

INDUSTRY Q+A /

TWUC's First Self-Published Member Writes the North and Talks About "Free Love"

BY HAL NIEDZVIECKI

In the Spring, the Union accepted its first ever self-published author into the ranks. To find out what motivated her to join and how things are going so far, we sent a handful of questions over to Annelies Pool of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.



You are the first self-published author to be accepted into TWUC. What does being part of the union mean to you?

As a self-published author, being a member of TWUC helps to give me credibility as a professional writer in the eyes of my peers. Even though many professional writers are now self-publishing, it still has the reputation of being a province of amateur writers.

TWUC's vetting process separates the professionals from the amateurs.

What do you write about?

I write about the Canadian North. I've published articles on the North in many magazines and newspapers. I am, however, best known for the funny personal essays I have written about my own northern life. My self-published book *Iceberg Tea* is a collection of these essays.

What inspired you to write and publish your own book of essays?

I have been writing personal essays that celebrate both the poignancy and absurdity of my life for my whole career. These essays have been published as columns in newspapers and

magazines and gained a readership throughout the North. A collection seemed the next step but, while I received encouraging comments, the few publishers I sent it to rejected it. Traditional publishing moves very slowly and I did not want to spend years trying to get the book published. At the same time, new technology has made self-publishing more accessible. With a background in magazine and newspaper publishing, I understand the publishing process. Self-publishing was an obvious fit for me.

You live in Yellowknife. What's the community and support like for writers there?

For a small city of 20,000 people, Yellowknife has an amazingly vibrant writing community. But we do not have access to local creative writing courses, agents, or publishers, so writing can be a lonely business here. However, for a number of years I have been involved with NorthWords NWT, an organization that offers writing workshops, mentoring, hosts an annual festival and provides a focal point for writers. I doubt that I would have had the courage to publish *Iceberg Tea* without the moral support provided by NorthWords.

What are you working on now? What's next for you?

I am just putting the finishing touches on my first novel *Free Love* which I expect to publish before Christmas of this year. Set in Yellowknife in the 1980s, *Free Love* is the story of Marissa as she struggles to quit drinking with the help of the eccentric people in Yellowknife's recovery community.

COMIC BY SCOT RITCHIE

