

Colborne principal publishes a special anthology

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CECILIA NASMITH
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COLBORNE — Unlike most anthologies where each story stands alone, Jessica Outram's new book *The Writing Spiral* explores themes, encourages discussion and invites action.

Subtitled *Learning As A Writer*, it began as an anthology project.

"There are 30 contributors from across Ontario," Outram said during an interview conducted during a break from her duties as principal of Colborne Public School.

"I put out a call for submissions — stories, memoirs, poems about learning and writing. As I started piecing it together, a structure arose and I realized it wasn't just one spiral but many spirals, much like the spiral pattern in a sunflower," she said, explaining the sunflower design on the book's cover. This natural wonder illustrates how one spiral flows from the next and so on.

The book is organized into eight spirals: creativity and process, honesty and courage, solitude and self-awareness, community and connection, ambition and audience, perseverance and diligence, curiosity and adventure, and energy and love.

Each spiral poses questions, she said. For example, the first spiral looks at lessons on learning and writing that spiral through our lives repeatedly. The second examines issues involved with sharing a story — like whose story is it to share?

"You don't sit down and learn about the writing process once — you learn about it with every project you do. It's the same with creativity," Outram said.

"The book asks questions and provides narrative responses.

"Rather than an anthology where every story sits alone, I set up a lens for the reader to view it through if they choose," she said.

"I wanted to integrate with learning theory throughout — so if someone works through the book, they change from beginning to end."

Outram includes calls to action throughout (which she calls stone carvings) and exercises she means as an invitation



Displaying her new book during an interview in her office, Colborne Public School Principal Jessica Outram is pleased that *The Writing Spiral: Learning As A Writer* is much more than just a simple anthology.

to engage in ideas — "act and reflect, act and reflect, and keep doing that," she said.

Having been involved in writing herself for about 15 years, she started the project by soliciting contributions from fellow members of the Writers Community of Durham Region and Northumberland's Spirit of the Hills writing group. Then, those people who received her e-mails

passed them along to other writers and writers' groups.

Like a spiral, Outram noted. "I think we have four writers from Owen Sound. Their whole writing group submitted, and four stories got in. I've never been to Owen Sound — isn't that delightful!"

"I was visiting my parents in Parry Sound, and I stopped and met another contributor from

the Barrie area," she added.

Contributors represent the spectrum from emerging writers who have never been published to Catherine Graham, who won the poetry prize from the International Federation of Authors.

"That's important in teaching as well — you need a variety of examples to learn from," Outram said.

Along with the sunflower

symbol on the front of the book, she is proud to point out the back cover, which contains an endorsement from Antanas Sileika, director of the Humber School for Writers.

The *Writing Spiral: Learning As A Writer* is now available in Cobourg at The Avid Reader.

cecilia.nasmith@sunmedia.ca
twitter.com/NT_cnasmith

IN BRIEF

Williams appointed to Property Standards Committee

There was a quick appointment to the Cramahe Township Property Standards Committee approved by council Tuesday.

Tim Williams will join municipal staff member Natalie Moroz-Cornell and citizen Alan Broatch to bring to committee membership up to standard.

There is some urgency to fill the vacancy. A property owner who has been ordered to bring a property up to standard is appealing the order. A hearing must go before the Property Standards Committee by next Tuesday, Nov. 11.

Coats for kids drive underway

A two-week campaign to collect winter coats for kids is underway in Colborne. Prospect Missionary Church, King St. E. and Elgin St., is asking donations of coats be brought to the church between 2 and 4:40 p.m. any day until Nov. 14. Enter through the back door of the church.

Inaugural meeting of new council Dec. 2

The inaugural meeting of the newly elected Cramahe Township council will be Tuesday, Dec. 2, 7 p.m. at the Keeler Centre in Colborne.

At this week's meeting of council on Tuesday, held at Castleton Town Hall, only three members of the incumbent five-seat council were in attendance: Mayor-elect Marc Coombs, elected Councillor Ed Van Egmond and Councillor Pat Westrope, who lost the mayoralty race to Coombs. Defeated Deputy mayor Jim Williams and Councillor Clinton Breau were not in attendance. New Deputy mayor Sandra Arthur was in the audience.