

Stories

poetry, prose, and personal reflection

Vol. 12 — September 2022



*The scariest moment is always
just before you start.*

~ Stephen King

Stories

poetry, prose, and personal reflection

Publisher

Lisa Browning

ONE THOUSAND TREES

3-304 Stone Road West, Suite 338

Guelph ON N1G 4W4

Email: lisa@onethousandtrees.com

Phone: 519-362-5494

Stories is published monthly, on the first day of each month. Submissions are due on the 25th of the month preceding the month of publication.

Please submit by email, as a Word doc attachment. Please do not send PDFs. If you are including photos/illustrations to accompany your submission, please put a placeholder in your word doc, indicating where each graphic is to be placed, and send the graphics themselves as JPEG attachments. Please do not embed graphics in your word doc.

First-time writers for *Stories* are asked to send a brief (two to three sentence) bio with their submission.

Because of difficulties with some articles sent in the body of emails, we cannot accept submissions in this format. Please send a word doc attachment.

All contributors retain the copyright to their work. No material in *Stories* magazine can be reprinted in any format, without the written consent of the contributor.



Table of Contents

Articles and Personal Reflection

What Did You Say? by Bill Brubacher.....	6
I Forgive You, by Colleen Heighington	8
Clock Tower Tour, Part 1, by Clay Williams	1
Two Blue Chairs, by Arlene Spencer	8
Questions and Answers with Anna Neriya Abdulla	10

Poetry

Friend Amid Grass, by Arlene Davies-Fuhr	9
Stillness, by Arlene Davies-Fuhr.....	3
once upon a time, by Edward Pickersgill	12

Regular Features

The Story Behind the Story: <i>What a Gift!</i>	11
This Month's Contributors	14

Publisher's Ponderings



It isn't lost on me that the first article in this issue is about clocks (in other words, time) ... and that I had planned on writing an article about time, until I ran out of ...

You guessed it!

In my defence, my life has been more chaotic than normal, what with major home renovations happening since mid-July. So beautiful a transformation, but my goodness, what a massive amount of work! Not that I'm doing the actual work, but I am moving items from room to room, then purging, reorganizing, etc etc.

It symbolizes a new beginning for me, as the world is now opening up again after 2 1/2 years of Covid-imposed isolation. I'm so grateful for that reopening ... for being able to be around people again.

One of the most exciting developments in that regard is a new storytelling venture entitled *Stories on Stage*. The first show takes place on Monday, September 12, and features five awesome people sharing their stories of inspiration, as well as an equally awesome musician! See page 10 for details, or visit www.storiesonstage.ca.

Another inspirational storytelling venture I'm excited about is the "hot off the press" publication of *What A Gift!* See page 8 for details on that.

I am looking forward to many new ventures, starting this fall. I am looking forward to the end of home renovations too, so that I can devote more of my time to those ventures!

As always, if you have a story to tell, but you're not sure how to go about it, please contact me at lisa@onethousandtrees.com. It would be my honour to assist you.

Lisa



Clock Tower Tour

Clay Williams

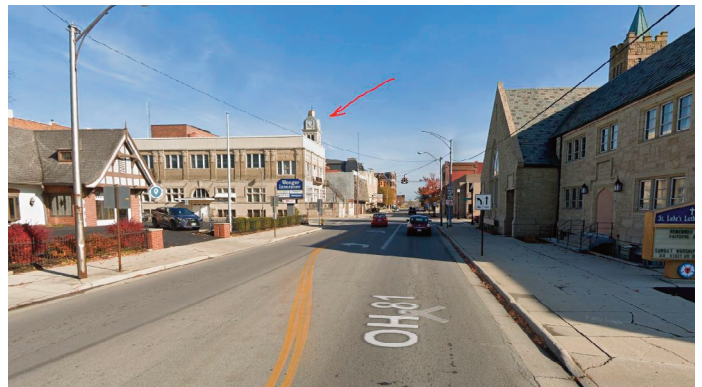
In the summer of 2022 I hopped on my motorcycle and headed south for an eleven-day road trip that would take me to the Gulf of Mexico and back, through 13 U.S. states and past 50 clock towers and town clocks. This is the first chapter in a series of stories about that 5300 km road trip that I've called The Clock Tower Tour.

Part 1: Planning a long road trip

Way back in 2017 I took a long motorcycle road trip from Waterloo to Saskatoon and back, and wrote a book about it titled Ten Days to Get Here. The book was a story about the motorcycle trip halfway across our beautiful country, it was an autobiography and it was an exploration of my relationships with my two brothers who died by suicide and my father who lost his battle with lung cancer in 2001. After finishing that trip and while I was writing the book, I started planning my next road trip. It was going to be a camping trip on the bike across upstate New York to Massachusetts and then back through northern Pennsylvania. Conjuring up romantic images from Easy Rider and Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, I mapped out a route that meandered through a bunch of little towns on secondary highways. The goal was to enjoy the journey, it wasn't about any destination.



As I was laying out a route, I started looking at it in zoomed-in detail using google street view, so that I would get an idea of what it would feel like as I rode through these small towns. I wasn't worried about stop signs and traffic lights slowing me down, in fact I wanted to stop and look around during the trip, I didn't want to simply blast through these little towns on an expressway. As I virtually traveled through some of the towns I noticed a few of them had town clocks. Some were clock towers on the local municipal building, some with more simple clocks on a post. So I started intentionally looking for a town clock in each of the towns and I was really surprised to see that most of the little towns had some sort of public clock in the downtown area. My initial goal for the trip was to take secondary highways so I could see what the real people were doing, ride through small towns with the mom & pop businesses and stop in a few along the way, maybe even get a feel for the heartbeat of the places I go through. After seeing that there were clocks in many of the small towns, I added another goal: to find the town clock or clock tower in each of the towns that I rode through. That was the start of my interest in clock towers.

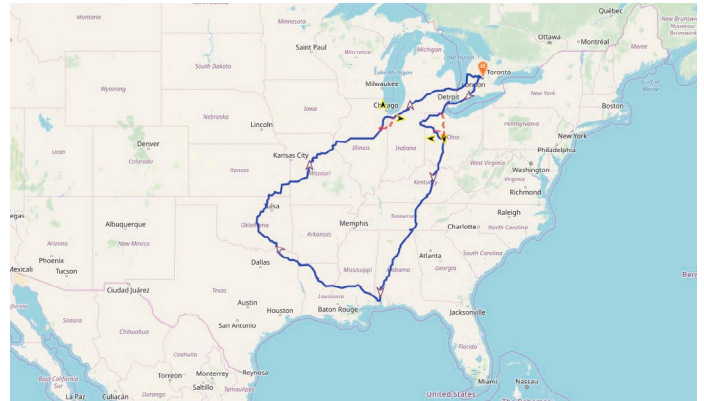


Sadly, the 2018 road trip was delayed because I needed the vacation time for a car trip down to Mexico on a scouting mission for the Monarch Ultra. Then the Monarch Ultra event took place in 2019 and I took all of my vacation time plus a leave of absence to run to Mexico with some friends.

But I still had a deep seated urge to go on a road trip, so 2020 was going to be the year. Because I had done the Monarch Ultra the previous year I changed the destination of the road trip to Texas, along the Monarch Ultra route. I thought it would be great to see some of the new friends I had met during the run, and maybe to have some time to see some of America without the super high stress level that I was under during the Monarch event.

I started planning to do the trip in mid July, 2020. I like to think of that initial planning time as “the before times”. When the pandemic hit in March 2020, well, you know what it was like. The border to the US was closed to nonessential travel and there were race riots in the U.S. that I didn’t want to get close to. I couldn’t even change the plan to a Canadian road trip because many Canadian campgrounds were closed or were restricted to fully motorhome guests only. Even the campgrounds in the maritime provinces were not accepting any visitors from out of province. So instead of a long road trip I decided to do a bunch of individual day trips around southern Ontario. I had a wonderful week of short motorcycle day trips, stopping at clock towers and finding fry wagons around the southern part of the province. That left me still hoping for an extended road trip, so with the hope that the pandemic CERTAINLY wouldn’t last another year, I planned to do it in 2021. But the pandemic didn’t end, did it? Again. So the 2021 trip was canceled.

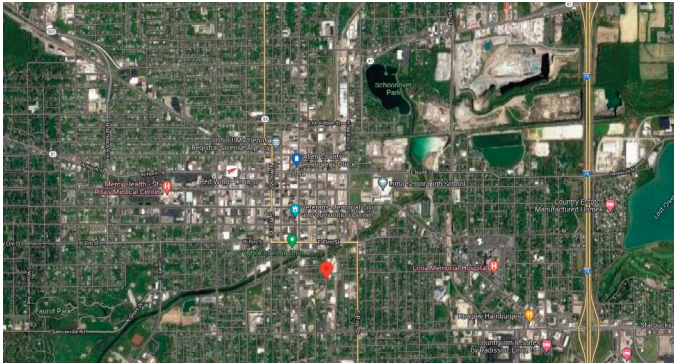
In late 2021 I sustained a really discouraging injury that made me feel like I had suddenly aged 10 years, so I started thinking that this trip is a “now or never” thing. If I were to delay it to the summer of 2023 I would be 63 years old and may not physically be able to spend a week or two on a motorcycle. So in mid January 2022 I started in earnest to plan the finer details of the trip with the mindset that this would be my only opportunity to do this so it has to happen. I had never been to the Gulf Coast, Gulf of Mexico, so I set Mobile Alabama as the southern point for my trip.



Planning was going to be very important because I have a fixed number of vacation days, and I’ll need to ride a lot of miles each day and make time for a lot of activities while taking as little time as possible for detours and unplanned activities. To avoid unplanned activities I need to plan all the details of the things that NEED to get done as well as those that I WANT to get done, including meal planning, where to do laundry, cooking, fuel, washrooms, running, tenting, photos, charging batteries, all the activities of each day. I know from my experience running races, if I make plans for every detail, then I don’t have to make very many decisions during the event, I just need to follow the decisions that I’ve already made. If things change, I’m not overwhelmed or begin to feel that it’s a disaster, I’ve got the attitude that the plan can be modified instead of having to make up a new plan.

I searched out grocery stores where I could pick up some food each day and all the town clocks in the towns and cities through which I would be riding. I confess that it was a lot of fun looking at the maps, virtually going through each day’s route, searching and finding small town grocers, town hall clocks, and out of the way campgrounds. To find clock towers, I would google the name of a town and the word “clock tower” then “town clock”. I would usually get a hit for larger cities, but for the little towns I would use Google street view to virtually ride through the middle of the “old town” part, you know, the area with the red brick buildings and no trees, and look for a building with a clock. Every time I used Google street view to look for

a clock tower I could imagine myself riding through town on my bike, duffle bags and camping gear strapped to the back. I could see myself parking, setting up a tripod and camera to take some photos, and then a Facebook live video about where I was and what I was doing.



I spent hours going over the route, reviewing one day's journey at a time, and trying to find the best camping spot. I used google maps as well as two different camping apps to find campgrounds then locate them relative to my route, make sure there was tent camping available, and then find out how to contact them to reserve a camping spot. Then I spent a few hours locating all of the Harley Davidson dealerships along the route, just in case I would need to buy some emergency parts.

In mid February I had a talk with the Production Manager where I work, because I know that we cannot both be away from work at the same time. We confirmed that my vacation plans and his don't overlap at all, so I had the green light from work to go. Things were falling into place, adding to my anticipation. Then on March 9th, the Canadian government announced the reduction then eventual end of covid restrictions for crossing the border. Even though there was a war raging in Ukraine, I was optimistic enough to believe that I could cross the border to and from the States without issue so I started to make campground and motel reservations for the trip, and even prepaid some of them.



With full confidence that I would definitely be doing it this year, I bought a few pieces of lightweight camping equipment especially for this road trip. Very early in the planning process I had made a packing list, and in the weeks leading up to the trip I did a couple of practice runs packing everything in the bags then onto the bike. Nothing was going to stop me this time.

* * *

Stillness

Arlene Davies-Fuhr

Sultry Sunday afternoon, white moth flutters
this way and that. Unsure where to land
in green grass, or upon dry twig?

Luxuriate in the blessings of this place
lichen and clover. Breezes elicit
new songs from the universe. Melodies
enter, merge, enrich the experience.

Sensual delights abound if I am mindful.
Smell. Listen. Pause throughout my hectic day.

Children's Reading Room Booktoberfest and FUNDrive



210 Silvercreek Pkwy North, Guelph
Saturday Oct 1st, 10 am - 2 pm

Join us for a day of family fun!

Meet our team

Tour our space

Craft activity by Rainbow Mentors

Take home a FREE BOOK

Donate household items
to our FUNDrive



Contact: Joanna Szulc
(226) 706 9845

info@childrensreadingroom.org



All donations
go directly to
Children's
Reading Room.
Thank you for
your support.

We are Collecting

Clothes

men's, women's and children's clothes,
coats, shoes, scarves, handbags, wallets,
fashion accessories, ties, belts,
backpacks, etc.

Household Textiles

bedding, comforters, blankets, sheets, towels,
linen, tablecloths, curtains, pillows, etc.

Small Household Goods

kitchen items (such as pots/pans, dishes,
silverware, glasses, serving pieces and
hand-held appliances), home decorative items,
knick-knacks, toys, games, books, and small
electronics.

**Please use bags for clothes and textiles and
tightly packed boxes for small household goods.
All items must be clean and in sellable condition.**



No furniture please.



What Did You Say?

Bill Brubacher

Have you ever wondered why it sometimes feels as if people, even your closest friends, don't seem to 'get you,' or that it can be difficult having a discussion with someone – even someone you like?

You are not alone because this is very common. So common in fact, that communication, like breathing, is generally taken for granted, and ironically is not even discussed (if you'll forgive the pun!) Unless, of course, something goes wrong and we simply have to do our best to deal with it.

Since communication seems to come so naturally to most, we don't give it much thought, especially regarding how we might learn to better communicate in order to be better understood.

This could explain why people often spend more time talking than they do listening, especially to what they themselves are saying. If it sounds right to them, then that's enough. (At least, the person speaking knows what they are talking about, right?)

Bottom line: 1) communication is really more of an 'art' than it is a science and, to be done right and effectively, 2) it's a two-way exchange, involving both talking and listening.

Even those who know how to communicate 'better' than the rest of us don't always get it right. If they did, there would be no divorce among marriage counsellors and no misunderstanding among psychologists/psychiatrists.

If more people knew how to better communicate, wouldn't the world be a happier and more peaceful place? Heavenly? Not necessarily, because communicating is one thing, but understanding is another; and one's personality also plays a part.

It's easy to understand why communication can feel so confusing sometimes, even when we do our best to try to make our messages clear. No wonder the world is in such a mess, especially in the aftermath of actions or behaviours having to be explained or justified.

So what's wrong?

A good place to begin might be with what actually constitutes 'communication.' There are generally three accepted means:

- 1) our words
- 2) our tone of voice
- 3) our body language

Now for this information to really mean something to you, take a moment to either agree or change the order of the above three factors to rank them in order of highest to lowest in communication effectiveness? (Remember we're not talking about someone being right or wrong.)

Experts say that the answer is:

- 1) body language
- 2) tone of voice
- 3) words

Are you surprised? I know I was. And I believe most people would be surprised as well.

When you consider our spoken words represent only 7% of effective communication, then those words would have to be pretty precise and easy to understand to get your message across clearly.

Since our *non-verbal* messages (body language and tone of voice) represent 93% of our communication and make a higher impact/impression on the sending of our messages than our verbal words, then is it any wonder why communication can be so difficult?

This is made worse if we're not even aware of how we're communicating.

It is also interesting to know that, on average, only about 1 in 10 people come closest in understanding what any of us are saying at any one time. In other words, it might shock you to learn what 9 out of 10 people actually thought you meant by what you said!

Now, as an obvious extension, you can imagine the connection that communication has with our relationships, and how our relationships with family, friends, co-workers, bosses, and service people in all walks of life can be so easily affected, either positively or negatively.

Just think of the difference our communication skills can make in our lives, and the lives of others. It wouldn't be surprising then, that the happiest and most fulfilling relationships are often based on best communication practices, or those working on them.

Moreover, people with good communication skills are also generally more successful and more popular among their peers.

Even very small and easy changes can make a huge difference in being heard correctly and understood, and ensuring a better relationship with people in general. It could be very useful to remember to be aware of your body language, your tone of voice, and the words you use to express yourself in any and all situations, in order to make the best effect and impression.

Take a genuine interest in what someone is saying by asking them what they meant, or repeating certain things back to them for confirmation, or listening a little longer to get a better understanding of the topic, or simply choosing your words more carefully before speaking.

Perhaps now the expression, "A word to the wise" (Benjamin Franklin) might have a different and deeper significance.

Meanwhile, here's a selection of relevant quotes to ponder when you have a moment, and here's wishing you a better life through better communication in your future:

"Communication is humanity's greatest blessing, although efforts to establish it can feel like humanity's greatest curse."

— **Cole Todd**

"The great enemy of communication, we find, is the illusion of it."

— **William H. Whyte**

"The fact that I'm using words doesn't necessarily mean that I'm saying anything."

— **Craig D. Lounsbrough**

"Say a little and say it well."

— **Irish Proverb**

"Every act of communication is a miracle of translation."

— **Ken Liu**

"You can communicate best when you first listen."

— **Catherine Pulsifer**

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."

— **George Bernard Shaw**

"To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others."

— **Tony Robbins**

"Are you really listening, or are you just waiting for your turn to talk?"

— **R. Montgomery**

"One of the best ways to persuade others is with your ears."

— **Dean Rusk**

I Forgive You *Colleen Heighington*

I've been walking for many years. I do it because I enjoy it, and it has helped me out with my chronic pain from fibromyalgia and arthritis. I am no spring chicken anymore; I will be nearing 70 in the very near future.

As I am writing this, I am in some extra pain that resulted from my walk last night. First, let me back you up to about 4 years ago. I was walking on the sidewalk on a beautiful August afternoon when, out of nowhere, I saw a dog break away from its owner's leash. To be honest, I am afraid of most dogs because I was bitten as a child and most of the time I have my guard up, especially when I am walking. When I saw the dog coming right at me, I panicked and tried to cross the road walking backwards, and was going so fast that I lost my balance and fell right onto the middle of the road. OUCH!!!! I couldn't believe what had happened. I remember getting up and being in shock and then a stranger came and helped me to my house.

Meanwhile, the owner of the dog had the dog in her arms and said to me, "My dog doesn't bite," and then she left. She never even asked me how I was, which made me very upset. I had no broken bones, just a lot of deep bruising and a lot of pain, which took a while to heal. I count my lucky stars that there was no traffic when I fell.

Now ... let me tell you what happened to me last night. I was doing my evening walk and I was making my way home when, out of the blue, I heard a voice say ... "Watch out!" By the time I heard it, it was too late. All I remember is that terrible helpless feeling of falling again, as a teenager on a bicycle almost rode into me. Thank goodness, I fell backwards on the grass. The teenager said to me, "Are you all right?" I told him that I didn't know, and that this shouldn't have happened. He then got off his bicycle and, seeing that I was in pain, asked me if he could walk me home.

That totally surprised me and I told him that I was on my evening walk and that it helps me out with my ailments. I saw him put his head down and I could tell that he was sorry. Then, I told him, "Please take this with you. Please do not ride your bikes on the sidewalks, and please tell this to your friends. You saw for yourself how quickly things like this can happen." I thanked him for walking me home and on the tip of my tongue I wanted to say ... I forgive you, but those words didn't come out.

I guess, at that time, I wasn't ready to say it. But as soon as I got home and relaxed ... I could say those words in my heart ...

I did forgive the lady with the dog, but that took me a lot longer to do. Showing others that you care, and having compassion, makes forgiveness so much easier ... that did it for me, and the recovery of my healing has been a lot quicker and smoother.

I thank the dear Lord that I wasn't more seriously injured, and that I am back walking again!

* * *

Two Blue Chairs *Arlene Spencer*

Memories are thoughts and remembrances you hold close to your heart, and every now and then you see something that takes you back to where those memories were made so long ago.

Back in our day most young couples with small children didn't have a lot of extra money to fully furnish a house, so they did it in stages when they could afford to. I remember my sister waiting for what seemed an eternity to finally be able to pick new living room furniture.

She chose a beautiful plaid couch and two blue leather wing back chairs. I was with her when she

bought them and when they arrived at her home, boy was she excited. We spent countless hours on those chairs being sisters, chatting while our own children played together. Sadly she was killed in an auto accident in 2002 and was gone from my life forever along with those two blue leather chairs.

The years moved on and so did everyone else. Her kids grew up, her husband remarried and had moved a couple of times and staying caught up got harder and harder. I often wondered what became of those two blue chairs we shared our hopes and dreams upon, I figured they were long gone.

I keep in close contact with her three children and have watched them grow into amazing young fathers and a remarkable mother. This past weekend while attending a birthday party at my nieces home for her little boy, I wandered into her living room like so many times before but that day it was different. There sat those two blue leather wing back chairs. My heart skipped a beat.

The chairs looked as I remembered but this time something was missing. Those chairs had come full circle back to the little girl who bounced so energetically on them long ago. Seeing them reminded me of the good times we shared, our laughter, our tears and our triumphs.

She was there, inviting me to come sit with her once again. In the stillness of the living room I sat motionless and listened closely. Like someone had just wrapped me in a warm blanket, I heard her laugh, saw her smile and felt her touch. I knew she was there sitting right alongside me. I know she sent those two chairs to her daughter's home so she could sit with us like so many years ago.

Funny how small things, like a visit on those old blue chairs get you through another day in hopes of a sign, somewhere, somehow tomorrow.

* * *

Friend Amid Grass *Arlene Davies-Fuhr*

Bark cracked and broken, twig is twig.
She doesn't mind. No complaints.
Just how twig is. All knobby
and crooked. Cut off from her life-source.

Some label twig dry and useless.
But is she, really?
Twig intuits she has purpose,
as yet unrevealed.

Twig lies amid the long, wild grass.
Waiting. Wondering.
What will come next on her journey?
A ladybug visit? A raccoon defecating?
Who knows?

Twig doesn't need to predict
the future. She is here now.
Ready. Accepting. Open.

Twig is happy in the place where she
has landed. It is soft. Welcoming.
Inviting her to rest awhile amid
clover and the yellow leaves.

Twig is not alone and for that
she gives thanks. It's a natural
community, not of her choosing
but of her finding.

Twig is at peace.





... with Anna Neriya Abdulla



When and why did you first start writing?

I started writing when I was 5 years old. My first story was a short story about a lost unicorn. My mom and I would tell stories to each other in the night before bed; sometimes they were good stories and my mom would tell me to write them down.

Where did you get the idea for this book?

I got the idea for this book from my mom's and dad's Guyanese heritage. In Guyana they have a lot of strange yet funny names for things.

What would you like to see happen as a result of it being published?

I would like this book to help other kids learn good moral lessons and most of all learn that God's ways are always good.

Other than writing, what do you do in your spare time? What brings you the most joy?

In my spare time I like to be outdoors. I like gardening and climbing the maple tree in our front yard. My pets bring me a lot of joy so I spend a lot of time with them. I have a pet dog whose name is Shiloh and a pet parrot whose name is Ner. I love playing with them.

What is your favourite subject in school, and why?

My favourite subject is math. I like math because I enjoy problem solving and figuring out the solution.

And, of course ... what is your least favourite subject ... and why?

My least favourite subject is French. I do not like it because the pronunciation is hard. The words sound different than how they are spelt.

What gives you inspiration?

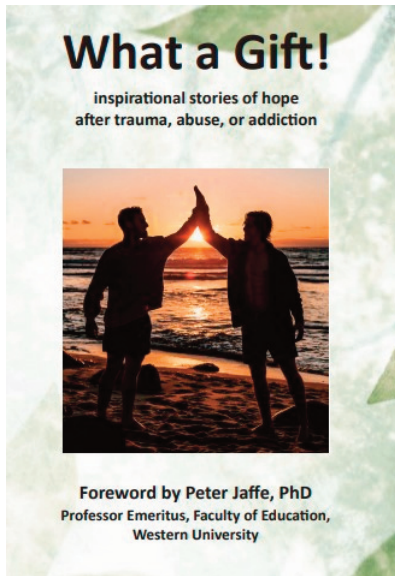
My inspiration comes from God, who brings people, animals, experiences and lessons into my life.

How do you think you inspire others?

I think I inspire others by the way I live. I try to inspire others to take care of the animals God has given us. God says we are the care takers of his creation so it means we have to take care of the lower life forms. I have rescued several animals and I share these stories to family and friends to encourage them to do the same and realize animals need love just like humans.

What are your dreams for the future?

My dream for the future is to start a company with my two cousins called "The Three Sisters." Our idea for the company is that we will each provide a different service. We will offer herbal remedies since my one cousin and I love to learn about plants and their benefits. Also we will provide Bible teachings and another service which we have not figured out as yet. We are still waiting for one of my cousins to decide what she wants to do when she is grown up!



Story Behind the Story: *What a Gift!*

“What a Gift!” is an anthology of inspirational stories of hope after trauma, abuse, or addiction, published in support of Recovery Speaking Initiative, a newly founded organization providing spiritual, emotional, physical, and financial resources as well as advocacy to assist those of limited means to recover from profound trauma. Following is the preface from the anthology, written by Chair of the Board, Peter Barrow.

The iconic Canadian chanteur, song writer and poet Leonard Cohen would not have met the publishers and authors of What A Gift, when he wrote the immortal line “There is a crack in everything, that’s how the light gets in.” But he would have identified strongly with them, because this book of hope, inspiration and motivation has been created from the light that shines out of the darkest, most impenetrable cracks in the human condition.

Lisa Browning, the publisher, has built a life from helping victims trapped in the dark underbelly of the world, to break free by telling their stories to others, through her books. In so doing, the writers bring hope

and the miracles of recovery and redemption to thousands like them, who continue to battle demons that are frequently buried beneath the suffocating surface of a society that often harshly judges—and ignores—those in pain and anguish. What A Gift is such a book, born of such a purpose.

In her journey, Lisa has met many amazing survivors, all of them victims of people and circumstances beyond their control that have brought them to the brink of self-destruction. Survivors who have nevertheless triumphed and overcome and gone on to lead productive and happy lives. Survivors who are courageous enough to stand up and share their pain and suffering and offer others a crack to climb through, into the light.

One of these is Bob McCabe, whose story is part of What A Gift, and whose journey back to fulfilment has included the establishment of Recovery Speaking Initiative or RSI. RSI is devoted to helping men who are victims of childhood sexual abuse and who have subsequently struggled with alcohol addiction and drug abuse; men who have quite literally lost everything as a result—materially, emotionally, spiritually and psychologically—as Bob himself did.

Lisa and Bob became fast friends, united in a common cause. What A Gift was conceived in discussions they held about how to help build RSI and continue to spread awareness of the central story of both their lives; that out of suffering can come salvation and out of rock bottom can come rebirth. That is why all proceeds from the sale of What A Gift will support RSI’s work of advocacy, counselling, education and access to support resources for men who need them the most. Once conceived, What A Gift developed a life of its own as many of Lisa’s readers and Bob’s colleagues learned of it and offered to share their stories.

The former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt once wrote in his famous “Citizenship In the Republic” speech delivered in Paris in 1910: “It is not the critic who counts; not the one who points out how the

strong person stumbles or how the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the one who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes up short again and again....because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds... who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst...at least fails while daring greatly...and shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

What A Gift! goes into the dark places: domestic violence, sexual abuse, economic disaster, terminal illness, bestiality and crushing despair, addiction and self-harm. It is created by those who have been in the arena and who have found their way to the triumph of high achievement. It is a journey into the light, a tearing wide open of the dark cracks; a tale collectively told of the ultimate triumph of the human will and spirit.

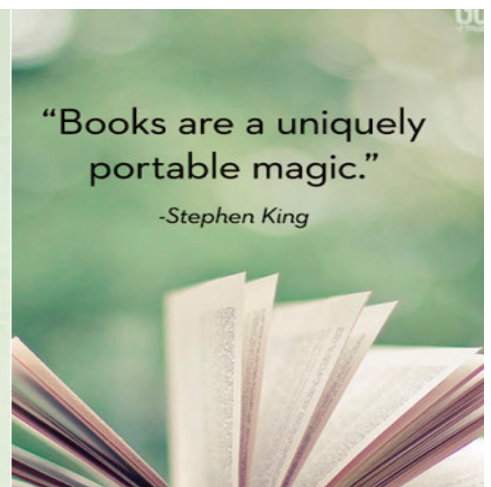
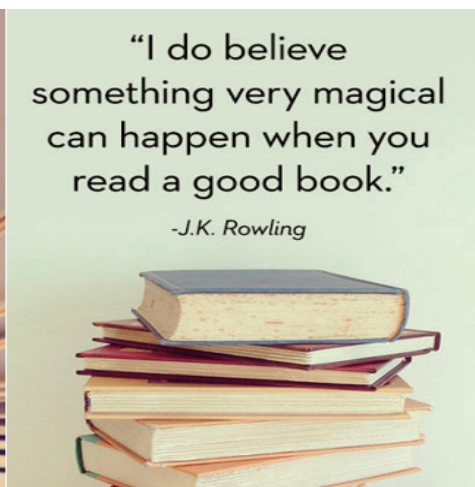
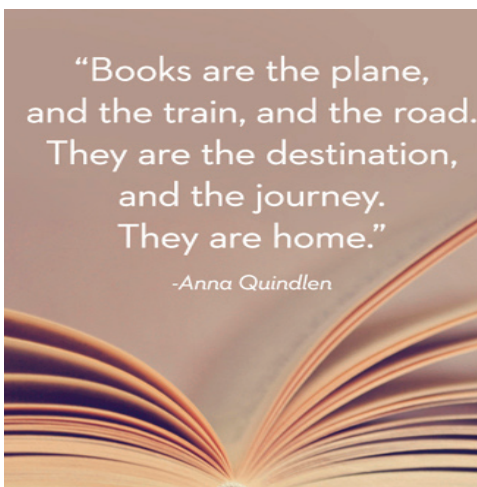
Visit www.ottbookstore.com to order your copy. 100% of proceeds from sales go directly to Recovery Speaking Initiative.

once upon a time

Edward Pickersgill

Following is one of the poems found in "splinters & fragments (vol 1)" an anthology by local activist Edward Pickersgill. Two volumes are available at The Bookshelf, or at www.ottbookstore.com, and 100% of proceeds from sales go directly to support Ed's efforts in our community.

once upon a time
a daughter explained
out of the blue to me
u do the things u do
because u cannot
give birth to babies
it's compensation
she explained
u create places
and things as wombs
for people to live in
while they get fixed
or ready to start over
& when she finished
making her comment
went back to reading
her book of homework
next day she said
it must be frustrating
to be a man like you



Guess Who's Back In Town??!?

S.O.S.
Stories On Stage



Do you have a story to tell?

Lisa Browning, Admin & Promo
lisa@onethousandtrees.com

Rob Osburn, MC & Production
rob@bnrmediagroup.ca

www.storiesonstage.ca
www.facebook.com/StoriesOnStageGuelph

A new name, a new location ... but the same
great inspiration & community connection!

S.O.S.
Stories On Stage



Monday, September 12, 7-9pm at ...

Fixed Gear
BREWING CO.



Your Hosts: Lisa & Rob



**Samantha
Kis**

*From F**cked, To Fired,
To Feminist*



**Barb
Lustgarten
Evoy**

Crafting a Healthier Life Lens



**Bob
McCabe**

What A Gift!



**Kat
O'Brien**

Reclaiming My Magick



**Tanya
Olsen**

*You Fall, You Learn,
You Get Back Up*



**Bob
MacLean**

*Musical
Guest*

Tickets available at: www.storiesonstage.ca

This Month's Contributors

Bill Brubacher

Bill is a long-time resident of the Region of Waterloo, a former successful business entrepreneur and an internationally published author of 15 national bestselling books. He is a Certified Bereavement Specialist, and a Certified Conflict Coach/ Elder Mediator, helping seniors and their families through difficult time through Caregivers Oasis, Pathfinder Canada, and Heart and Soul Bereavement for Seniors. Bill has recently authored a new book about his amazing life's journey. His book, *Against the Odds*, is a ten-year testament to his incredible emotional, spiritual and mental tenacity as he fought to reinvent himself after experiencing tremendous loss. His model and message are an inspiration to all who struggle to survive in the face of defeat. His latest book, *The Secret Pond*, is a classic love story fantasy about the shared journey of a young boy and an unusual stranger finding healing from grief and loss at a mystical pond in the midst of an ancient magical forest. For more information about his books go to <https://legacypress.ca/> or contact Bill at billbrubacher@gmail.com.

Arlene Davies-Fuhr

Arlene is retired and resides in Guelph. She has been a lay-minister in the United and Mennonite churches, a college English instructor, and an ESL teacher. She has published a workbook on the Psalms and has edited a book of essays. She has travelled widely and currently enjoys playing the ukulele and the mountain dulcimer.

Colleen Heighington

Colleen is happily married to a wonderful husband named Ken. They have been blessed with three beautiful children, and four terrific grandsons. She enjoys reading, writing stories and poetry, and she keeps fit by walking 3 to 4 kilometres every day. Her summers are spent at their trailer in Orillia, and she really enjoys the time she spends with family and friends. She has been a volunteer with Hospice Wellington since 2015.

Edward Pickersgill

Edward was born in Glasgow, Scotland, way back in October 1944. He moved to England at age 4, to Quebec at age 12, and then to Guelph, Ontario at age 26. The rest is less clearly defined!

Arlene Spencer

Arlene is a wife, mother and grandmother, and a special needs educator who wanted to share her story. Through her regular newspaper columns and weekly radio segments she shares her heart felt experiences that will leave you laughing out loud, having an ahhhh moment or finding you wiping away a lonely tear. Her abundance of energy and passion for life has lead her exactly to where she needs to be, telling stories and inspiring others because at the end of the day everyone deserves to be heard.

Clay Williams

Clay is a 61-year-old Manitoba-born father of two living in Elmira Ontario with his wife of 40 years. He manages the Engineering Department of a manufacturing company in Kitchener and has worked in Northern Ontario, Germany and South Carolina. Clay is an avid distance runner, having run dozens of marathons and longer runs, and creator of the Canal Pursuit for Mental Health, a 785 km run along two of Canada's longest canals as well as The Monarch Ultra, a 4300 km run following the migration path of Monarch Butterflies.

**STAY SAFE
STAY HAPPY
KEEP WRITING!**



**Do you have a story to tell?
www.onethousandtrees.com**