



News Release

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A Creative Writers Reading Series to take place at NMCC in April

Aroostook County - A Creative Writers Reading Series will take place at Northern Maine Community College in April in honor of both National Community College Month and National Poetry Month. Three noon-time sessions will be held featuring readings from both a guest writer as well as students from the College.

The reading series will take place on three consecutive Thursdays, April 15, 22 and 29, at noon in the College's library. Each of the days will feature a specific genre of writing: poetry, fiction and non-fiction. Students from the College's creative writing class will each read briefly from their own original work, followed by a guest writer who will read from his or her own published work and then answer questions about the work, experiences as a writer, or other areas of interest from audience members.

"Although the month is intended to celebrate poetry, we wanted to broaden our approach to a celebration of literature and reading in order to better meet the diverse interests of our students," said Jan Grieco, NMCC instructor and coordinator of the reading series. "Not only is this a wonderful opportunity for our students, but we're hoping members of the surrounding communities will join us."

The series gets underway on Thursday, April 15, with writer Kasey Grieco as the featured guest speaker. Kasey Grieco lives in Westmanland with her husband and two sons. She received her Master's Degree in Fine Arts in Fiction from the University of Southern Maine's Stonecoast MFA program in 2004, and is a founding member of Simply Not Done, a collective of five women writers who conduct lectures, workshops and readings across New England. Her work has appeared in *Portland Magazine*, *Maine in Print*, *Echoes*, and *The MacGuffin*. Although Grieco normally works in fiction, she will be reading from a nonfiction memoir she is working on, which is about her experience raising chickens and children in rural Maine.

The April 22 reading will feature poet Anne Britting Oleson, a writer and teacher from central Maine. Her work has appeared in literary magazines nationwide, including *The Cafe Review*, *Cimarron Review*, and *The Valparaiso Poetry Review*. A chapbook, *The Church of St. Materiana*, was published by Moon Pie Press in 2007. Her second chapbook, *The Beauty of It*, received second place in the Sheltering Pines Press chapbook contest. She will be reading from this new book, which will be published this year. Britting Oleson is also a graduate of the Stonecoast MFA program of USM and a founding member of Simply Not Done.

Wrapping up the reading series on April 29 will be Shonna Milliken Humphrey, the executive director of the Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance, Maine's only statewide organization for writers and the literary arts. She holds an MFA in Nonfiction Writing and Literature from Bennington College. Her work has appeared in national anthologies, as well in regional publications. A native of Aroostook County, she now lives in southern Maine. Although she normally specializes in nonfiction, she has just written her first novel, *Show Me Good Land*, a work of fiction. The book will be published in April 2010 by Down East Books, kicking off the new Maine literature line from the publisher. Those in attendance will have the opportunity to hear an excerpt from the work before it is available to the general public.

Just as exciting to Grieco as the reading series is the fact that each of the featured writers will also be visiting her creative writing class after the public event in order to critique her students' work, to share with them both the process of being a professional writer and where inspiration comes from, and to answer questions about being a professional writer.

"This year is particularly unique, since all of our visiting writers have been working outside of their usual genre. Kasey's doing nonfiction as a fiction writer; Anne is doing poetry but currently has a novel being considered by an agent; and Shonna's specialty is nonfiction, but she is publishing a novel," explained Grieco. "This will help students understand that writing is not static. You don't have to be a poet or a novelist; you just have to be a writer willing to find the best way to tell the story."

This marks the third year that the creative writers reading series is taking place at the College. While the featured writers and many of the student writers have changed, the intent remains the same, according to Grieco. "This is such a terrific opportunity for my students to have their voices heard," she said. "It's also a wonderful opportunity for other students at the College and members of the public who love literature to hear original work by both experienced, published writers and talented beginners. It should prove to be an exciting combination."

Members of the campus and local communities are encouraged to attend the series, which begins this Thursday, April 15, at noon in the NMCC library.

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Kasey Grieco



Anne Britting Oleson



Shonna Milliken Humphrey