

The Quill

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

Supporting Writers Since 1984

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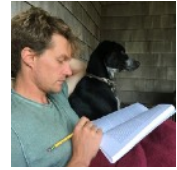


Welcome to the Monadnock Writers' Group! Since 1984, the MWG has provided community, inspiration, and support to the writers of the Monadnock region. All are welcome! Our membership includes writers of every variety: from poets to journalists, from mystery writers to playwrights, and from career writers 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 monadnockwriters.org, or join our Monadnock Writers' Group [Facebook page](#).

MWG & MEMBER NEWS

Rodger Martin will be featured at **Poetry Nashua** on Tuesday, April 2. All writers are welcome to share poems and discuss poetry on the first Tuesday of each month in the activity room on the lower level of the Nashua Public Library. Poets of all levels and ages are welcome! Rodger's reading will be followed by an Open Mic. For more information please go to: psnh.org/events/poetry-nashua-rodger-martin/.

Our March speaker, award-winning writer and editor **John Knight** of Harrisville, discussed the various ways that authors and editors collaborate, ranging from developmental editing that focuses on overarching issues of structure, voice, character, and audience to the minutiae of copyediting for grammar and style. He encouraged the audience to seek out editors in addition to beta readers and provided several avenues for doing so. knighteditorial.com/



The Wallace House of Pain, a novelette by **S.M. Stevens**, has made it through four rounds of judging and been named a Finalist in the Chanticleer International Book Awards. The book has also won an American Fiction Award and a 5-star Readers' Favorite review.

2024 SPRING MEETING & SPEAKER SCHEDULE

APRIL IS NATIONAL POETRY MONTH!

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.



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. Celebrated 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. brindacharry.com/

June 15: BIENNIAL MEMBER READ-AROUND. Our second Member Read-Around of the year has the same rules as in December...please come, share your writing, and keep your selection to ten minutes so everyone will have a chance to read! Our Read-Arounds are always surprising, humbling, entertaining, and inspiring. Come learn what your fellow MWG writers are working on!



APRIL EVENTS FOR WRITERS

The **Annual Exeter LitFest** on April 5-6 celebrates the rich literary heritage of Exeter, NH, with an annual literary festival. This year's keynote speaker is Andres Dubus, Lowell native and award-winning author of *The House of Sand and Fog*. The Exeter Literary Festival is free and open to the public. For a complete schedule of events, please go to exeterlitfest.com/.



The annual **Derry Author Fest** is Saturday, April 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Author Fest is a day of writing workshops, panels and networking for aspiring authors, dreamers and dabblers alike. The library brings in reputable authors to teach in areas of their expertise. Attendees are welcome to stay all day, a half day, or just drop in for a session. Book sales and signings are interspersed in between the workshops so you will have time to buy books, support a local indie author, and get some face time with the teachers. derryauthorfest.wordpress.com/schedule.



The **Jaffrey Public Library presents a monthly book discussion with NH Humanities Scholar-in-Residence, Dr. Carrie Brown**. April's event is Tuesday, April 9, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Each month, Dr. Brown facilitates a discussion on a title related to the theme of transitions and how we, as humans, transition through life and define ourselves along these journeys. She will engage us in a more critical reading of our texts, exploring language, structure, and character development. This month's title is *Rules of Civility* by Amor Towles. Preregistration is required. More information about this series is available at jaffreypubliclibrary.org.

The next **Monadnock Underground Writer's Open Mic Night** will be held April 11, 5:30 p.m. at the Peterborough Town Library. The event is managed by Monadnock Underground, an emergent community of writers, who are publishing work online and in various print publications and anthologies. They have published two literary magazine anthologies, four collections of writings, and two books. Their work celebrates the writers of the Monadnock Region and beyond. Learn more [here](#).



Spaces are still available at the **19th Annual Monadnock Pastoral Poetry & Writers Retreat**, April 19-21 at the Barbara C. Harris Camp and Conference Center on beautiful Otter Lake in Greenfield, NH. Please see the poster at the end of this newsletter for more information.

Prose writers are especially encouraged to attend. To register and for more information, please go to: monadnockpastoralpoets.org

Firelight Theatre Workshop's spring play, *Assisted Living*, opens April 19 and will run through May 12 at the Firelight Theater, 70 Main St., Peterborough. It's a deep, comic, and tender

exploration of found family, belonging, and trust. Firelight is looking for volunteers for House Manager. Please go to firelighttheatreworkshop.com.

Save the Date! The NH Writers' Project's Annual 603 Conference is June 8. The NHWP is excited to announce that this year's keynote will be American writer, actor, and director Ernest Thompson. Thompson is best known as the author of the play *On Golden Pond*, about New Hampshire's Squam Lake, which he wrote at the age of 28. He later won an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay for his own play of the same title. More information coming soon at nhwritersproject.org/.



PLACES TO SUBMIT YOUR WRITING

New Ohio Review Literary Contest. Three prizes of \$1,500 each and publication in *New Ohio Review* are given annually for a poem or group of poems, a short story, and an essay. Submit a story or essay of up to 20 pages or a poem or group of poems of up to 6 pages with a \$22 entry fee, which includes a subscription to *New Ohio Review*, between January 15 and April 15. All entries are considered for publication. newohioreview.org/contests/



The **2024 Whiting Creative Nonfiction Grant** of \$40,000 will be awarded to as many as ten writers in the process of completing a book-length work of deeply researched and imaginatively composed nonfiction for a general adult readership. It is intended for multiyear book projects requiring large amounts of deep and focused research, thinking, and writing at a crucial point mid-process, after significant work has been accomplished but when an extra infusion of support can make a difference in the ultimate shape and quality of the work. Projects must be under contract with a publisher in Canada, the UK, or the US by April 23 to be eligible. Contracts with self-publishing companies are not eligible. whiting.org/writers/creative-nonfiction-grant/about

The **Tadpole Press 100-Word Writing Contest** is open for submissions to its April 2024 contest. The deadline is April 30. And, they are hosting a “community write-in” where you can get tips and answers to questions you might have about the contest. Have some face-to-face time with the judges and get your questions answered straight from the source. They'll share behind-the-scenes insights to help you craft your best piece, saving some quiet writing time to work on your entry. Find details on the contest and register for the April 8 community write-in here: tadpolepress.com/100-word-writing-contest

The **Ghost Story Supernatural Fiction Award** contest for full-length short stories is now open. Ghost stories are welcome, of course—but your submission may involve *any* paranormal or



supernatural theme, as well as magic realism. They're looking for fine writing, fresh perspectives, and maybe a few surprises in the field of supernatural fiction. Story length should run between 1,500 and 10,000 words. ALL submissions will be read and evaluated. This competition typically draws more than 300 submissions from all around the world. The winning stories are selected by the editors of The Ghost Story, and contest winners have included writers with a long history of publishing their work and/or winning awards, as well as writers who have never before published a story. theghoststory.com.

The ***F(r)iction Spring 2024 Contest*** seeks work that actively pushes boundaries, that forces people to question traditions and tastes. If your work takes risks, they want to read it. They like strong narratives and stories they haven't seen before. They strongly recommend checking out a past issue of *F(r)iction* before submitting to the contest to get an idea of their general publishing aesthetic. Issues are available in their [shop](#). More info on the contest and what they're looking for in short stories, flash fiction, poetry and creative nonfiction here: frictionlit.org.



The **Montreal International Poetry Prize** is committed to encouraging the creation of original works of poetry, to building international readership, and to exploring the world's Englishes. The



Montreal Prize awards one prize of \$20,000 CAD to a poet for a single poem of 40 or fewer lines. A jury of internationally reputed poets and critics selects a shortlist of approximately 60 poems, from which a judge chooses one winner. The shortlist is published in *The Montreal Poetry Prize Anthology*. The prize is run by the Department of English at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. Every year, jurors and finalists of the Montreal Prize share their work in [Fluid Vessels](#), their online reading series. All are welcome to listen and join the discussion.

montrealpoetryprize.com/

The **Evil Cookie Publishing** is the chaotic publishing house of Extreme Horror Author and Artist, **K. Trap Jones**. After a decade of writing extreme horror, Trap decided to throw his hat into the publishing



ring of hell. The Evil Cookie Publishing is structured to specialize in creating high-quality, gore-infested, fast-paced novels/novellas and anthologies including some of the best writers in the industry. Evil Cookie accepts novellas and short stories. For submissions information, please go to: theevilcookie.com/pages/about.

MEET A MEMBER: DENNIS CALDWELL

This month we feature poet and writer Dennis Caldwell. Denny is a pilot, a poet, a longtime MWG member, and our former treasurer. Denny, who recently read an excerpt of his work as Ten-Minute Reader, is working on a memoir about his experiences in Vietnam. Please email Jess at mwg.quill@gmail.com if you'd like to be featured in a future issue.

How long have you been writing?

In the early 1980s, I was in an administrative position of an air charter company that used a continually changing fleet of airplanes. I was required to create flight operations, training, and maintenance manuals specific to each type of airplane to meet FAA requirements, yet satisfy "local interpretations" of those national standards. Having the local inspector approve a newly created manual (and revisions to existing ones) was gratifying. I also instituted an occasional company newsletter where operational information was shared more formally rather than word of mouth. In late 1989 my career and life took a different track when I moved to New Hampshire, became a single dad with no job and a young daughter. I managed to find a daytime factory job and began to write just for myself, journaling my way through periods of depression, uncertainty, reflection on events, memories of both bad and good times. That writing helped lay the groundwork for later writing. Eventually I married again, and found work again as a pilot until I retired in 2006. Around 2010, a chance encounter with Tina Rapp at the Bagel Mill led me to become a member of MWG, and enabled me to connect with many people. Local writing programs sponsored by Sharon Arts Center and Keene State College CALL program helped me "up my game" in addition to the benefits from attending MWG meetings and hearing phenomenal speakers.

What are you working on right now?

I've been a factory worker, pilot, anti-war and voting rights activist, airport maintenance worker, and firefighter. I write from some of those experiences. My core project is a personal narrative having to do with war and its effects on participants, loved ones, and acquaintances, writing from the perspective of an army helicopter pilot for a year in Vietnam. In a period of post-Vietnam depression and isolation, I revealed to an old high school friend some of my dark moments and he encouraged me to finish out my active duty and once released, I would be able to speak my truth from a place of honor. I have not finished, though, and I am writing the story of my flight school roommate who was killed only about six weeks after he arrived in country. His death left a swath of heartache and tragedy through his surviving family and home town in Kentucky.

Who are some of your favorite writers?

Ernest K. Gann (*Fate Is the Hunter*), Guy Murchie (*Song of the Sky*), Dag Hammarskjöld (*Markings*), Anne Morrow Lindbergh (*Listen! The Wind*), and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (*Wind, Sand and Stars*) are my top "traditional" writers. When I became involved with Monadnock Writers' Group, the poetry of Rodger Martin and Maura MacNeil caught my attention and opened my thinking on alternate ways to express what I am trying to say. I am drawn to Billy

Collins, Ted Kooser, Yusef Komunyakaa, New England poets Charles Coe, Pam Bernard, John Hodgen, Susan Roney-O'Brien, and others.

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

That I stick to? That's an area that needs improvement. Recently I have tried waking at 5:00 a.m. before other responsibilities take control of the day. In winter, it takes 15 or so minutes to clean out and restart the woodstove and fix a cup of coffee, and often I can get two or more hours of dedicated time. I have a few dozen writing projects that are in progress. I often don't know which specific work I will work on until I review the list and something strikes a chord. On occasion, a particular work nags at me upon waking and I go straight to work on it.

What is your favorite/least favorite thing about writing?

My favorite thing about writing is when something I have written resonates emotionally with a listener or reader. I have been reviled by some, threatened by an old war buddy, and commended by other readers of an article I wrote about a Vietnam experience. I was saddened by negative responses but happy that my work was published and I feel like I was heard.

Excerpt from *Town Without a Bell* by Denny Caldwell

A town without a bell
is a town without a heartbeat,
a toller with no work,
despite the need for people to gather.
When all else fails, how will the town warn
of imminent floods, summon help to fight fires,
honor history, cast out demons?
How can the town announce
town meetings, fairs and feasts,
coronations,
calls to court, hangings,
the beginning -and ending- of wars?
How will we be called to funerals,
three times two tolls for a woman,
three times three for a man?
How will we know there is news,
a marriage to celebrate, a birth to rejoice?
How will we know when it is time
to go home?

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. 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.
- **Send your writing news or announcements to *The Quill*.** If you would like to submit to our monthly newsletter, please contact Jess at meg.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: monadnockwriters.org/about-us
- **Please explore MWG online.** Visit our website, monadnockwriters.org, for news, member profiles, speakers series information, contests, publications, and more. Find us on Facebook under Monadnock Writers' Group: 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 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: 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 McIntire

Emerita: Ann Day



THE NINETEENTH ANNUAL
MONADNOCK
PASTORAL POETRY
RETREAT

April 19-21, 2024

WORKSHOPS IN:

- POETRY
- FICTION
- PERSONAL NARRATIVE

THIS SPRING, JOIN POETS AND WRITERS FROM ACROSS NEW ENGLAND FOR A WEEKEND
OF COLLEGIALLY AND WRITING WORKSHOPS AT THE BARBARA C. HARRIS CENTER IN
GREENFIELD, NH

FOR WORKSHOP INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION DETAILS, SEE OUR WEBSITE:
[HTTPS://MONADNOCKPASTORALPOETS.ORG](https://monadnockpastoralpoets.org)

