

The Junior Achievement program manager is always looking for new volunteer advisors from the business community. Advisors last year were: Susan Charbonneau and Michael Stiff, Don King Insurance; George Devonshire; Denise Galloway, Lipton; Mary Scott, Wright's Guardian Drugs; Chris Henden, Highshore Real Estate; and Bob Branscombe, Picton Fire Department.

J.A. also receives financial support from local businesses and service groups, and it is hoped that continued support through funds and volunteers will keep the program going in the future.



COUNTY MAGAZINE

## Janet Lunn

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translating mythology into fiction, as she did in her 1979 book *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*, which was based on one of her favorite classic folk tales.

All of her stories have a sense of mythology, a sense of magic, a touch of the other world that legends grow from. Some people call them ghost stories, but there's much more involved than just the idea of spirits walking around.

"One of the things that's important to me with what I write is assembling time, people and places," she told a writer for *NEWEST Review* in 1983. "I love to get a sense of time shifting." Stories about what children experienced years ago parallels what children experience today. She tries to bring the past to life, "so children don't have that feeling of being born yesterday."

"What I really wanted to write about" in *Shadow in Hawthorn Bay*, she said in a recent interview, "was the loss of mythology, as I think it's a very important part of the whole Canadian experience."

She got the idea for the book after reading a remark by 1850's Canadian author Catherine Parr-Traill, who wrote, "how happy she was to see— and these were her words— 'that the ignorant Scots and Irish peasants had left their foolish superstitions behind them'. I remember the book falling in my lap and thinking, she's right, the mythology does not travel well."

Janet Lunn believes that legends and myths develop from the geography of a people and remain with their culture.

Canadians "haven't been here long enough, although there are stories about people from the early days here. If we had a couple of thousand years, all those people who were real once would become mythological and would take on mythical characteristics."

It was important for her to make this point in her new book, to emphasize what some other writers forget, that stories must be true to the times, the places and the people being written about. "I read stories about leprechauns travelling across the ocean. This is a false understanding of what happens. It doesn't happen like that. People will tell ghost stories ... of the old days, but everybody knows that they happened across the ocean. They didn't happen here."

Although she was born in the United States, Janet has been part of Canada since she studied at Queen's University in Kingston from 1947 to 1950. She feels strongly about the existence of a Canadian identity, but says too many writers once ignored it, fearing their work would be automatically branded as bland or boring.

In the Spring, 1987, edition of *School Libraries in Canada*, published by the Canadian School Library Association, she said that many children's books now reflect the Canadian character:

"What I see is that familiar, controlled, pragmatic exterior that's so often caricatured at home and abroad," she wrote. "I see the much maligned, so uncommon, common sense that is— to my mind— one of the finest qualities and I see the didacticism that's one of our most boring. I see, too, a depth of feeling, bubbling up from its underground spring into intense passion."

She believes Canadian children's books now have an international appeal.

"In Europe, they're more interested in Canadian children's literature" than books from many other countries. U.S. writers, in particular, are guilty of too much formula writing, of dealing with issues such as divorce and family separation too tritely, with the message more important than the quality of the story.

To create the historic flavour of her novels, Janet Lunn talks ceaselessly with people she meets, delving into their communities, into the stories that remain from previous generations.

Early journals and letters tell her that Canada was formed on the "strong, uneasy relationship between the Anglo-Saxon personality of the United Empire Loyalists and the not-much-later English immigrants, on the one hand, and the Celtic Scots, Irish and Breton French on the other." Later immigrants, with more diverse backgrounds and ancestry, added their own flavour to the mix, but the survival mentality of the early pioneers remains.

She says it took several generations for people to look upon themselves as part of this country, instead of as immigrants from other places. It is a feeling she can relate to.

When she married fellow student Richard Lunn, who grew up at Niles Corners, in the County, Janet Alfred began to feel that the U.S. was not her country. She didn't stop caring about it, but she stopped thinking of it as her home. A naturalized Canadian