

# Between the Covers



Newsletter of the PWAC London & Southwestern Ontario Chapter

Summer 2007 Issue

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## President's Message

by Kym Wolfe

**I have recently stepped into** the position of President of the London chapter of PWAC, and I would like to commend my predecessor, Carolyn Gibson, for all of the work she did when she sat in this seat.

During her tenure Carolyn raised our profile in the local community, she introduced the chapter's Christmas book drive, and she had to deal with the rollout of Sun Media's Freelancer Contract, which she will continue to deal with in her position as President of PWAC at the national level. We are certainly fortunate to have Carolyn, Suzanne Boles (national Past-President) and Mark Kearney (national VP Membership) right here in our home chapter.

With those lazy, hot and hazy days of summer upon us, it's an ideal time to sit out on a patio, drink in hand, sharing a few laughs and getting to know our fellow PWACKles. When I agreed to step into the role of president, Mark assured me that the most important part of the job would be organizing our monthly pub nights, and of course being there to enjoy the evening. Seemed like an ideal job!

Luckily we have a very dedicated Vice-President in Kevin Glew who promptly jumped in to arrange pub nights, which I'm hoping will be one of the highlights of the summer. Our July 31 gathering at The Runt Club at 55 Albert Street, located in an old house off Richmond Street, was well-attended. Join us again on August 28, at the Symposium Café, 620 Richmond Street at Central Avenue in London.

If you have a favourite patio that you'd like to suggest for our September meeting, we'd love to hear from you. It may be our last chance to enjoy an outdoor pub night for a while!

Pub nights are certainly one of the more entertaining things that we do, but I suspect that writers are looking for much more than a monthly social night. There's the newsletter for example—many thanks to Keith Risler, who continues to do a bang-up job with the design and layout, and to Nancy McSloy who edited this issue...just think, next issue it could be your name on the masthead as editor! (Don't delay...call now...operators are standing by...)

The year ahead is already taking shape: We have a seminar about writing a book planned for October, our Christmas book drive in December and we hope to offer a second seminar in the spring. Any ideas you have to share are always welcome. Is there specific training or professional development you feel would be of benefit to our chapter members? What do you think about a speed-networking night where we can each spend 5 minutes getting to know another chapter member before moving on to the next person? How about a games night?

I'm hoping to connect with each of you over the next few months to find out what you are hoping for through your membership in PWAC London, and also what talents you are able to share. Please drop me a line (dk.wolfe@sympatico.ca), give me a call (519-660-5275 x5432 most days or 519-645-6340 at home) and arrange a time to chat or, I'll see you at pub night!

Kym

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## From the Editor

How did we get by before the Internet?

**When I volunteered** to take on the job of Newsletter Editor, I didn't realize that my life would have several twists and turns in a very short time frame.

Needless to say, the newsletter is late because of this, but good things are worth waiting for. I hope you feel that way once you have read this masterpiece! I do apologize for the delay and want to say that things should be getting back to normal very soon.

I have resigned myself to the fact that I have no idea how I functioned before the days of the Internet and Call Display. In fact last week I had to use a typewriter and I don't know how I even passed the typing courses when I was in school. The past few weeks have been very testy for me.

Sympatico has been less than user-friendly for me during the past month. Now that my internet is working properly, we have started a major house renovation. When you are working on an eighty-year-old house, you anticipate pains and problems, but I didn't anticipate several days without power and only one bathroom.

I also didn't expect dust to the point where I had to stay out of my house and become a "transient bag lady." If you happen to see me walking down your street pushing a shopping cart with my computer and other worldly possessions please be nice and offer me a cup of tea or something.

I thought being self-employed would be great and it is. The only problem is that with all the things going on in my house, I don't have a boss to rag out at. I can only talk to myself and hope that I don't start answering!

Nancy McSloy  
Editor

## Vice-President's Message

A focus on contributing and learning...

**I feel like the hitting coach** of the New York Yankees these days. I mean, what batting tips can you offer Derek Jeter and Alex Rodriguez? As the new vice-president of our chapter, I'm still a little awestruck by the talent around me. My fledgling freelance career pales in comparison to the "stars" that comprise our chapter.

So what can a relative newbie like me contribute to our "team"? Well, like the Yankees hitting coach, I can offer a positive voice, encouragement and suggestions, without, of course, messing with the successful formula already in place. I can work hard, share my passion for writing and help bring the team together to discuss potential improvements.

I can also assist in planning and promoting additional chapter events, such as the seminar on book writing slated for October. For more information, check out our website at [www.pwaclondon.org](http://www.pwaclondon.org).

Most of all, I can learn from the "stars" in our chapter and revel in the opportunity to work with such a talented group. Armed with this approach, I'm looking forward to serving as vice-president on a "team" that's destined to hit its share of home runs this year.

Happy Writing,

Kevin Glew  
Vice-President

## Getting to Know...

### Kym Wolfe

With questions by Mark Kearney



#### Q. Why did you become a writer?

A. My writing days go back to high school when I was a “teen beat” reporter for the Sault Star. There were two writers from each high school in the city, and we wrote about cool and interesting things happening in our respective schools. The Teen Page ran once a month, and they gave it two whole pages of coverage (you’ve got to love smaller communities!) Anyway, it was a great way to make money (30 cents per column inch), and I really enjoyed it. In retrospect I probably should have studied journalism at university instead of business. It’s certainly something I’ve always loved to do. Writing has been a part of every job I’ve had—usually things like proposals and reports, not nearly as interesting as the stuff I’m writing as a freelancer.

#### Q. You’ve written about a lot of different topics, especially about London. Is there a type of story you like best?

A. Regardless of the topic, the thing I like best is meeting the people behind the story. Whether an article is about their business or event, or the impact that some issue has had on them, I love hearing people share their stories. Community-based events and lifestyle stories are the most fun, but I’ve also tackled meatier topics that required extensive research and I’ve enjoyed those too, but in a different way.

#### Q. What stands out for you in your earliest days as a professional writer?

A. I took Mark Kearney’s “Writing For Fun and Profit” in the fall of 2003, mainly because of Cyndi Mills (a former PWAC member). She was looking to kickstart her writing career in London, and at that point I looked upon it as a personal interest class, never dreaming it would lead to a career for me as well. The first pieces I sold were class assignments that Mark encouraged me to pitch. What stands out for me is how quickly things took off—it was, in some ways, the perfect storm—I was in touch with the right people at the right time with the right story ideas, and was very fortunate that it all came together. I’ve been busy every since.

#### Q. What’s been the highlight of your writing career?

A. Nothing I would call a big highlight so far, but a lot of high points. The first story I sold, the first one I saw in the newspaper, and the first cheque I got in the mail. The first time an editor assigned a story without me having to pitch it—it was like “I’ve got this story and I want you to write it,” and that was such a confidence booster.

#### Q. Tell us a bit about your other day job

A. For the past seven years, I’ve been a program coordinator for the London Military Family Resource Centre. It’s a non-profit agency that provides programs and services for Canadian Forces families. At the moment my program areas are personal development, employment assistance and second language training. Mainly I organize a lot of events, run workshops, write resumes, help people with their job search and hook them into French classes. I also do some deployment support, working with families when their soldier has been sent overseas. For the past year I’ve also been responsible for PR/communications and a new outreach program for families across Southwestern Ontario.

#### Q. Now, complete this phrase: If I weren’t writing, I’d ...

A. ...be back in school part-time or doing more volunteer work. I thrive on variety and being busy, so before I started writing I did both continuing education courses and volunteer work in my spare time. I love learning about new things, and writing really satisfies that curious side of my personality.

#### Q. Do you ever plan to make the jump to having a career that’s nothing but writing?

A. I think when I’m retirement age I’ll likely be doing nothing but writing, but until then I need the stability of a steady paycheque. I work in the non-profit sector and have no pension plan, so I expect I’ll be writing for a good long time.

#### Q. What do you do in your spare time?

A. Most of my free time centres on my family and friends. With three teenagers in the house, there always seems to be something on the go, and I’m their main taxi driver. My two sons (Alex is 16, Jacob is almost 15) are very active in sports, so I spend a lot of time at basketball and hockey games during the school year. My daughter Sarah is 18 and just finished first year at Brescia. The kids have a much better social life than I do, although my husband and I make time for date nights and I have a few close friends and a sister in London that I get out with for girls’ nights out. I’m also a member of Toastmasters, which is a public speaking group. I’ve taken up different hobbies over the years—crafting, dancing, etc., but nothing on a regular basis. I also try to hit the gym when I can, but I definitely need to do that more often. I just don’t have enough spare time to fit it all in!

#### Q. Was there something about PWAC that motivated you to take on the job as chapter president?

A. The London executive are a great group of people—a lot of fun to be around and they’ve been really helpful to me since I started writing. Plus, writing is a solitary trade and it’s nice to connect with other writers. I haven’t had time to do much volunteer work for the past few years, but I know that organizations like this only thrive if people are willing to step into leadership roles. Apparently Carolyn also felt it was time for me to step up, so here I am!

Continued on Page 4...

## Reflection Time

Our national Past-President explores her new role...

by *Suzanne Boles*

**I've been told by my predecessors** that being PWAC National Past-President is the best job on the PWAC National Board. At this point, I'm not sure that I agree.

The reason I say this is that I feel that my predecessors worked diligently to ensure that PWAC would have a strong mandate, and thus clear direction about what the organization stands for and how it serves its members. I think that all that hard work has now come to fruition.

I have served on PWAC's Board in every position (except Treasurer). I began as Ontario Regional Director for three years, followed by Vice-President, then President. Now moving into my sixth year on the Board (the maximum number of consecutive years a member can serve on the National Board according to our bylaws) as Past-President. I now see how things done in the past have actually come together to create a strong mandate for the organization and one that has involved member feedback each step of the way.

After our Executive Director, John Degen, started with PWAC (a year after I joined the Board), and as he became more comfortable with his role, we started to see positive change come at a much faster pace. The onus on the Board to oversee every aspect of what staff are doing has been removed—thanks to our staff as well.

John has proven to be a strong leader and advocate for freelance writers in Canada. His background, working for Magazine's Canada, and the respect he has gained in the industry before he came to PWAC coupled with his outgoing nature, not to mention the fact that he too lives the life of a freelance writer (and now author as well), has allowed the Board to spend more time focusing on big-picture issues that affect our members. For all these reasons, and the fact that our Board works together fabulously, I found my job as PWAC President to be an easy one.

Sometimes I think it will be hard for me to go back to being a "member" and not seeing things from the perspective of a Board member, but in other ways I look forward to doing just that.

PWAC has changed a lot since I first joined 11 years ago. We have become the organization I was hoping we would be. We are leaders in the industry. We work in collaboration with other creator organizations, and have even spawned off new organizations—like the Canadian Freelance Union (CFU)—to help writers with issues that challenge our industry.

PWAC is also at the forefront when it comes to lobbying for writers' rights. That was particularly evident as many of us walked up and down Parliament Hill in May 2006, where we lobbied our MPs about issues related to the industry, and sat face-to-face with our country's government representatives, educating them about the challenges we face and soliciting their assistance.

We continue to do this today and will continue to do this forever, I hope, or at least until the time comes when rights are no longer an issue for writers because we will be treated with due respect and paid for additional use of our work without question.

Okay; maybe I'm wearing rose-coloured glasses, but having seen so many positive changes I can't believe otherwise. PWAC will be the organization that represents this industry. I believe that the result will be positive for all parties in the publishing industry.

In the meantime, I will take time to see whether being PWAC Past-President is the best job on the Board. I need to gear down and become a bit more selfish, focusing more on my writing, growing my business and enjoying more personal free time as well... Hey, that does sound like a pretty good job to me after all.

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*Suzanne Boles is a freelance writer in London, Ontario and Past-President of the Professional Writers Association of Canada. Her work has been featured in a variety of publications and corporate media*

### Seminar

#### THE NEXT CHAPTER: HOW TO SNAG YOUR FIRST BOOK DEAL

Date: Wednesday, October 24, 2007

Time: 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Location: Lerner's Room at the London Central Library

Cost: \$15 for PWAC members, \$20 for non-members

Our website at [www.pwac london.org](http://www.pwac london.org) will include more details on this seminar in the near future.

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### Getting to know Kym Wolfe *...Continued from Page 3*

#### Q. And the final scary question: tell us something about yourself that PWAC members might not know?

A. *When my kids were young I wrote the text for a picture book called "Higgle Me, Piggie Me." I sent it out to a few book publishers, but there were no takers. With recent discussions on the PWAC biz-list about self-publishing, I'm thinking I might dust off... I just need to find a good illustrator. Any suggestions would be greatly appreciated.*

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*Mark Kearney is an award-winning writer whose work has appeared in some 80 magazines and newspapers*

## PWAC's 2007 National Conference

A newbie perspective...

by Nancy McSloy

**If you have never attended** the PWAC Annual Conference, all I can say is “you don't know what you are missing.” Every member should attend at least once, preferably more often!

I could say that I was apprehensive about going, that I was dragged there, kicking and screaming, but that would be a blatant lie. Actually, I was very excited about going and hoped that it would be as great as I was anticipating. From the time I arrived on Thursday evening, until I had to catch the airport shuttle at some horrible single digit morning hour on Monday everything was absolutely wonderful.

I could also lie and say that the whole conference is work from the time you arrive until the time you leave, but it isn't. The workshops were great! The networking is wonderful as well. I made new friends, put faces to email addresses and got so many ideas from other members.

Friday's pub night and the banquet on Saturday night were a great way to relax and get away from “business” for a while as well. The executive certainly knew what they were doing when they planned the AGM for Sunday. That was what I thought would be the scary part of it all—*not!* It was over in about an hour. The business was covered and we were on our way to some last minute R&R in beautiful Vancouver.

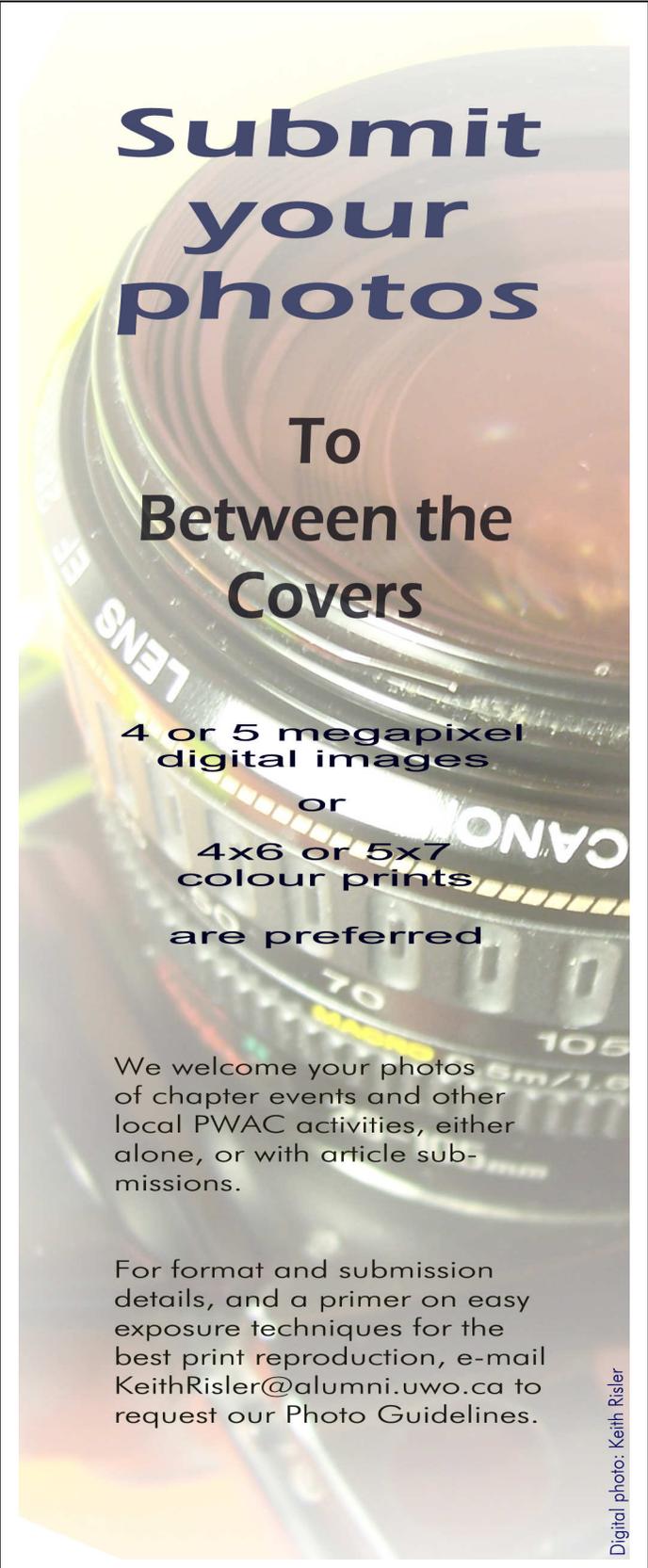
Granted, Vancouver to me is one of the most awesome cities in North America and it was great to get out and do some sight seeing and so on. It isn't all about location, the conference could be in some place like Drumbo, Ontario and it would be just as great because of the people!

High on my list of favorite cities is Winnipeg which is the location for next year. I think that as a chapter we should all go to Winnipeg. From talking with Doreen and getting a glimpse of what is in store for next year, you won't want to miss it.

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*Nancy McSloy is a London PWAC member.*

A close-up, artistic photograph of a camera lens, likely a Canon lens, with text overlaid. The lens is the central focus, showing its intricate details and the 'CANON' branding. The background is a soft, out-of-focus bokeh of light colors. The text is in a clean, sans-serif font, with 'Submit your photos' in a larger size than the rest.

Submit  
your  
photos

To  
Between the  
Covers

4 or 5 megapixel  
digital images

or

4x6 or 5x7  
colour prints

are preferred

We welcome your photos of chapter events and other local PWAC activities, either alone, or with article submissions.

For format and submission details, and a primer on easy exposure techniques for the best print reproduction, e-mail [KeithRisler@alumni.uwo.ca](mailto:KeithRisler@alumni.uwo.ca) to request our Photo Guidelines.

Vertical text on the right side of the image: Digital photo: Keith Risler

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## Whatever Happened To... In Stores Now!

Congratulations to Mark Kearney on a second printing of 3,000 copies...

**Whatever Happened To...? Catching Up With Canadian Icons** by Mark Kearney and Randy Ray has been reprinted. The second printing, which took place in June, consists of 3,000 copies.

"We're excited that the first print run sold out in seven months," says Kearney, who with Ray has written eight books about Canada.

"Canadians seem to be interested in knowing what's happened to a range of interesting people and things over the years and we've given them plenty of food for thought."

*Whatever Happened To...?* tracks the whereabouts of about 100 celebrities, newsmakers, places and things that have played a significant or interesting role in Canada's recent history.

Long after making headlines or burrowing their way into our collective consciousness, these icons have traveled different roads—or in some cases kept more quietly to the path that gained them attention in the first place.

*Whatever Happened To ...?* is available at bookstores across Canada or from the authors' website at [www.triviaguys.com](http://www.triviaguys.com)

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