



# News Release

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## **A Celebration of Literature to take place at NMCC in April**

*Aroostook County* - *A Celebration of Literature* will be 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.

“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 one of the coordinators of the reading series. “Not only is this a wonderful opportunity for our students, but we’re really hoping members of the surrounding communities will join us.”

The reading series will take place on three consecutive Thursdays, April 10 – April 24, 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 her own published work and then answer questions about her work, her experiences as a writer, or other areas of interest from audience members.

Honoring the intent of the month, the first session, scheduled for April 10, will feature poetry. The guest reader will be Anne Britting Oleson, a writer who has worked in secondary education for twenty years. She recently earned an MFA from the Stonecoast MFA program at the University of Southern Maine. Her work has appeared in journals nationwide, and her chapbook, *The Church of St. Materiana*, was published in 2007 by Moon Pie Press. She has given readings in New York City as well as in venues across Maine. She is a founding member of Simply Not Done, an all-women reading, writing and teaching collective.

The guest reader for the April 17 event will be Kasey Grieco. Grieco writes fiction and non-fiction, and has taught English, literature, and writing at Emerson College, Northern Maine Community College, and the University of Maine at Presque Isle. She lives in Westmanland, Maine, with her husband, son, and dog. Her work has appeared in *Portland Magazine*, *The MacGuffin*, and *Echoes*. Readings from both the students and Grieco will focus on fiction.

Wrapping up the reading series on April 24 will be Rebecca Bearden Welsh, who will be addressing the genre of creative non-fiction. Bearden Walsh, who lives in Rumford and Boothbay, holds an MFA in creative nonfiction from the University of Southern Maine's Stonecoast program and is an associate of Amherst Writers and Artists. Her Boothbay-based summer workshop, the Willow Brook Farm Writing Series, is in its fourth season, and she is the founder of the Pennacook Writers' Guild in Rumford. Her essays and poetry have been published in *Echoes* and *The Notes*.

The series celebrating literature has been made possible through a grant from the Maine Writers' and Publishers' Alliance located in Portland that serves writers and publishers throughout the State.

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 is such a terrific opportunity for my students," said Grieco. "What we don't always make clear to students is that writing is a chronicle of our human experience. Many of my students are preparing for careers in the trades or business that are not traditionally associated with literature, which oftentimes has led those students to believe that there is no role for them. This is an opportunity to broaden their outlook and help them see that literature is for everyone. The hands-on work students are engaged in experimenting with form has helped make literature much more accessible to them."

Grieco's creative writing class is taking part in the *Celebration of Literature* reading series as part of a capstone project for the course. For the remainder of the project, they are working to produce an on-line literary magazine featuring their work.

"Collectively, these two projects are giving all these students a voice," explained Grieco. "It's exciting watching students who would potentially not have anything in common come together with a common voice and a common understanding."

In addition to the benefits to her students, Grieco believes that other students at the College and members of the public can also benefit from this opportunity.

"As a member of Maine Writers' and Publishers' Alliance, I have often heard concerns about the lack of literary opportunities and events in Aroostook County," said Grieco. "This event provides an opportunity for those who love literature to hear original work by both experienced, published writers and talented beginners. It should prove to be an exciting combination."

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