

# 5 Stories from

*a continuing series of  
bulletins ...*

SAGE HILL WRITING EXPERIENCE



## *1. A Note from the Executive Director*

Well, hello all of you glorious writers!

I would call out a hearty WHOOPLA but somehow it doesn't quite make the cross-over translation onto the printed page. However, if you are inclined and able, you could, right now from where you are reading this, let out a wee WHOOPLA and think of Sage Hill!

At autumn's end as we approach the fading of the light, this is what I hope for all of you:

- that you are writing
- that your writing is strong and true
- that you are moved by what you have written, that you can cast a stern eye on those words that aren't in the right order, and that you employ your skills and muster your courage to align them in a way that responds to your imagination
- that you are confident you have the right to say the things you want to say in the way you want to say them
- that you are in the best of health so that your body and mind will continue to support your imagination
- that you continue to believe that you have important things to say in words on paper or screen
- that your readers are edified by what you have written
- and that you continue to write and that you believe in the power of the written word.

Do keep me posted on your work; it is the reason why I'm here.

All the very best,  
Philip Adams

## *2. Summer 2011 Poetry Colloquium by Al Rempel*

I arrived at Sage Hill with just over a hundred pages of poems, a rough idea for a manuscript, and an uncertainty of how I would fill my days there. Ten days! When my daughter was younger, I was lucky to get two hours a week to write, and even now that she's a little older, I don't get much more writing-time than that. What was I going to do with ten days?

I've never worked so hard on my poetry in my life. Aside from the hearty meals, the three group sessions our colloquium agreed on, the rich literary evenings filled with readings by writers and faculty (including a powerful keynote by John Lent), and lots of laughter afterward as we unwound from our days, I spent almost every minute working on my manuscript – both at the macro level of structure & arc, down to minute editing details of word choice and comma. This was in large part due to in-depth one-to-one meetings with Al Moritz, the poet-mentor I was privileged to work with.

What did I get done in ten days? I arrived with a bundle of poems and left with a polished manuscript. I made friendships with some amazing writers. I had great conversations with people that wanted to talk about writing, life, and everything else. And I came away with a set of tools that I'll be able to use on future projects. Ten days at Sage Hill was more than worth it; it transformed my writing and myself in ways that I'll still be discovering years from now.

Al Rempel

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## 3. *Our Experience In Our Words* By Emilie Moellenbeck and Rebekah Wall

In July 2011 Emilie and Bekah attended the Sage Hill Teen Writing Experience in Saskatoon. Here are a few questions they answered about their time there:

*What was your favorite thing about the Sage Hill Teen Writing Experience?*

**Bekah:** I think just being with other writers and getting to practice my skills was great.

**Emilie:** I don't know many other writers, and being able to experience and connect with them like that was amazing.

*Did you like the instructor (Jennifer Wynne Webber)?*

**Bekah:** Yes, Jennifer was a wonderful instructor! She did a good job!

**Emilie:** Jennifer was great, I learned a lot from her, things I don't get to in a school setting that really improved my writing. That and she was really friendly.

*What did you think of the speaker (Mary Bishop)?*

**Bekah:** I was pleased to have her come. She was a real encouragement to me as she is a more seasoned published author.

**Emilie:** Mary was a favourite author of mine when I was younger, and meeting her and having her know me was really special. She also did a great job.

*Did you find there were too many writing assignments or not enough?*

**Bekah:** I love writing assignments. I love the challenge of them.

**Emilie:** I also loved the writing assignments, they were more challenging and inspiring than anything else I've written with instruction. They helped me to write about things I normally never would.

*What did you take from the experience?*

**Bekah:** It was a good reminder that writing is a powerful tool that can be used for good or bad and that we, as writers, should learn how to polish our talents and use them to reach the world.

**Emilie:** I learned that telling the stories we dream of in our minds is something we should tell because no one else can tell them like we do. It reminded me that writing is an art medium, something beautiful to be enjoyed.

*Would you go back?*

**Bekah:** For sure! I am not able to attend the teen experience anymore, but I am considering attending the adult experience.

**Emilie:** Absolutely, I plan on applying next spring when the information is published.

*What has happened to your relationships with other participants?*

**Bekah:** I have stayed in contact with 3 of the girls I met and we get together every now and then. Meantime, we email!

**Emilie:** I'm in contact with four, some more than others. Emailing, Facebook, and meeting now and then.

*Was there anything new you might like to see added to the event?*

**Bekah:** I was thinking that there really should be a short session on self-publishing. Publishing companies were really promoted, but they aren't for everyone. I'm self-published and am doing quite well.

**Emilie:** We maybe could have a few more writing assignments. The whole experience was done really well by everyone involved.

You are the Sage Hill  
experience!

We believe in what you're  
doing and our support  
doesn't stop when you go  
home.

Please send us any  
information or news about  
your publications and  
readings.

We will publicize them for  
you.

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## *4. Alumni News*

Another alum doing well in the world is Jeanette Lynes. The poet and novelist attended the Poetry Colloquium twice, in 1999 and 2001 and then graduated to faculty ranks to co-lead the Intro group with Bob Currie from 2006 to 2008. She has been appointed Coordinator of the new MFA in Writing program at the University of Saskatchewan. For Lynes, who's been teaching at St. Francis Xavier University and editing its *Antigonish Review* for a number of years, the appointment is the culmination of a love affair with Saskatchewan that began with her first time at Sage Hill and continued with a Writer-In-Residence stint at the Saskatoon Public Library in 2005-06.

## *5. Happy Writers at the 2011 Summer Adult Experience*

