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recently revived), but Wordstock soon picked up some of the slack. Cantley started it as a low-cost opportunity for editors and writers, particularly those at smaller dailies or community papers, to get access to high-quality training. Open to the public and attended by over 200 journalists from across Canada, the program includes an invigorating keynote speaker and, this past year, 18 seminars on topics as diverse as editing convoluted stories, the challenges of convergence between print and broadcast, writing editorials, and injecting emotion into magazine stories.

The genesis of the conference came after Cantley attended a similar event in the United States and asked: Why can't we do the same thing in Canada? He continues to ask this question as he keeps abreast of newspaper-related activities in both the United States and Europe, and devises seminars and resources to respond to shifting needs in the Canadian newspaper industry. Cantley's longstanding faithfulness to professional development is exceptional.

Isn't that something worth recognizing?

Monica Plant is a freelance editor and writer, the Toronto branch Public Relations Chair, and bears no resemblance to the winner of our photo contest this month.

MY EXPERIENCE AT THE HUMBER CREATIVE BOOK PUBLISHING PROGRAM

By Lilly Quan

Now I know what it must be like to be on Canadian Idol.

In May of this year, I enrolled in the inaugural running of the Creative Book Publishing Program at Humber College. The accelerated four-month program explored all aspects of book publishing, especially trade (fiction and non-fiction). I had been freelancing as a copy editor/proofreader, but wanted to upgrade my skills. This program would give me the intense training I wanted without years of schooling. As it turns out, it gave me a lot more than that.

For three months, we explored every aspect of book publishing, from editing and marketing to production and distribution. Our instructors were the top of the field: Karen Cossar, VP of Marketing at HarperCollins Canada, was our marketing instructor, and Prof. Keith Oatley, author of *The Case of Emily V.*, taught a course on creativity. We sat entranced as Scott Richardson, creative director for Random House of Canada, took us through the frustrating process of designing the cover for *The Way the Crow Flies* by Ann-Marie MacDonald.

And then there were the guest speakers. On the first day of class, there was a surprise visit from Giller nominee Camilla Gibb, who graciously spoke to us about the writer-editor relationship. That set the tone for the course. You never knew who would show up. The CBC's Mary Lou Finlay and Andy Barrie explained the dynamics of book coverage at CBC Radio. Foreign rights agent Nicole Winstanley explained the decision-making behind selling the UK rights to *Life of Pi* and the serendipity that led to the Booker Prize win. A top literary agent told us that authors lie to each other

about their advances. His Excellency John Ralston Saul challenged us, as newcomers to a cultural industry, to view ourselves as potential agents of change.

A friend kept asking me why all these famous people would come talk to us. The reason is that the program director, Cynthia Good. Cynthia, former president and publisher of Penguin, is passionate about books and people, and this course is her labour of love. All of her students felt privileged to be part of the program.

And we worked hard for her. The days were long and intense. For the final month, we were divided into groups, and we set up our own publishing houses. We created our own booklists, complete with marketing and business plans, profit and loss forecasts, and book covers. The finale was like performing at a "Literary Idol" competition: we gave a business presentation to a group of judges who represented potential investors. Among them were Scott Griffin, sponsor of the Griffin Poetry prize, and Kim McArthur, president and publisher of McArthur and Company and one of *Chatelaine's* top women entrepreneurs in Canada. The presentations were superb, and our booklists, according to Kim, "the most realistic I've ever seen." At the end of the day, Cynthia's students gave her a standing ovation.

Such was my exposure to a side of life I had never before encountered. When I asked Cynthia what her experience with the first year of the program was like, she said, "Exhausting and exhilarating." I would have to agree.

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