

A Visit from Budge Wilson

One of the best ways to encourage young writers is for them to meet other successful writers. Libraries can invite accomplished writers to meet teens. They can lead writing workshops, give a talk, or meet informally.

Children's book author Budge Wilson visited Vivian Howard's Young Adult Resources class at Dalhousie University on March 23, 2005, and she shared her experiences as a writer and a published author.

Budge Wilson has written 29 books, publishing her first novel at age 56. She has been an educator, photographer, and fitness instructor. She wrote for five years before she had a book accepted for publication-- "*The Best Worst Christmas Present Eve* (1984). Budge's sister, a teacher, read the unpublished book to her classroom, and the class was assigned to write reviews-- 29 were quite favorable, and one was a pan. Budge sent all the reviews to Scholastic Canada and they accepted her work on the strength of



the reviews. Budge has since won the Canadian Library Association Young Adult Book Award for *The Leaving*

(1991), a book the American Library Association (1994) chose as one of the best 75 children's books in the last 25 years. Budge's most recent young adult book is *Fractures: Family Stories* (2002).

The following are some of Budge's essential tips to writers who want to get published:

Enter contests: Contests may give a writer feedback: it is hard to know if one's own writing is truly good, friends and family may have a difficult time judging the work also. Many successful writers have taken their start by competing in local writing competitions.

Take writing courses: Although there may be some people who are natural writers and can effortlessly put forth excellent prose, most

writers can benefit from instruction and group support.

insights into the world of professional writing.

Value discipline: Writing at scheduled periods of time may help, and being committed to writing will help. Budge usually works for 3 hour stretches in the late morning.

Be patient: Publishers may take six months to return a manuscript in order to reject it. This can be quite discouraging, so be patient.

Have thick skin: Even the best works get rejected by publishers. One must send it out to another publisher. Also, publishers are not always courteous in their rejections. Budge has received a few unpleasant rejection letters.

Have a library card: Reading helps writing, and libraries have plenty of books.

Keep writing: Persistence pays off.

Budge proved to be an engaging and motivating speaker. Her lecture provided many helpful hints and

Budge's Two Favourite How-to Writing Books



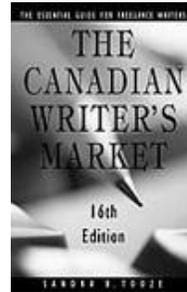
Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life by Anne Lamont. (1995) Knopf: ISBN 0-385-48001-6



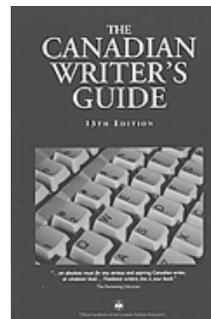
Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within by Natalie Goldberg (2005). Shambhala Publications: ISBN 1-59030-261-3

Both of these books give excellent instruction for writing and other aspects of life. Lamont's *Bird by Bird* is a compelling and funny read, and she gives sound advice: write every day, write about what you know, take notes. Natalie Goldberg's *Writing Down the Bones* is influenced by Zen teachings. Goldberg discourages rules, and offers simple, but helpful, guidelines to writing.

Budge's Two Favourite Writing Trade Manuals



The Canadian Writer's Market, 16th Edition
By Sandra Tooze
(2004) McClelland & Stewart: ISBN 0-7710-8527-3



The Canadian writer's guide: official handbook of the Canadian Authors Association, 13th ed. (2002) Fitzhenry & Whiteside: ISBN 1-5504-1740-1

Both of these books give comprehensive information about Canadian awards, competitions, and grants, agents, publishers, magazines, journals, and newspapers. They include marketing, copyright, and legal issues.

