



NANCY FRASER

“Love of Literature”

By Tanya Shukalova

Putting words together is an art form for Nancy Fraser. The local author, born in Nova Scotia, kindly invited me for tea to share her love of literature. I could tell simply by the way she spoke, composed and deliberately, that she is fascinated by the English language.

“I just like putting words together. I like the beauty of the English language, the beauty of the correct form of expression. It’s a challenge and a pleasure for me.”

Nancy’s passion for literature blossomed at Dalhousie University and even more so when she majored in French. After a post-graduate year at the Sorbonne, she obtained her Nova Scotia teacher’s certification

and taught French at Queen Elizabeth High School in Halifax. Nancy relocated to Brockville in her early twenties after marrying her fiancé, Duncan Fraser. “Once you take a husband, you take a country,” she said with a giggle.

After moving to Ontario, Nancy spent 15 years organizing plays for the Brockville Theatre Guild. Once her children grew a bit older, Nancy enrolled at Queen’s University to obtain the requisite Ontario teacher certification and returned to teaching French. It was only after she retired from teaching in 1992, that Nancy started writing.

In June, 1993, Fulford Place was opened to the public as a museum and volunteer

docents were needed. “So I thought, this is perfect! I will be a docent!” Nancy’s face lit up as she spoke about Fulford place and its haunted reputation. “Visitors were transfixed by the tales of Mary Fulford and, you know. . .” As she knocked on the table to imitate the knocking on walls that were attributed to Mary Fulford’s ghost.

This led to Nancy creating the Brockville Ghost Walks, on which she and her fellow guides told many stories of the eerie happenings at the mansion and other Brockville sites. “For the first three summers, my companions and I led the Ghost Walks, rain or shine, every Friday night. It was so popular that we were booked weeks in advance.”

“This has to be a book,” Nancy decided. After months of detailed research, she wrote, *Mysterious Brockville*, a compendium of 32 Brockville ghost stories, including six Fulford Place mysteries. The book sold out in weeks. It was so popular that she reprinted it, and in 2006, published a second edition, *Mysterious Brockville 2*. (Only the second edition is now sold in stores.)

“I think it celebrates Brockville in a wonderful way. It creates an aspect of Brockville that you wouldn’t dream of if you simply came here as a tourist. It’s a history of Brockville too, that is carefully researched.”

Nancy’s third book, *Letters from Paris*, was never originally designed as a book. It’s a collection of the amusing letters she mailed to her Halifax family during her study year in Paris. It was published with her own hand-drawn illustrations in 2008. She showed me the original letters in their envelopes that she has still kept to this day. She spoke highly of Paris and even has a large, colorful transit map of the city hung up by her door.

“It wasn’t until 1992, when I flew down to Halifax that I found all these letters. I found them all bound up in string in the back of a drawer. My mother had kept them all.”

Her fourth book is a collection of poems. “*March Poems, 2003*” came to her when she was grieving her mother’s death. It is a symbol of a new beginning to Nancy - when the spring comes and life is reborn. These intricate poems “had to be written,” she says. Her own watercolor paintings are reproduced in the book as well.

It is easy to tell, from her career, her way of speaking and the artwork in her home, that Nancy has a passion for writing as well as reading. It is people like Nancy that we have to thank for making the art of language as beautiful as it is today. **LH**