

The Purloined Newsletter



A CAPITAL CRIME WRITERS PUBLICATION

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Inside this issue:

From the President Susan Gates	2
Notes from the Editor Katherine Hobbs	3
Forensic Corner: H is for Hanging	4
MJ Maffini Steps over to the Dark Side	6
Blog Book Tours—Part 2 Cyber schmoozing	7
Critique Groups 101: September Meeting Report	9
The final bits	10

Next Meeting — October 8, 2008

Getting Into Character



Photo: Laird Mackintosh

On Wednesday October 8, we welcome the National Art Centre's artistic director **Peter Hinton**. Peter will demonstrate how using techniques actors use to get in character can help writers flesh out their stories and reveal emotion through actions and gestures.

Expect a dazzling, entertaining evening!

See you there,
Deborah Gyapong
Program Committee

Update on membership!

Hello Again from the CCW Membership Secretary,

I'm happy to say that we had over 20 people pay their membership fees at our first of the season meeting on September 10th.

You can see me and pay your dues at our next meeting on October 8th or check out our website for information on how to pay your fees via cheque using regular mail.

At the end of October all paid members will receive new membership access details via email which will give you access to the member only section of the www.CapitalCrimeWriter.com website.

Thank you for your ongoing support!
Darlene Cole
Membership Secretary



Capital Crime Writers is an organization of writers and editors working in the mystery field, as well as readers who love the genre.

We meet on the second Wednesday of each month to discuss writing and crime. Meetings are suspended in July and August for the summer.

Membership fees are: \$30 per year, \$15 corresponding.

Meetings are held in Room 156 at the Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington Street beginning at 7:00 p.m.

From the President—Susan Gates

The CCW Executive

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“Where do you get your ideas?” is a question often asked of published writers. But I wonder if the better question from the writer’s point of view, isn’t “How do ideas come?”

I know a number of perfectly normal-looking writers whose neighbours would live in fear and suspicion if they were to read any of my acquaintances’ fiction. Still other writers — when they feel safe enough to share the twisted workings of their minds — you come to realize, process their observations of the world through a different prism.

Then there are the ideas that come from feelings about and passionate responses to other people, injustices or certain circumstance.

For some of us, constructing ideas for a plot is a torturous experience (I fall into this category). How do you present a cast of characters or discuss a particular issue inside a story that will entertain? I’m hesitant to let my writing be *too* dramatic — worrying about the believability factor. As a result, I risk having my tales appear passive or lacking in conflict.

Even when we are lucky enough to capture a few ideas, what then? How do you save and store your ideas? How do you determine if a given idea is novel-length or short story-sized? Is this idea “good” (i.e. useful) or “bad” (i.e. doesn’t serve your story well)?

How can an idea be fleshed out and manipulated to translate it into a full-fledged plot?

For October’s meeting, please give these concepts some thought. We’ll take time to share our ideas about Ideas before we welcome our October guest, Peter Hinton who is the Artistic Director of English Theatre at the National Arts Centre.

Peter will be asking us to step outside the writer’s cage and think like actors and directors do when they create their characters for the stage.

What an exciting opportunity to explore dramatic techniques and loosen up the strictures we writers can build up in our little offices hunched over our keyboards! So let’s be brave and come willing to play along. The side effect of this workshop? Have your pens handy, because I predict we’ll be astounded at the tidal wave of ideas.

Susan

“Be careful how you judge others...” As Scottish author J.M. Barrie said, “Never ascribe to an opponent motives meaner than your own...”

From the Editor—Katherine Hobbs



I have a number of scars on my body. I slid into a small town in Spain, quite literally on my side, but still gripping the handlebars. The road rash wasn't a pretty sight on the beach. I slashed my palm slicing a crusty bun exactly how you're told not to use a knife (it's away from you, not towards you.) When I fell out of a tree my grandfather bound my gaping wound with electrical tape, telling me, "it's better than stitches," although the big white scar on my shin proves definitely proves him wrong.

However I've never had to experience the emotional scars that would haunt me if I were witness to a judicial execution. Even if it was Saddam Hussein about to be executed, I don't want to see it.

But five thousand Ottawans ventured out on a cold winter's night to witness the hanging of

Patrick Whelan on February 11, 1869 for the killing of Thomas McGee. Five thousand? What would it take nowadays to get five thousand people out on a snowy February night, other than slashed gas prices at Castlefrank and Hazeldean? But all those people out for a hanging?

When I wrote Forensic Corner this month, I thought about the entertainment factor wrapped up in watching someone put to death. It may be a moot point today... the death penalty was abolished in Canada in 1976, and the last man hanged in the Ottawa jail was in 1946. By then executions were private. Five months after Whelan's death, Canadian law was changed and public hanging was banned.

Well, in theory, hangings were supposed to be private. Hanging was a prolific punishment applied for murder, rape and treason. Fully private executions being fairly costly, were difficult for some of the smaller county jails to organize.

In 1902, Stanislaus Lacroix was hanged in Hull for killing his wife. Eager spectators climbed buildings and telephone poles to peer into the jail yard.

The hanging of Peter Balcombe in Cornwall in 1954 attracted a boisterous crowd.

"The canvas-covered top of the gallows was plainly visible from the street. The crowd, many of them teenagers including young girls, was in a holiday mood, shooting off firecrackers, joking and laughing for more than two hours before the execution took place. Several times, police details had to clear the streets so vehicles could pass as the onlookers pressed forward for better vantage points.." **(Toronto Star, May 25, 1954, pp. 1-2)**

It wasn't quite as much fun to be incarcerated in The Ottawa Jail, originally known as The Nicholas Street Gaol. It opened in 1862 and closed in 1972 due to inhumane conditions.

As well as housing men, children over 12 years old and women (and their kids if no one could take them) were confined there.

The solitary confinement cells on the lower level were cold and drafty. Inmates would be chained naked face down to the cement floor for 23 hours and 45 minutes a day. The 15 minute break was for your once-a-day feeding. You could be held there anywhere from 48 hours to six months.

I visited the jail last year on the anniversary of Whelan's death to

witness the ceremonial re-enactment of his hanging.

I waited, standing silently outside in the snow-covered yard below the gallows. A disembodied voice pronounced Whelan's sentence, then his last words were read out, "God save Ireland. God save my soul."

The metal trap doors clanked open. A noose dropped down -- and fell all the way to the ground. It lay at my feet for a few moments before being slowly winched upwards to a more appropriate length, somewhat spoiling the drama of the moment.

At the end of his trial Whelan asked that his body be sent back to Montreal. He proclaimed, "No grass will grow on my grave." In order not to make him a hero amongst the Irish, his body was buried in an unknown area.

When building the McKenzie King bridge a great number of skeletons were found. It's rumoured prisoners who weren't quite so *justly* hanged as Whelan had their bodies disposed of there. It's believed Whelan probably ended up there too. If so, no grass ever did grow on his grave.

A little something to think about the next time you drive over the bridge...

Katherine

Forensic corner : H is for Hanging

In December, 2006 the world watched as Saddam Hussein was hanged in Iraq. The official footage showed him being led to the gallows, and ended after his head was in the hangman's noose. For those of us living in Canada hanging may seem more synonymous with lynching in the Deep South, and justice-on-the-spot hangings in the Wild West. But hanging is still a legal method of judicial execution in 58 countries and in some US states, such as Washington State and Delaware where three prisoners have been hanged since 1976.

Lethal injection has largely replaced hanging as it's believed to be a more humane form of execution, but hanging, when carried out with modern techniques, can be one of the quickest and most painless ways to be executed. I stress the words *can be*, because there are a number of methods for hanging someone, and some are definitely better than others.

The Long Drop

The long drop is touted as the most humane way to go. For the person being executed, the actual experience of the hanging lasts anywhere from a few seconds to a few minutes, or at least that is the belief by forensic scientists. The distance the body drops can be anywhere from 1.5 to 2.7 meters (5 to 8 feet).

With the knot of the noose placed at the left side of the neck under the jaw, the jolt to the neck at the end of the



The gallows at the Ottawa Jail.

drop is enough to break or dislocate the neck bone (called the axis), which in turn should sever the spinal cord. If the hangman jerks up on the rope at the precise moment when the drop is ending, the better the chance the neck will break.

When the neck breaks and severs the spine, blood pressure drops down to nothing in about a second and the subject loses consciousness.

Brain death takes several

minutes to occur and complete death more than 15 or 20 minutes, but the person at the end of the rope most

subject usually dies of strangulation and compression of the arteries in the neck.

Strangulation is a more gruesome experience than when the neck breaks. Prior to 1850, it was the main method used for hanging.

Suspension Hanging

In suspension hanging the subject is jerked into the air instead of being dropped. Suspension hanging is similar to the long drop, except the gallows are movable, so that the noose can be raised once the condemned is in place. This method is currently used in Iran, where tank gun barrels or mobile cranes are used to hoist the condemned into the air.

Standard Drop

In standard drop the subject falls about 1.2 to 1.8 meters (four to six feet). Depending on the weight and build of the condemned person, this drop will either break the neck and spinal cord, or cause death by strangulation. Unconsciousness occurs from a few seconds to a few minutes, but it's blind luck if it's only a few seconds.

This method began in the mid-19th century in English-speaking countries and those countries under English influence. It was considered an advance on the short drop because it was intended to be sufficient to break the person's neck. This method was used to execute condemned Nazis after the Nuremberg Trials.

likely can't feel any of it.

Short Drop

The short drop is done by placing the condemned prisoner on the back of a cart, horse, or other vehicle, with the noose around the neck. The vehicle is moved away, and the person is left dangling from the rope.

The drop is between approximately .5 of a meter to about a meter and a half (a few inches to a few feet) and the

Forensic Corner: H is for Hanging (cont'd.)

Why Hanging Kills

The cause of death in hanging depends on a number of factors. When the body is dropped from a relatively high position, death is usually caused by the severing of the spinal cord (a functional decapitation). High cervical fracture frequently occurs. This has been called the

to a lack of oxygen. Classic signs of strangulation will be visible due to hemorrhaging (petechiae) which cause little blood marks on the face and in the eyes from burst blood capillaries. The tongue may protrude. This would be more common in short drop hangings.

Once the prisoner has lapsed into unconsciousness, rippling movements of the body may occur for some time. Generally this is attributed to nervous and muscular reflexes.

After death, the body typically shows marks of suspension: bruising and rope marks on the neck.

Sphincters relax spontaneously and urine and feces is evacuated.

In Britain, it was normal to leave the body hanging for an hour to ensure death.

Isn't that a lovely note to end on?

Obstruction of the carotid arteries affecting cerebral blood flow may occur, although their obstruction requires far more force than the obstruction of jugular veins, since they are deeper and the blood they contain has much higher pressure compared to the jugular veins.

If death has occurred through carotid artery obstruction or cervical fracture, the face will typically be pale and hemorrhaging will not occur.

When cerebral circulation is severely compromised, death occurs in four or more minutes from a lack of oxygen to the brain (cerebral hypoxia), and although the heart may continue to beat for some time, the person can no longer be resuscitated.

The time of death in such cases is a matter of convention. In judicial hangings, death is pronounced at cardiac arrest, which may occur at times from several minutes up to 15 minutes or longer.

"hangman's fracture" in medicine, even when it occurs due to other circumstances than hanging.

In the absence of a fracture, the blockage of the blood vessels becomes the major cause of death, rather than asphyxiation.

Obstruction of the veins from the brain via blockage of the internal jugular veins leads to a build-up of fluid (cerebral edema) and then lack of blood to the brain (cerebral ischemia).

The face becomes engorged and turns blue due



Death Row Cell—Ottawa Jail

Suicide by Hanging

In Canada, hanging is the most common method of suicide, and in the U.S., hanging is the second most common method after firearms. In Great Britain, where firearms are less easily available, as of 2001 hanging was the most common method among men and the second-most commonplace among women (after poisoning).

Forensic experts may often be able to tell if hanging is suicide or homicide, as each leaves a distinctive ligature mark. One of the hints they use is the hyoid bone. If broken, it often means the person has been murdered by manual choking.

DEFINITIONS:

VAGAL REFLEX: The carotid arteries in the neck which supply blood to the brain are compressed and the brain swells so much it ends up plugging the top of the spinal column; the Vagal nerve is pinched, which stops the heart, and the lack of oxygen getting to the lungs due to compression of the trachea causes loss of consciousness due to suffocation. It can take anywhere from 5 to 20 minutes to die.

HYOID BONE: The hyoid bone is a horseshoe shaped bone in the neck. It is the only bone in the human body not joined to any other bone. It is supported by the muscles of the neck and it supports the root of the tongue.

Stepping Over to the Dark Side with Mary Jane Maffini



**September 16, 2008
Ottawa Public Library**

A packed room greeted author Mary Jane Maffini for **Step Over to the Dark Side**.

So why does crime fiction matter? What makes a good mystery? What are the unwritten rules?

Mary Jane Maffini talked about all those things, and shared the trends and opportunities in contemporary crime and mystery fiction in Canada and elsewhere.

The workshop explored the building blocks of mystery: character, plot and setting, as well as other tools needed to involve and captivate your readers. Mary Jane talked about local and national crime writing organizations, like Capital Crime Writers and Crime Writers of Canada, for networking and support opportunities, and current markets. Participants were sent away list of crime writing guides, reference materials, websites and next steps. All the essential tools to embark on a life of crime!

The Writers' Trust

This workshop was sponsored by The Writers' Trust (www.writerstrust.com) who believe that the remarkable talents of Canadian writers must not only be widely recognized and applauded; they must be rewarded. The Writers' Trust is a unique institution, providing a level of support unmatched by any other non-governmental organization or foundation. Through its various programs and awards, it celebrates the talent and achievements of Canada's novelists and poets, biographers, and other non-fiction writers. At the same time, it is making an important investment in nationhood, in the development of a cultural legacy.

Blog Book Tours: Part 2 – Cyberschmoozing

Last month we covered the benefits of going on a virtual book tour, getting started on creating a blog, finding blog hosts for your book tour, and naming some book-marks.

Next step is to GET NETWORKING!

John Grisham's mother would hang around

fans read more than one book a year – so there is plenty of room for all of us. So use everyone in your social arena to help create a following.

MySpace and Facebook profiles are a brilliant starter as they are the most popular social media sites. MySpace has been designed for artists of every type and has a

for building free, single pages about whatever you are passionate about. The page (or *lens* in Squidoo terms) would be your view on a topic. It's an easy-to-build, single web page that can point to your blog, or a favorite link, RSS feeds, Flickr photos, or Amazon books for starters. So if someone is looking for recommended information fast, your *lens* gets them started in the right direction.

Highlight books, blogs, videos, or just spread the word about stuff you love. But once you have created it, the idea is to email it to everyone you know. You can also post your *lens* to your blog. And you can link to the *lens* on Facebook or LinkedIn, anywhere you have a profile on the net – and make sure you add it to your email signature.

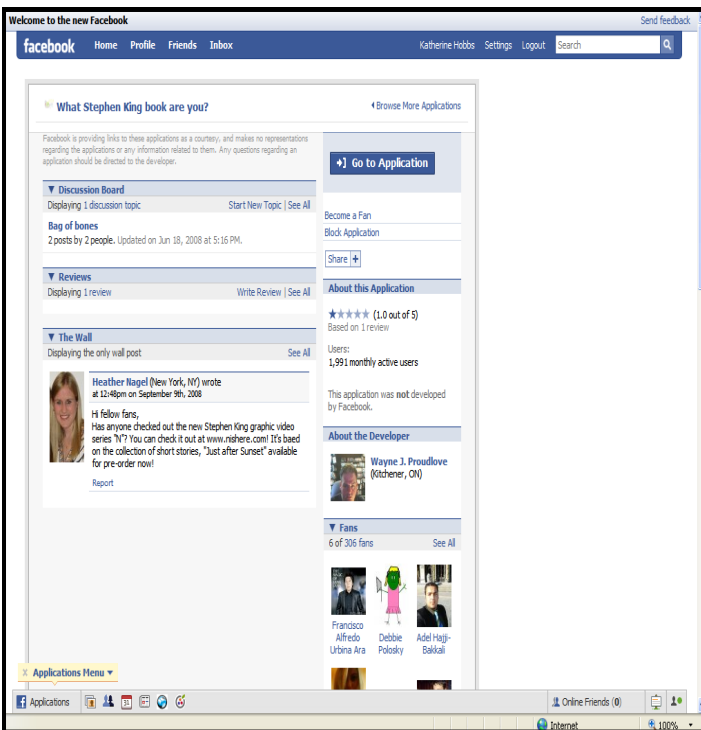
www.goodreads.com
Ever wanted a better way to see what your friends are reading? Keep track of what you've read or would like to read? Maybe get book recommendations? Every once in a while you run into a friend who tells you about this, "great new book I'm reading." And suddenly you're excited to read it.

It's that kind of excitement that Goodreads is all about. Its mission is to improve the process of reading and learning throughout the world. Most book recommendation websites work by listing random people's reviews.

On Goodreads, when a person adds a book to the site, all their friends can see what they thought of it. The idea is that people are more likely to get excited about a book their friend recommends than a suggestion from a stranger.

Goodreads is a place where you can see what your friends are reading and vice versa. You can create "bookshelves" to organize what you've read (or want to read). You can comment on each other's reviews.

WWW.BLOGHER.com
Blogger is a blogging community specifically for women. It provides an opportunity to gain additional exposure for your blogs and your ideas (think about your book!) and you can even start your first blog on the site. It has more than 13,000 members and 10,000 blogs on its blog list, creating a community that is fun, informative and supportive.



bookstores in Austin talking up her son's books. Time to get your friends and family talking you up – bragging, as it were.

And to paraphrase a piece of advice author Mary Jane Maffini gave in her workshop -- make sure you rely on other mystery writers. Mystery

blog feature which is easy to do. But there are plenty of other types of social networking sites that might work for you as well. Here are but a few:

www.squidoo.com
Squidoo's goal is to bring the power of recommendation to the net. Squidoo is a popular site

Blog Book Tours: Cyberschmoozing (Cont'd)

www.librarything.com
LibraryThing is a site for book lovers. Enter what you're reading now, or your whole library—it's an easy, library-quality catalog. LibraryThing connects you with people who read the same things; you can find people with eerily similar tastes in the world's largest book club.

Again with this site you can import from anywhere, you can get recommendations, tag your books, etc. You can enter 200 books for free, then as many as you like for \$10 a year. The members of LibraryThing have catalogued more than thirty million books.

www.shelfari.com
Shelfari lets you build a virtual shelf to display the books you've read, want to read or are reading now. Then you get to be the critic by rating and reviewing your books so your friends can see what you think. Connect with your friends to see which books you have in common, what they're reading or what they think of the books they've read.

Ask your friends for book recommendations or create a group where you can talk about your books. See what other members are reading and what books are the most

popular. You can even see the top books in your favorite genre.

Time to Schmooze
But don't stop with these sites. There are many more and not enough room to talk about them all here. You might want to check them out further:

- **www.linkedin.com**
Over 25 million professionals use LinkedIn.
- Lovin' Life on the flip side <http://www.eons.com/> which is a site for boomers (over 50)
- **Vox.com** Vox is a free personal blogging site. It's a great place to build your online neighborhood. Add seamless integration with popular web services like Flickr and YouTube.
- **Ning.com** This is where Murder Must Advertise is housed. Create your own social network!

And a final word about **www.YouTube.com**. Don't forget YouTube — you can post short videos of you doing just about anything. If you can sing and dance (as well as write) more's the better!

I've watched Ian Rankin talking about the room he

writes in. Actually discussing the objects around him. Fascinating. No, really, it is!

Sign on to YouTube and do a search of Ian Rankin. You will be amazed by how many cool videos turn up.

So why not make October the month you go forth and schmooze...

Coming up in November: You're ready to start planning your tour. Most blog tours run from two to three weeks with stops at different blogs (this is different than casual visits to blogs that you can work into your schedule anytime.) We'll have information on choosing your tour hosts, and creating buzz on the blog sites you are going to visit on your tour.

MySpace Page 1 of 2

Michael Connelly
Category: Literature & Arts
Type: Public Membership
Founded: Aug 30, 2004 10:39 PM
Location: Los Angeles, CALIFORNIA - US
Members: 217

For those impressed with the mystery novels of Michael Connelly.

Michael Connelly (217 Members)

Book'n Danne	Casey & John	Sean V. Lehoist	catchjoe
Trey	jayboy	BIGROCKJAMIE	The Hollywood Military Advisor

Are You Writing a Book?
Publish Your Book Quickly & Easily. Get Your Free Publishing Guide Now!
www.iUniverse.com

Forum Topic	Posts	Last Post	Topic Starter
New Connelly Book for 2008	3	Jul 17, 2008 4:26 PM by: Sean V. Lehoist	Dec 15, 2007 2:03 AM by: Willy T-Bird (The Decade)
Harry Bosch, hero or rogue cop?	3	Jul 17, 2008 4:26 PM by: Sean V. Lehoist	Jan 7, 2008 9:20 PM by: Robert

http://groups.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=groups.groupProfile&groupId=100 18/09/2008

Critiquing 101: Report on September's Meeting

"You need a thick skin. If you consider your writing as your child, and you don't want your child criticized, then a critique group is not the place for you," said panellist Jane Watson on September 10th's first meeting of the year.

Fellow panellists Robin Harlick, Vicki Cameron, Sheila Gallant Halloran and Bev Panasky discussed what critique

Gallant-Halloran. "But in a critique group if I don't like it, I have to read it, and I have to figure out why I don't like it."

Other bits of safe advice came from Cameron



Panellist Jane Watson talks to Karen Moore following the meeting.



Susan Gates presents a bouquet to Brenda Chapman. Foreground right: Trevor Hodge Background (l-r): Robin Harlick and Vicki Cameron

groups were, what a writer can expect and should expect, and how much it all hurts. "I quit writing for seven months after receiving a critique of my first book," said Harlick. "Then I decided to pick it up again, take their advice, and now I am on my fourth published book."

"In my real life if I'm reading a book and don't like it, I put it aside, said

who advised "have respect for one another, trust one another and resist the need to argue."

Keeping quiet and thanking your critiquer/torturer seemed to be a common theme, as was everyone's assertion that it truly hurts. It hurts, but it's necessary. Writers have the ability to articulate what is

wrong versus regular readers — who may not like it, but can't pinpoint why.

At this point in her career Harlick no longer uses a critique group, but rather waits until the end, "I worry that if I received critiques chapter by chapter, I will lose my way in the story." Rather she has designated

subject matter experts who read the finished product.

A list of critique web resources provided at the meeting is on page 10.

Susan Gates kicked off the meeting by thanking Brenda Chapman for her role as chair during the last two years and Barbara Fradkin for her role as past chair and her chairmanship of the CCW prior to that.



Barbara Fradkin hugs Susan Gates after receiving her bouquet.

Critique Web Reference Links

<http://www.crayne.com/howcrit.html>

<http://www.writing-world.com/fiction/fiction03.html>

http://www.ehow.com/how_2128576_critique-fiction-writing-workshops.html

http://www.ehow.com/how_4477531_critique-your-fiction.html

<http://right-writing.com/critique.html>

<http://fictionfactor.com/articles/workshopwork.html>

<http://fictionfactor.com/articles/killercritique.html>

<http://fictionfactor.com/articles/critiquing.html>

www.capitalcrimewriters.com

Events:

Ottawa Writers Festival

Criminal Minds takes place on Sunday, October 19th at 6:00 p.m., and will see famed mystery writers gather for readings, followed by an intimate discussion on the craft of weaving thrillers and a book signing. All events take place at the Library and Archives of Canada (395 Wellington).

With **Andrew Pyper** (whose fourth novel *The Killing Circle* is being adapted to film by Cowboy Films), **Maureen Jennings** (recently nominated for the Arthur Ellis Award), and internationally-acclaimed author **Peter Robinson** on hand, it's sure to be an engaging and exciting opportunity for mystery readers - as well as writers -- to fuel their passion for the genre.

Ticket prices: Single event tickets -- \$15 (\$10 for students and seniors) (Events before 6 p.m., Monday - Friday are \$10/ \$5) Festival Passes -- \$85 (\$75 for students and seniors)

A bundle of 5 tickets for \$55. Or FREE for Carleton University students!

More info: <http://www.writersfestival.org/>

Contests:

You can find more info at:

<http://www.capitalcrimewriters.com/newSite/CCWmembers/index.html>

CBC Literary Awards Deadline Nov. 1 Website: www.cbc.ca/literaryawards

Writers' Collective Non-Fiction Contest

Deadline Nov. 1 Website: <http://writerscollective.uwinnipeg.ca/contest.html>

Wyn Lit 73 Hour Novella Writing Contest Website: <http://www.wynter.ca>