minute meet-and-greet, announcements, a ten-minute reading from a member, and a main speaker sharing professional writing experience and answering questions. Coffee and light refreshments are provided. Our monthly Speaker Series is open to the public and free of charge. Our speakers are instructive and inspirational for writers of all literary forms, genres, and levels of experience. For more information, please go to our website at [www.monadnockwriters.org](http://www.monadnockwriters.org), or join our Monadnock Writers' Group Facebook page.

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## **MWG NEWS**

Many thanks to Jaffrey author and MWG member **Tory McCagg** for filling in as speaker at the February meeting after our scheduled speaker was unable to attend. Tory spoke to the group about her experience relocating from a city to rural N.H. and living on an off-grid farm, which she captured in her memoir, *At Crossroads with Chickens*. She also discussed publishing her novel, *Bittersweet Manor*, with a hybrid publisher.

For the next few meetings, our 10-minute readers before the featured speakers will be contributors to *Smoky Quartz*. It's a great way to introduce more members to the quality work being published in our online journal! Member J. Kates will be the 10-minute reader at the March 16 meeting.

Speaking of *Smoky Quartz*, submissions for the next issue remain open until March 15 – see below.

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## UPCOMING MWG EVENTS

**March 3, 2:00-4:00 PM — SMOKY QUARTZ ONLINE READING** featuring authors and poets published in the *Smoky Quartz Tenth Anniversary Anthology*. The public is invited to attend this free online event. Those interested should email [mwgsmyquartz@gmail.com](mailto:mwgsmyquartz@gmail.com) for the link to the reading. Readers for the event include **Liz Ahl, Joan Doran, George Drew, Carlene Gadapee, Elizabeth Gauffreau, Jimmy Pappas, Tina Rapp, Carla Schwartz, and Allison Whittenberg**. Artwork from the anniversary issue will also be featured.

**March 15 — DEADLINE TO SUBMIT YOUR WORK TO SMOKY QUARTZ** for consideration in the Spring 2024 issue. *Smoky Quartz*, an online journal of literature and art published by the Monadnock Writers' Group, features poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and a diverse selection of art and photography. We welcome submissions from new, emerging, and established writers and artists with ties to New Hampshire. For complete submission guidelines, go to: [www.smokyquartz.org/submissions](http://www.smokyquartz.org/submissions).



**March 16, 9:45 AM — MONTHLY MEETING WITH JOHN KNIGHT** as featured speaker. John is an editor who lives with his wife, Rebecca, and their two children in Chesham. He edits fiction and nonfiction for writers across the country and teaches a writing workshop at CUNY's Writers' Institute. He has worked for Farrar, Straus and Giroux in New York, and for McSweeney's in San Francisco. He grew up in Greenfield, NH. <https://www.knighteditorial.com/>.

## 2024 SPRING MEETING & SPEAKER SCHEDULE

**April 20: SINGER-SONGWRITER COSY SHERIDAN** is our speaker for National Poetry Month. Cosy has been called one of the era's finest and most thoughtful songwriters, and also "a buddhist monk trapped in the body of a singer-songwriter." Her music regularly tops the folk radio charts. She has released more than 13 CDs and written a one-woman-show. <https://cosysheridan.com/>



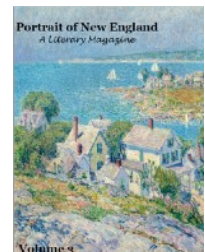
**May 11: Please note this meeting is the second Saturday in May to avoid a conflict with the Children in the Arts Festival. AUTHOR BRINDA CHARRY** will talk about her new novel, *The East Indian*, which was published by Simon & Schuster. Inspired by a historical figure, *The East Indian* tells the story of Tony, a native of the Indian subcontinent who came to colonial America. A story of loss, love, and survival, that is also a story of the early years of the English settlement of Virginia. Charry, a professor of English at Keene State, is an award-winning fiction writer who has published in the U.K., the U.S., and India. <https://brindacharry.com/>

**June 15: BIENNIAL MEMBERS' READ-AROUND.** Our second read-around of the year has the same rules as in December...please come, share your writing, and keep it to ten minutes!

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## PLACES TO SUBMIT YOUR WRITING

*Portrait of New England* is a regional-based literary magazine accepting poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction submissions from writers with ties to New England (for example: former resident, current resident, attended school in the region). See the first issue of the magazine to get a sense of the type of writing they seek. Submission window is March 1-May 31. There are no submission fees. <https://portraitne.com/submissions/>



For two decades, *Fourth Genre* has published two issues a year featuring the full spectrum of creative nonfiction, showcasing the lyrical, self-interrogative, meditative, and reflective, as well as the expository, analytical, exploratory, and whimsical. *Fourth Genre* is "devoted solely to

works of contemporary nonfiction, extending from the personal essay—including nature, environmental, and travel writing—to memoir, literary journalism, and personal cultural criticism.” **Fourth Genre** is accepting entries for its Steinberg Memorial Essay Contest and its Multimedia Essay Contest until March 15. <https://fourthgenre.org>

**The Indiana Review** is a non-profit literary magazine published biannually by the English Department at Indiana University Bloomington. The *Review* has been offering "carefully strange" literature since 1976. They are accepting general submissions of unpublished fiction, nonfiction, and poetry from February 1–March 31. Additionally, *Indiana Review's* Poetry and Creative Nonfiction Prizes are open for submissions until March 15. The final prize judges are Oliver Baez Bendorf (poetry) and Lars Horn (nonfiction). The \$20 submission fee includes a subscription to the journal. Winners receive \$1,000 and publication. <https://indianareview.iu.edu/index.html>



**Narrative Magazine's** Winter Contest is open to all fiction and nonfiction writers. They're looking for short shorts, short stories, essays, memoirs, photo essays, graphic stories, all forms of literary nonfiction, and excerpts from longer works of both fiction and nonfiction. Entries must be previously unpublished and no longer than 15,000 words. They seek works with a strong narrative drive, with characters they can respond to, and with effects of language, situation, and insight that are intense and total. They look for works that have the ambition of enlarging our view of ourselves and the world. The deadline is March 28. <https://www.narrativemagazine.com/winter-2024-story-contest>



**The Maine Review** seeks outstanding contemporary fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, including works in translation and hybrid forms. They are pleased to publish new, emerging, and established writers, and are committed to supporting representation, innovation, and literary artistry. *The Maine Review* is open to submissions from January 1–March 31. They publish issues biannually, in the spring and fall, and nominate for Best American Short Stories, the Pushcart Prize, Best of the Net, and other awards. <https://mainereview.submittable.com/submit>



Founded in 1959 by a group of professors from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst College, Mount Holyoke, and Smith, **The Massachusetts Review** is one of the nation's leading literary magazines, distinctive in joining the highest level of artistic concern with



pressing public issues. They accept fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and hybrid work. For complete requirements and guidelines please go to <https://www.massreview.org/submission-guidelines/general-guidelines>

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## MEET A MEMBER!

This month we feature MWG member Sue Snape. Enjoy this Q&A and brief excerpt from Sue's work! Please email Jess at [mwg.quill@gmail.com](mailto:mwg.quill@gmail.com) if you'd like to be featured in a future issue.

### **How long have you been writing?**

About 30 years ago, I signed onto a university extension course, Finding Your Voice in Writing. Before that, I had worked as a local news correspondent for several Massachusetts newspapers. I authored two historical books for the Town of Rehoboth, Massachusetts, in a volunteer capacity. I had a job in Marketing and wrote promo material. But that university extension course marked a turning point. I immediately identified myself as an up-and-coming novelist. In the years since, I have written several books that remain unpublished and many shorter works, with only a few in print. But I still work at it. One great thing about writing is you do get better the more you work to improve.

### **What are you working on right now?**

A suspense novel, *The Stairwell People*. In brief: A troubled girl at an elite ski academy interacts with a rookie police chief to forestall a serial predator stalking the girl. The title relates to the theme of "shadow identities" we encounter in our daily lives that drive our perception of reality and the choices we make.

### **Who are some of your favorite writers?**

I became hooked on Nancy Drew in elementary school. Later I recall seeking out every Agatha Christie and Daphne du Maurier book in the library. In contemporary crime fiction, my favorite writers include Michael Connelly, Harlan Coben, Robert Crais, and Michael Koryta. I like Paul Doiron's Maine game warden mystery series (the Mike Bowditch series), suspense novelists Ruth Ware and Tana French, and historical/biography writer David McCullough. I enjoy hearing authors speak at meetings and conferences, and I often buy their books, providing some excellent reading I might otherwise have missed. One such book is Richard Russo's collection of essays, *The Destiny Thief*. I was at the New Hampshire Writer's "603" conference in 2018 when Russo read "The Boss in Bulgaria" from the collection. I was blown away. I bought the book, and have reread that essay multiple times.

**Do you have a writing routine/process that you stick to?**

I have a home office and try to make a routine of sitting down every morning to write for an hour or more. How long depends on my motivation, and what else I have going on. It helps to have a goal. Submitting work gives me a deadline to meet. When motivated, I write four to six hours daily for whatever time it takes.

**What is your favorite/least favorite thing about writing?**

Writing keeps me challenged and engaged. Doing it successfully brings a much-needed sense of accomplishment. My least favorite thing? Writing that messy first draft. My impulse is to fix things as I go along. I can spend an entire morning playing around with a single paragraph, and end up trashing the whole thing.

**Excerpt from *The Stairwell People*: Chapter One**

On a gray winter afternoon, a few die-hard skiers dotted the slopes at Harmony Mountain ski area in northern Vermont. Hard ruts marred the groomed snowpack. Ice glistened in exposed patches. Along the tree line, shadows lay deep.

At the head of a trail aptly named Spillway, the line of competitors in the junior slalom competition was down to three. Over the PA system came a boomed announcement:

*Next up Penelope Prince.*

The name brought a stir of interest from the handful of spectators remaining. Rock star father, Olympian mom. Their divorce had made headlines. Their daughter, now thirteen years old, wore the signature racing suit of Green Valley School, known for turning out ski legends.

The girl stood out as a pork chop among her athletic peers. She was prone to skiing badly. She went by the nickname *Dusty*.

The team coach clapped his hands, hollered, *come on, Dusty let's go let's go . . .*

She burst off the start ramp, made the first gate no problem, and the one after that . . .

Oops. She veered off course. Her left ski snapped off.

She popped upright. Single ski. Go Dusty. She kept going. Flying over bumps. Gathering speed, faster and faster straight down to the finish . . . oh bugger . . .

*Slam.* Into safety net.

"Yea Dust-up, way to go!" hollered one of the boys.

The team coach swooped down on her. What was that? What was she thinking? Asking to be carried off the hill in the sled? A body bag not out of the question.

Dusty picked herself up. She did her best, okay? She yanked off her helmet.

A maintenance worker on a Skidoo returned her other ski and gave her a lift to the base lodge. She stowed her skis in a locker, collected her sports bag, and clomped downstairs to the restroom to change. She emerged twenty minutes later to find her eleven-year-old brother, Matt, hovering outside, waving her ski helmet.

"Forget something?" Matt dangled her ski helmet just out of reach.

He could be so annoying.

She snatched the helmet from him. “Thanks, twerp. Now could you please go bother someone else?”

“You remember it’s Friday?”

During the week, they boarded at Green Valley School, but on Friday, after ski class, they went to their mom’s place for the weekend. It was a vacation condo, not an actual home. They could ski there directly or take the shuttle.

Dusty settled a frosty stare on her brother. “What is your problem? You need a babysitter to find your way to Mom’s?”

“Where’re you going, then?”

“I’m going to the village,” she said mainly to put a lid on Matt, and because she could think of no other clever comeback to his prying. Harmony Resort Village had all kinds of fun shops and cool places to hang out with your friends. Of which she had none.

Matt said, “What’ll Mom say when she finds out?”

“What do you care?” Dusty turned her back on him, walking off.

“There’s a snow stalker hitting on girls like you,” Matt called after her.

Girls like her. She raised a fist at him.

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## ALL ABOUT MWG

- **Submit your bio as a member of MWG.** Are you a member? If you would like your bio added to the [About Our Members](#) page on the MWG website, please send it to Mary Marchese at [mwgwebmaster@gmail.com](mailto:mwgwebmaster@gmail.com). Bio: Maximum 200 words, 3rd person, feel free to include links to your website, most recent publication, or listing on Amazon, and social media.
- **Volunteer!** If you would be interested in bringing refreshments, being our ten-minute reader or have ideas for speakers or events, please let us know at [monadnockwriters@gmail.com](mailto:monadnockwriters@gmail.com).
- **Send your writing news or announcements to The Quill.** If you would like to submit to our monthly newsletter, please contact Jess at [mwg.quill@gmail.com](mailto:mwg.quill@gmail.com) at least a week before the end of the month. As a member, you may include your author events and announcements.
- **Who are we at MWG?** Established in 1984, the primary mission of the Monadnock Writers’ Group is to offer fellowship and support to professional writers and to those actively engaged in developing their writing skills. To learn more: [www.monadnockwriters.org/about-us](http://www.monadnockwriters.org/about-us)
- **Please explore MWG online.** Visit our website, [www.monadnockwriters.org](http://www.monadnockwriters.org), for news, member profiles, speakers series information, contests, publications, and more. Find us on Facebook under Monadnock Writers’ Group: [www.facebook.com/groups/monadnockwriters/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/monadnockwriters/)

• **Monadnock Writers' Group membership information:**

- Annual membership fees are \$30, or \$25 for students and seniors, \$50 for Patrons, \$100 for Benefactor, and \$250 for a Corporate membership.
- Individual members are encouraged to announce their own projects such as workshops, social gatherings, group support sessions, or whatever the writing-related endeavor. Feel free to take the floor at the monthly meeting, or contact the newsletter editor at [mwg.quill@gmail.com](mailto:mwg.quill@gmail.com) to send an announcement to the membership in the monthly newsletter.
- Bring a friend to one of our monthly meetings, and if they join MWG, you will receive a \$20 gift certificate for the Toadstool Bookshop!
- See the full list of membership benefits here: [www.monadnockwriters.org/membership](http://www.monadnockwriters.org/membership)

• **The MWG 2023-2024 Board of Directors**

*President:* Jesseca Timmons

*Vice President:* Rodger Martin

*Treasurer:* Carl Mabbs-Zeno

*Secretary:* Susan Gebo

*Members at Large:* Deni Dickler, Tori Haring-Smith, Maura MacNeil, Mary Marchese, Ronnie McIntyre

*Emerita:* Ann Day

**SUBMISSIONS ARE OPEN**  
**DEADLINE March 15<sup>TH</sup>**

# SMOKY QUARTZ

*An online journal of literature and art*

Please submit poetry, prose, and artwork by **March 15<sup>th</sup>**



Peterborough NH Post Office Waterfall  
Photograph by Alison Deland Scott

*Poetry ~ Prose ~ Art ~ Photography*

*Smoky Quartz* is published by the Monadnock Writers' Group and welcomes submissions from new, emerging, and established writers and artists with ties to New Hampshire.

For complete submission guidelines, go to: [www.smokyquartz.org/submissions](http://www.smokyquartz.org/submissions)

