

MacEwan Lecturer Solves the Mystery of Success

Janice MacDonald, a lecturer in the English Department, has published her third mystery novel, *The Monitor*, with Turnstone Press. Her route to writing mysteries, however, is as circuitous as one of her plots. Janice started writing plays while working on her MFA in Playwriting at the U of A, but decided to enter the work world before completing her MFA. She composed a couple of province-touring musicals and wrote several radio plays for U of A and CKUA. During this time she also published three local history and recreation books for Lone Pine Publishing. Soon, she returned to university to complete her MA in English. At university she was dared to write a mystery novel and that began the Randy Craig series.

Janice also worked as the mystery reviewer for the Edmonton Journal and taught sessional courses at the U of A. Then she came to Grant MacEwan College where she has been a part-time lecturer for seven years. For the 2004 winter term, Janice is teaching the equivalent of six classes so there's not much time between marking essays to devote to the next mystery. Along with being a teacher and writer, Janice is a wife and a mother of two daughters. Her writing time is limited, so she squeezes time in on Reading Week, Christmas Break, and the time between the Spring and Summer sessions. Her other accomplishments include publishing a children's book, *The Ghouls' Night Out*, winner of the Our Choice Award from the Canadian Children's Book Centre, and *True North: Canadian Essays for Composition*, a text used in Western Canada for college English courses. She has also written and published several articles and creative non-fiction essays in writing anthologies.

Her character, Randy Craig, started as a graduate student in English, who later pursued a part time sessional lecturer job. In the interview, Janice joked about Randy, "She may well get a fulltime job before I do."

The Monitor finds Randy working a second job, as a chatroom monitor, to help while she is also teaching distance courses with the English Department at Grant MacEwan College. During her second job Randy notices that there is something going on. The chat room may be the contact point for a serial killer.

In inspiring her students, writing and publishing eight books, numerous short stories and articles and several plays to her credit, Janice is truly a success story. Find *The Monitor*, and her other titles, at your local bookstore.