

# NEWSLETTER

## Summer Writing...



One month left before we get that urge to hole up in our homes, pile firewood, get back to school...but the summer classes at WritersWebWorkshop are each almost full. In spite of the heat (yes, we have experienced some warmth at last here on the coast),

and the distraction of road trips (ball tournaments, in my case), for me, summer is a particularly rich time for writing. Perhaps this is habit, left from my years of teaching—every April, I'd begin a burst of writing—but I think it has more to do... (con't p. 2)

### NOT FOR THE FAINT OF SPIRIT - SCREENWRITING - BY AMY WHITMORE

Lots of people have ideas that they believe would make a perfect movie, and as soon as they hear at a party that you are writing scripts, they'll tell you they have lots of great ideas. "My Aunt Milly loves to, like, bake pies, you know? And she baked this pie with custard in it, and put it on the back



porch to cool, and forgot about it, and it was in the sun and curdled and the neighbor's dog, the one my Aunt Milly hates, ate the pie and got sick! My Aunt Milly poisoned the neighbor's dog!" So they buttonhole you as you watch a lively conversation between the film director you want to meet (con't p.2)

### News

This month, I'm so pleased to be able to tell you that Rachelle Delaney, author of **The Ships of Lost Souls** (HarperCollins 2009) has been awarded the Canadian Authors' Association Emerging Writer Award...congratulations, Rachelle! This is a delightful pirate story for both girls and boys, with main characters Jem and Scarlet. This coming fall, watch for the sequel, **The Lost Souls of Island X**.



**FROM P. 1 ...SPIRIT...**

and a producer and when you finally get away the film director has left the party.

Say you DO like the story. The trick is, HOW do you turn that great idea about Aunt Milly making the pie that poisoned the neighbors' dog into a two hour movie that people will pay money to see? That someone will pay even more money to consider? That someone will pay yet more money to make?

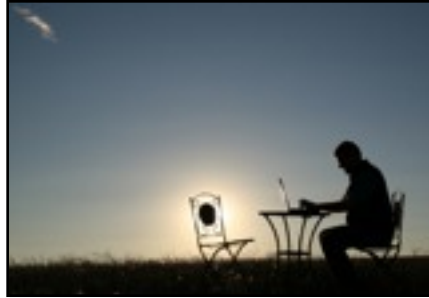
Whatever the idea, however simple, complex, or violent, your script is a work of art: it won't sell if it isn't. Your script must be brilliant, no matter what happens to it once it's sold. You will tear your hair out while writing it, apply to McDonalds to flip burgers - any money making venture to escape writing within the structural rigidity of a script. You will want to cheat in any way you can: easy flashbacks (crime TVs current fave), easy narration, Deus Ex Machina - help!!

When you finish, and it is good - you got through that interminable second Act in which obstacle after obstacle threatens to drown your character, but how the heck do you think up enough obstacles that are true to your character, and after four drafts it STILL sags and drags at page 50, you will leap from your chair, free of the iron grip of structure, and run down the street shouting in relief.

You will be astonished at how your brain searched and delved through your life experience and academic

knowledge to find solutions, images, words.

Writing is not for the faint of heart. Scriptwriting is not for the faint of spirit.

**SUMMER WRITING**

con't ...with the early rising of the sun, and the silence of that time before the household stretches and yawns, gulps for air, and begins to howl.

So long as I can get up at this time, I can write, and by the end of these weeks, I have—almost every year—had a productive, creative time.

Last month I wrote about forming habit. Some writers can't get up early; they're night people.

I chose the above photo from istock for this: an image of evening writing. For me, the image has a poignancy because of that empty chair across from the writer. What is that empty chair for you? Does it focus on the alone-ness of writing? The missing time with loved ones because of your drive to write? Does it represent your internal editor, away while you're creating? Might it represent some sort of freedom?

Know yourself. Know when you can write. Know that you need to show up. **Gayle Friesen** visited my recent UBC class, and said that, while she may not write every day, she "always shows up."

**Courses****July 26 - 8 weeks**

Writing for Children - full

**August 3 - 4 months**

Novel writing - one opening

**September - 8 weeks**

Elements of Screenwriting - date TBA

**November - 4 weeks**

Holiday stories - memoir

**October 4 - 8 weeks**

Writing for Children

**Contributors/  
Instructors**

**Alison Acheson**  
Administrator and Instructor for WritersWeb Workshops, former instructor at University of BC, Vancouver. Author of **Molly's Cue** and **Grandpa's Music**.



**Amy Whitmore**  
Amy has edited scripts and taught from sea-to-sea in Canada (Vancouver to St. Andrews, NB!) Her understanding of character and human nature is a fundamental strength of her work.