



News Release

Contact:
Jason Parent
Development and
College Relations Office
33 Edgemont Drive
Presque Isle, ME 04769
Phone: (207) 768-2808
Fax: (207) 760-1101
jparent@nmcc.edu

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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.

“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 really hoping members of the surrounding communities will join us.”

The reading series will take place on three consecutive Thursdays, April 9 – 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 from a specific genre—fiction, non-fiction or poetry—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.

“Generally, people think of creative writing either as fluffy and unimportant or incredibly easy. The students who take this class and who are part of this series come away with a solid understanding of the amount of work it takes to create really good writing,” said Grieco. “They also develop a new appreciation of how literature serves as another way of preserving history, with a focus on the human experience. That, after all, is what creative writing really is about.”

Grieco herself will kick-off the first session in the series, featuring fiction writing, on April 9. Grieco is a former journalist who earned an MFA in fiction from the University of Southern Maine’s Stonecoast program, and is a member of the Board of Directors for Maine Writers’ and Publishers’ Alliance. Her nonfiction work has been published in *Port City Life*, *Portland Magazine*, *Travel Holiday* and other regional magazines, and her fiction has been published in *iris*, *Cracked Lenses* and excerpted in *Portland Magazine*. In 2005 she was recognized as one of New England’s most significant emerging writers by PEN New England. As a faculty member at NMCC, she teaches English Composition, Creative Writing and Mass Communications. She has recently completed her first novel, and lives in Perham with her husband and a pair of speckled German shorthair pointers.

The April 16 reading will feature Michael Macklin, a carpenter and a poet. He is an associate editor of *The Cafe Review*, a journal of poetry and art, and his own poetry has appeared in a number of journals and anthologies including *Rattle*, *Animus*, *Off the Coast*, *The Other Side of Sorrow*, and *The Best of Moon Pie Press, Volume 1*. His chapbook, *Driftland*, was published by Moon Pie Press. In the last year, he has presented his work at the Belfast Poetry Festival (collaborating with Artist Cathy Melio) and was part of a group of poets that just produced *The Police Poetry Calendar* that includes poems by Portland, Maine Police Officers. Michael holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Vermont College. He is interested in the mysterious way that words can lead us from what we know into the unknown.

Wrapping up the reading series on April 23 will be Shonna Milliken Humphrey, who specializes in non-fiction writing. She is the executive director of the Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance, Maine's only statewide organization for writers and the literary arts. Her nonfiction has appeared in local publications, as well as included in national anthologies. She holds a MFA in Nonfiction Writing and Literature from Bennington College. She is a native of Aroostook County and her work reflects that background.

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 marks the second 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 9, at noon in the NMCC library.

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