

# NEWSLETTER

## A Room of Your Own

*~where you work*



*Jean Kindratsky at work*

Jean Kindratsky and I have worked together in workshops at UBC, as well as the inaugural novel-writing with writerswebworkshop ...so when I met up with her at Serendipity (the spring-time event of the [Vancouver Children's Literature Roundtable](#)), and she told me about her new writing space, I asked if I could share this adventure of hers in our newsletter.

So...the interview...

**Alison:** *What led to seeking out a space of your own?*

**Jean:** I've always found it easier to write when I'm out of the house, and away from things that are waiting to get done. At the studio there's no pile of laundry leering in the corner, my desk is never buried and I can always find a pen that works. There are no interruptions. There is no internet connection. It's bliss.

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Last month I asked:

Where do you work? and I asked for workspace photos. I've had three responses—thank you all!

First from Jean Kindratsky, featured in the photo to the left, working on her novel...

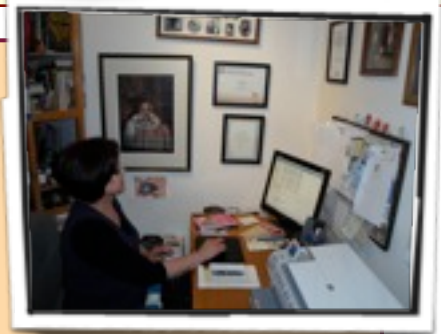
Second, Darlene Foster, local writer and regular reader of this newsletter, shares her space! Her blog is [here](#).

And third, we have Joan J.K. Noble, a recent graduate of [Literary Living](#), the program we featured in the November issue. Remember? We said we'd catch up with the first cohort—a Success!— and here we are...

Wonderful to see writers at work. Gives me the warm fuzzies...



*my friend,  
Joan Dempsey of  
LITERARY  
LIVING...  
relaxing... (an-  
important part of  
~writing!)*



## A ROOM OF YOUR OWN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

**Alison:** *How does sharing a space work? any recommendations for others?*

**Jean:** In our four person space, we each have a desk and corner to call our own. There is a shared tea table and a rocking chair with a reading light next to our chalkboard calendar. We each pay our portion of the rent directly to the artist's group that runs the space. About once a week my time there overlaps with one other writer. It's reassuring to check in with each other briefly, then get back to work. Generally, we work in companionable silence, with breaks to boil water or open windows. Most often, I'm there alone, sometimes just for an hour. It's amazing what one hour can yield. If I'm there for a long time, I take breaks to stretch and pace and stare out the window as needed.

Advice to others:

Find an inexpensive space and reach out to your writing contacts. Accept compatible artists (one of us is a painter who uses the space to generate computer images). Respect and uphold the studio as a place to create. Go there and work.



**Alison:** *Finding compatible artists...are there any particular questions you'd recommend asking of writers and potential space-sharers?*

**Jean:** Hmmn. I think we told people that we weren't open to any art that was smelly or needed more space than a desk. We were pretty open, and found that filling the four spaces was harder than we'd imagined. Who wouldn't want a writing studio for less than \$60/month? Look at those blank walls - utterly inspiring. And the desk arrangement - the classic classroom - is because our neighbour (an almost always absent artist) has all the windows. Like sunflowers we face the natural light.

**Alison:** *How has this changed your writing life?*

**Jean:** It works better than a closed door at eliminating distractions. The short drive (soon to be bike ride) marks the change of location, mental as well as physical. When I sit down at my studio desk I have already entered the story and can start writing. There's no further need to clear my mind. My studio time is very productive. ~~~~~

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## A ROOM OF YOUR OWN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Darlene Foster is a local writer, here in Delta, BC, and the host of a group that meets monthly to share work.

**Alison:** *What can you tell me about your workspace?*

**Darlene:** I have a corner in the guest room all set up with things to motivate me, like a print of the girl in the painting from *Amanda in Spain*, which really helped keep me going when I was writing that book. I have just added the Maine Coon cat who will be featured in *Amanda in England*, which I am working on right now. Also some writing awards, motivational quotes and my published book to remind me that I can actually do it. I always have a pad and pen handy in case I need to write something down to use later on in the book. Ideas seem to come from out of nowhere and at the craziest times! My space can get messy with scraps of paper, bookmarks, reminders, magazine clippings etc., but it works for me. Sometimes my cat, Monkey, likes to sit on my lap while I work but she doesn't like getting her picture taken.

**Alison:** Reminds me of Rita Mae Brown saying that if your cat doesn't like to sit on the pages of manuscript on your desk, toss 'em— the pages, not the cat! ~~~~~

*Darlene Foster at work...*



**POETRY WITH RIA VOROS...COMING RIGHT UP! JUNE 6**

Ria's 8-week class focuses on the craft and creativity of poetry. Learn how to analyze what makes a poem work and how to use expressive, clear language in your own poems. In this course, you will look at contemporary free verse, as well as some forms like Haiku and rhyming verse through exercises and examples. Experimentation and imagination is encouraged! Every week, students will submit poems to be workshopped and receive useful, respectful and encouraging feedback. This course will not only benefit poets, but anyone interested in language and the craft of writing.



**LITERARY LIVING — REPORT FROM THE FIRST COHORT***From Joan J.K. Noble...*

As I finish up my course in Literary Living my thoughts turn back to the way I was in January of this year. I didn't know if I could make it as a writer. Now I'm sure I can. It sounds too banal even to me, but it's a deep visceral feeling that all will be well.

I found the ad for Joan Dempsey's Literary Living Course at the Writer's Digest website.

It hit me hard. My eyes zeroed in on the ad : A course. A course online, a course in Literary Living. Oh my, that's my course, that's the one that will make the difference between success and defeat.

I think the word "literary" has special meaning for me. It takes me to a place where the red walls are covered in books, the windows open to the fresh air, and I sit working at an old desk holding papers with writing I have done. And ink-stained fingers.

The program has benefited me much more than I can ever rate emotionally. Logically, yes, emotionally, I am a changed woman. It's too new. It's not rational to want to spend your one precious life in a room shut off from others. But it's rational for me. I feel as if I've been sucked up into a tornado,

*Joan's work space....*

twisting higher and higher with each new assignment. By the way, I'm not coming back.



....continued on page 5

*Julia J.K. Noble* continued from page 4

Finding out how I tick was the most surprising thing I learned. The things I've been shying away from are part of my hard-wired brain, not of an artistic temperament. Literary Living taught me how to be that Introverted Intuitive person and still be a writer. What a bop on the head. I have examined my writing life and my personal life every which way, my relationship with money seemed irrelevant at the time. I now see my money habits could actually add to my writing problems. And some of my responsibilities are now designated freeing up valuable time.

It is not all work. The assignment to build a Vision Board made me see how far I have come. I am now envisioning the final outcome. My new Writing Contract will be posted on the inside of my door to remind me each and every day that I can do this and do it well. Writing is its own reward, other rewards, whatever they mean to you, build on that.

Last winter you could hear me say, "I don't have enough time, I cannot do this" several times a week. That was Before Joan Dempsey. Now I have enough time to write, study and read with time left over. This is After Joan Dempsey. "BJD-AJD." I will recommend this course to everyone who wants a literary life.

*Joan J.K. Noble lives in northwest lower Michigan in the woods*



*...and this is my favourite writing space...at least until the family wakes up...then off to my little room under the roof.*

*Make your space YOURS. And happy writing, happy writing to all -*

*Alison*

*[www.writerswebworkshop.com](http://www.writerswebworkshop.com)*

## Calendar

### May 2

Novel Writing (full - email for next session info and to be placed on waitlist)

### June 6

Poetry (with Ria Voros) - 8 week

### July 4

Writing for Children - 8 week

### September

Novel Writing

Life Writing

Writing for Children

## Editor/Instructor

writerswebworkshop.com

ALISON ACHESON

